

## Once-in-a-lifetime occurrence

Skywatchers witnessed a rare, vibrant spectacle when the two gas giants, Jupiter and Saturn, travelled together across the sky in an event known as the 'Great Conjunction'. Such an event, also called the 'Christmas Star', is projected to happen again after 60 years

### NEARBY



#### Veteran Congress leader Motilal Vora passes away

NEW DELHI  
Congress veteran Motilal Vora passed away at Delhi's Fortis Escorts Hospital on Monday, a day after his 93rd birthday. He had been admitted to the hospital on Saturday for a urinary infection but developed severe lung infection and was put on ventilator, his family said. Tributes poured in from political leaders and dignitaries for the politician.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

#### New COVID cases hit four-month low in Delhi

NEW DELHI  
The city recorded 803 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours – the lowest in four months – taking the total number of cases to 6,17,808, said a health bulletin released by the government. The last time the number of new cases was less than 803 was on August 17 – 787. Also, 27 more deaths were reported in the past 24 hours, pushing the toll to 10,304.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

**GS MAINS TEST SERIES - 2021-22**  
Only Non-Serious Aspirants take Mains Answer writing lightly!  
Are you also the one?  
Starts - 27<sup>th</sup> Dec. | 3<sup>rd</sup> Jan.  
Seats 100 | Individual Discussion  
₹ 999-035-6664 | 9704-004-0445

## Suspension of IBC extended till March '21

Waiver was to end on Dec. 25; decision to help businesses cope with difficulties

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The government has decided to extend the suspension of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) till March 31, 2021, to help businesses cope with the lingering difficulties posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

The Minister's statement settles a major uncertainty facing businesses since the present government order to keep the insolvency code in abeyance was due to expire on December 25.

#### Defaults from March 25

All defaults arising on or after March 25, when the nationwide lockdown was imposed to curb the pandemic, will effectively

remain out of the insolvency net for a full year, Ms. Sitharaman said.

"When the nationwide lockdown was announced, there was constant engagement with industry. So many deadlines were postponed and many compliances relaxed. Even the suspension of the IBC has been postponed even further from December 25. I

think we have moved to saying that will be in abeyance till March 31, 2021," the Minister said at an interaction with the Bangalore Chamber of Industry and Commerce on Monday evening.

Experts, however, said more action may be needed to help stressed corporate balance sheets.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Bengal BJP youth leader's wife joins Trinamool Congress

Soumitra Khan says he will send her legal notice for divorce

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

BJP leader Sujata Mondal Khan, who is the wife of West Bengal Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha president and Bishnupur MP Soumitra Khan, on Monday joined the Trinamool Congress. Ms. Khan said she did not get the respect she deserved in the BJP.

Hours after his wife announced her decision, Mr. Khan said at a press conference that he would send her a legal notice for divorce within 24 hours.

**'Trinamool stealing wife'**  
Expressing surprise over the development, he said his wife was well aware of the misdeeds of the Trinamool Congress. He accused the party of "ending his relationship" and "stealing his wife". He asserted that he would continue his fight against the



Sujata Mondal Khan

Trinamool Congress and vowed to remove the party from power in 2021.

At the Trinamool Congress headquarters in Kolkata, Ms. Khan told journalists, "I was a BJP worker when the party had two MPs. Now, there are 18. There are many opportunists, who are joining the BJP... It has become a B-team of the Trinamool Congress. Why should I not join the Trinamool now?"

She expressed the hope that good sense would pre-

## A year on, kin of anti-CAA protest victims await justice

Families allege bullets of U.P. police killed their loved ones, police claim they died in firing by rioters

### ANUJ KUMAR GAZIABAD

"We are waiting for the wheels of justice to turn," said Mohd. Salahuddin, the brother of Aleem who died during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests in Meerut on December 20, 2019.

The 24-year-old was one of the six persons who were killed when the protests turned violent. While the police claim they died in firing by rioters, the kin of the victims allege that they were killed by bullets fired by the police. "All that we have got in the last one year are dates. We have not been heard," said Salahuddin, who suffers from polio in one leg. "We have been told that the Delhi riots that happened after the



Aleem, 24, was killed in the anti-CAA protests in Meerut last year. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

evidence rejecting the bogus investigation that claims the victims died of gunshots of rioters," claimed Mr. Zaidi, referring to the chargesheet filed by the police in the Allahabad High Court. "They have arrested four to five

people who have criminal record to weave a fictitious story that they fired at different places during the protest. The victims were pelting stones and sustained bullet injuries in the melee that ensued," alleged Mr. Zaidi.

Subhash Chandra Prajapati, Additional District Magistrate (Finance), who heads the inquiry into the death of Aleem, said he would file the report in week. "We have received evidence from police and the Chief Medical Officer but nobody from the victim's family turned up," he said, adding the inquiry was delayed because of COVID-19 and workload.

In Bijnor, Afzal Ansari was mourning the death of his nephew, Suleman, who was one of the two persons killed

in the protest in Nehta town on December 20 last year. "We remembered him by distributing woollens to the poor. He wanted to serve society as a District Magistrate. This is the least we could do," said Mr. Ansari, a lawyer.

"It was a targeted killing but nobody is listening. Can't we even protest? The then Superintendent of Police had admitted that the police fired in self-defence but now they say the two died in firing by rioters. They have many ways to silence us. When I actively pursued the case, I was named in an FIR in Nagina for rioting," he alleged. The case, he ruled, was pending in the court but "it seems the system wants us to forget our loss".

## Govt. considering 1-year extension of protection for illegal colonies

Relief from punitive action is set to end on December 31

### DAMINI NATH JATIN ANAND NEW DELHI

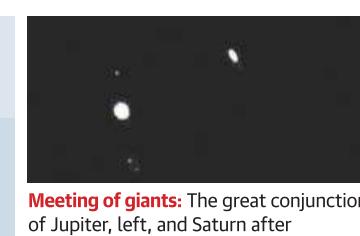
The Centre is considering a one-year extension of protection from demolitions and sealing granted to certain kinds of illegal constructions in Delhi that is set to end on December 31, according to multiple sources.

The protection from punitive action was given to slum clusters, illegal buildings and constructions in unauthorised colonies that existed as of March 31, 2002 till June 1, 2014 by the National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second (Amendment) Act, 2017. The Act was first passed in 2014, giving three-year immunity from action, and then amended to give another three years in 2017.

**Ordinance planned**  
With no winter session of Parliament scheduled this year, the government would bring in an ordinance to extend the protections for a year, the sources said. A Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry official said the process of extending the provisions of the Act has been started.

BJP sources said the issue came up for discussion between HUA Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly and Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and State BJP president Adesh Gupta during a meeting on December 14.

According to a source, Mr. Puri assured the leaders that an ordinance would be introduced. The source added that it has been decided to extend the validity of the existing provisions so that those affected would not have to deal with the possibility of demolition of their properties at a time when COVID-19 had hit businesses. Another source said a one-year extension was considered as opposed to three years since the Master Plan 2041 is being drafted and was expected to be completed in 2021.



- Jupiter and Saturn came in close conjunction after 367 years on Monday
- While the conjunctions happen every 20 years, the great conjunction on December 21 was the closest observable since 1226

- The planets were separated by just one-tenth of a degree
- On Monday, they appeared so close that a pinkie finger at arm's length covered both planets in the sky
- Despite appearances, Jupiter

- and Saturn were separated by a distance of 730 million km
- December 21 also happened to be the Winter Solstice in the northern hemisphere, making it another rare coincidence
- Their next such super-close

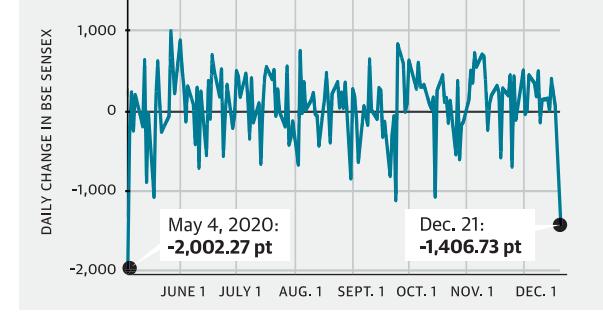
- pairing is set to take place on March 15, 2080
- In 1610, Italian astronomer Galileo Galilei discovered the four moons of Jupiter – Io, Europa, Ganymede, and Callisto. In the same year, he also discovered the rings surrounding Saturn
- Thirteen years later, in 1623, the 'Great Conjunction' was first observed

## Markets plunge on news of mutant virus

Worst single-day fall in seven months

### Market mayhem

The Sensex ended 1,406.73 points, or 3%, lower to close at 45,553.96, the largest single-day drop since May 4



### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Fears of a rapidly spreading new strain of the COVID-19 virus in the U.K. caused a bloodbath in Indian equity markets, with key benchmark indices slumping 3%.

The rupee declined to a two-week low at 73.79 against the U.S. dollar.

Global equities, too, tumbled, the dollar strengthened and volatility surged across asset classes as news of the new strain threatened to torpedo markets' optimism over a vaccine-fuelled rebound in economic growth.

U.K. equities were down just over 2%, while European equities fell around 2.5%. Futures for the S&P 500 fell 1.8%, recouping some earlier falls, while Nasdaq futures were down 1.2%.

Gold, which usually rises during times of turmoil, fell as much as 1.3% in the global markets before clawing back some of that loss.

Back in Indian equities, all sectoral indices closed with losses. The markets witnessed the worst single-day loss in more than seven months, analysts said. Declines were seen across sectors such as banking, auto, metal, oil and gas, real estate and public sector stocks.

Amid widespread sale of the BSE Sensex pack, intraday trade saw the index plunging 2,038 points or 4.34%. It recovered to a 3%, or 1,407-point decline, to 45,554 points. ONGC led the bloodbath, plummeting 9.15%, while SBI slumped 6.2%.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

No flights to and from U.K. till Dec. 31

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Monday banned all flights from the U.K. from Tuesday midnight until December 31 in an effort to keep out a new highly infectious coronavirus strain that is rapidly spreading in England.

"This suspension will start w.e.f. 23.59 hours, 22nd December 2020. Consequently, flights from India to the U.K. shall stand temporarily suspended," the Ministry said in a series of tweets.

The government also clarified that no airline operating from any country would be allowed to bring a passenger who had travelled from the U.K. to India.

Belgium, The Netherlands, France, Italy, Germany, Canada and Israel have already suspended U.K. flights.

While international flights remain suspended, the government has entered into a special agreement with 22 countries to allow direct flights to and from India.

The announcement will hit Air India, Vistara, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways, who together operate 21 weekly flights from Delhi and 16 weekly flights from Mumbai.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Fresh off the boat



**Hope afloat:** Vegetable dealers waiting for buyers on their boats at a floating vegetable market on the Dal Lake in Srinagar on a cold Monday morning. The 40-day intense winter period 'chillai kalan' started in Kashmir Valley on Monday with sub-zero night temperatures recorded across the region ■ NISSAR AHMAD (REPORT ON PAGE 9)

## Farmers to take decision on talks today

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Appearing set to reject the fresh offer of talks by the Union government, farmer unions spearheading the agitation are of the opinion that the three laws are pro-corporate and promote stocking and black-marketing of foodgrains. The final decision will be taken in a meeting of Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a joint front of farmer unions, on Tuesday.

In a virtual meeting during the day, farmer leaders said the government had selected eight issues and was now trying to claim they were the main issues, said sources privy to the meeting. They also took exception to the language used by PM Narendra Modi, wherein he said that "no one could stop him" from going ahead with the reforms.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 9



protests have become the priority of courts and lawyers," he said.

Salahuddin, a resident of Ahmed Nagar area in Meerut, works in the catering business which has been badly hit because of the COVID-19 pandemic. "The monetary support that came from social activists and political parties went to the wife of Aleem. She left home after the *iddat* period and now I am struggling to make ends meet. My father also got paralysed in the last one year," he said.

**Ready with evidence**  
Ali Zaidi, a Delhi-based Supreme Court lawyer, said from the highest to the local court they were in queue for dates. "We have complete

evidence rejecting the bogus investigation that claims the victims died of gunshots of rioters," claimed Mr. Zaidi, referring to the chargesheet filed by the police in the Allahabad High Court. "They have arrested four to five

people who have criminal record to weave a fictitious story that they fired at different places during the protest. The victims were pelting stones and sustained bullet injuries in the melee that ensued," alleged Mr. Zaidi.

Subhash Chandra Prajapati, Additional District Magistrate (Finance), who heads the inquiry into the death of Aleem, said he would file the report in week. "We have received evidence from police and the Chief Medical Officer but nobody from the victim's family turned up," he said, adding the inquiry was delayed because of COVID-19 and workload.

In Bijnor, Afzal Ansari was mourning the death of his nephew, Suleman, who was one of the two persons killed

in the protest in Nehta town on December 20 last year. "We remembered him by distributing woollens to the poor. He wanted to serve society as a District Magistrate. This is the least we could do," said Mr. Ansari, a lawyer.

"It was a targeted killing but nobody is listening. Can't we even protest? The then Superintendent of Police had admitted that the police fired in self-defence but now they say the two died in firing by rioters. They have many ways to silence us. When I actively pursued the case, I was named in an FIR in Nagina for rioting," he alleged. The case, he ruled, was pending in the court but "it seems the system wants us to forget our loss".

The protection from punitive action was given to slum clusters, illegal buildings and constructions in unauthorised colonies that existed as of March 3

## Farmer attempts to kill self near Singhu border

Police verifying note written by him

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH

A 65-year-old Punjab farmer protesting against the Central government's agriculture laws tried to kill himself by taking some poisonous substance near Delhi's Singhu border on Monday, a police officer said.

The man, who hails from Punjab's Tarn Taran, was admitted to Rohtak's PGIMS and his condition is stated to be stable, the officer said.

The farmer left a note behind, which is being verified by the police.

"We are in the process of recording his statement," the officer said when asked about the reason behind the suicide attempt.

The incident comes close on the heels of Sikh preacher

Sant Ram Singh allegedly committing suicide near the Singhu border last week as he was "unable to bear the pain of the farmers".

On Saturday, a 22-year-old farmer was found dead in Punjab's Bathinda after returning from a protest site near the Delhi border.

Farmers are protesting against the Centre's three contentious farm laws enacted in September this year.

The government has projected the laws as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove middlemen and allow farmers to sell their produce.

*Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)*

## 'Haryana farmers' participation in protest rising'

They are providing food, lodging and other essential items to the protesters, says former Union Minister Birender Singh

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

The participation of Haryana farmers has been growing in the ongoing agitation against the agricultural laws, but they are contributing more in terms of supplying food and other essential items to the protesters, according to former Union Steel Minister and senior BJP leader Birender Singh.

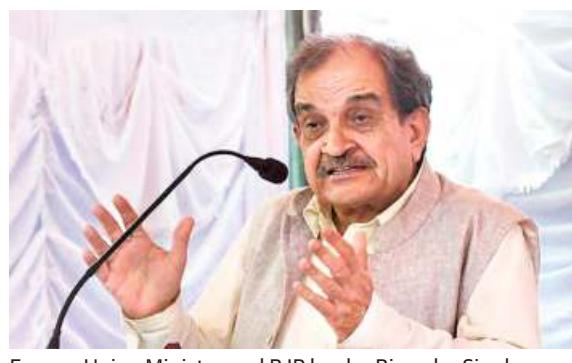
Last week, he had come out in support of the farmers agitation by holding a sit-in at Haryana's Jhajjar district.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Singh said Punjab was among the top three States in terms of individual land holdings, farmers were resourceful and had a high level of awareness and were thus taking the lead in the ongoing farmers' agitation. "But the participation of Ha-

ryana people has also been growing. On account of Haryana's proximity to Delhi, the farmers in the State are participating in a different way in the agitation and providing food, milk, vegetables and lodgings to the protesters. Besides, sit-ins are also being held in the State," said the 74-year-old leader.

### Strong resentment

He claimed that there was strong resentment among the farmers in the State and they felt that their existence was at stake. "The farmers of Haryana and Punjab have benefited a lot from the Minimum Support Price scheme. Farmers deep inside feel that these legislations could end it. And they seem determined to not let this happen." The resentment among the farmers was



Former Union Minister and BJP leader Birender Singh.  
■ FILE PHOTO

bound to have short-term and long-term political repercussions, if an amicable solution was not found.

"People may still be less angry with the Bharatiya Janata Party in Haryana, but they are more angry with the Jannayak Janta Party, which claims to be a farmers' party exclusively," quipped Mr.

Singh.

Holding sit-ins at district headquarters across the State under the aegis of "Chhotu Ram Vichar Manch", Mr. Singh, a grandson of eminent peasant leader Chhotu Ram, said they also had plans to take out a yatra to galvanise support for the cause by creating

awareness among the peasantry who were not aware of the agitation. He added that speaking for the farmers could not be termed "anti-party".

### SYL issue

On the allegations of anti-national elements and foreign powers being behind the movement and most recently the issue of Sutlej Yamuna Link canal raised by the Haryana government, Mr. Singh said he did not give much "credence" to such things and these tactics would not cause any distraction.

"The farmers in Haryana and Punjab have awareness. People in Haryana have protested against the BJP leaders holding sit-ins on SYL issue. They cannot tolerate this. They feel that their existence as farmers was in jeopardy,

and all this talk about water can be left for discussion later," said Mr. Singh, who also held the portfolio of Rural Development during the first tenure of Modi government.

### Dais sharing

He remarked that the agitation was led by the farmer unions and the "good thing" was that the political leaders were not allowed to share its platform.

He said he was for amicable resolution to the matter, but the "lack of mutual trust" had led to a deadlock. "This impasse can end only with the restoration of mutual trust and confidence. I am not sure that efforts must be going on behind the curtains to end the stalemate. The farmers also know that the agitation cannot go on endlessly," said Mr. Singh.

## IYC protests against new farm Acts

Editors say they want to assist movement; farmer leaders to discuss issue today



■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

said Mr. Mehma.

Jasdeep Singh, one of the editors of *Trolley Times*, said they are aware of the opinion of the leaders.

"It's not necessary for them to align with us but we are aligned with them. They

have just said that we are not their official voice and it's correct. We are a group of youngsters who have got together to bring out stories of the protest," he said.

Gurdeep Dhalwal, designer and contributing edi-

tor, said the next edition is being published on Tuesday wherein they have written what *Trolley Times* is all about. "It is just to clarify what the newsletter is because it received a lot of attention. We don't want to damage anything. We want to help the protest," he said.

Mr. Gurdeep said the intention is to make the voice from the main stage reach the end. "The protest site is stretched about 15 km. We thought that stories from the front and whatever is being said on the stage should reach the last person at the end and for people to know how the protest is progressing in order to bring everyone on the same page. That's the intent," he said.

## BJP to instal LED screens in all 272 Delhi wards

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday said it will instal LED screens across the 272 municipal wards here and target bringing 500 to 1,000 people to each venue for Prime Minister's dialogue with farmers via videoconference on December 25.

The party also began door-to-door distribution of the Centre's letter on the agriculture laws to farmers here on Monday.

Delhi BJP workers, led by Leader of the Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, who is also the convener of the initiative in the city, distributed copies of the letter written by Union Agriculture Minister Narendra



Ramvir Singh Bidhuri

Singh Tomar regarding the laws, in Tajpur village.

"There are several programmes being carried out by the party's leaders. The programme will conclude with the PM's address on December 25 where he will directly converse with farmers," Mr. Bidhuri said.

## People pen letter in blood to PM Modi

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A group of people who donated blood at the mobile van parked at Delhi-Haryana's Singhu border have written a letter in their blood and plan to send it to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

At least two Ludhiana-based blood banks were set up at Singhu border on Monday where people donated blood and also wrote a few letters on which – Take back the black laws – is written.

"We'll send these letters to the PM by post or have it delivered in person," said Taranjeet Singh Nimana from Ludhiana.

GOVERNMENT OF UTTARAKHAND				
Office of Superintending Engineer, Research Circle Irrigation Research Institute, Roorkee-247667				
E-mail: uttarhawd@gmail.com, Website: www.irriroorkee.res.in				
e-Tender Notice No. : 10/SE(R)/NHP/e-Tender/2020-21 Dated 19.12.2020				
Superintending Engineer, Research Circle, Irrigation Research Institute, Roorkee on behalf of "Governor of Uttarakhand" invites item rates for the "Electrical Fitting, Furnishing and installation of other accessories in SWIC building, Roorkee under National Hydrology Project", Through e-tenders in "Two Bid System" as give below				
S. No. Name of work Earnest Money (Rs.) Cost of tender form (Rs.) Validity of Tender Period of Completion				
1	Electrical Fitting Furnishing and Installation of other Accessories in SWIC Building Roorkee under National Hydrology Project.	2.22 Lac	4,000.00+ GST @ 18%	90 days 03 months
Key Dates				
1	Date of calling	19.12.2020		
2	Date of online publication	21.12.2020	03.30 PM	
3	Documents downloads start date	21.12.2020	05.00 PM	
4	Pre-bid meeting date	29.12.2020	11.45 AM	
5	Bid submission start date	11.01.2021	03.30 PM	
6	Bid submission end date	21.01.2021	03.00 PM	
7	Physical Submission of bid security and cost of bidding document	21.01.2021	03.00 PM	
8	Date of opening of Technical bid	21.01.2021	03.30 PM	
9	Date of opening of financial bid	To be declared later		
For further details please log on to www.uktenders.gov.in				
Superintending Engineer Research Circle Irrigation Research Institute, Roorkee				

Office Of The Superintending Engineer 9th Circle Public Work Department Dehradun							
Office of the Superintending Engineer, 9th Circle PWD, Dehradun Uttarakhand							
Website- http://pwd.uk.gov.in Letter No 5844/1C-9/2020							
E-mail: seppwdunn@rediffmail.com Dated: 19/12/2020							
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING e-Tender Notice (Short term)							
The Superintending Engineer 9th Circle, Public Works Department, Dehradun on behalf of "Governor of Uttarakhand" invites item rate tender in two bid system for the following work. Information regarding tender shall be available on https://www.uktenders.gov.in from date 23.12.2020.							
Sl. No. Name of Work Earnest Money (Rs. of Tender In Lacs) Validity (In days) Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.) Period of Completion (In Month) Contractor's Category of Registration							
1	Improvement of riding quality by 30mm B.C. of Donal-Nathuwa-Balawala Motor Road, Akhanda Enclava & Himadri Enclava Internal Road, Harappa-Nakrona Road, Harappa-Gulgarh Road & Balawala, Nathuwa, Nathupur Internal Road under Central Special Assistance Scheme (2020-21)	8.50	60	5000.00 +18% G.S.T.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Months	Registered in 'A' & above category in Road works in Central Govt./State Govt./Any Govt. Undertaking	
Superintending Engineer 9th Circle, PWD, Dehradun							

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF MATERIALS MANAGEMENT OFFICER (PURCHASE- 1 <sup>st</sup> ) SHER-I-KASHMIR INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES SOURA, SRINAGAR-190011 Extension: 2275 Email: ammpurchase1@skims.ac.in TELE/FAX NO.: 0194-2403929							
Abbreviated E- TENDER NOTICE No: SIMS 325 Purchase 1 <sup>st</sup> tender 09 of 2020 Dated : 19/12/2020 invited for Surgical Dressing Material for the year 2021-22, 2022-23.							
E-tenders are invited for and on behalf of 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 Sales Tax Registration and Drugs Licence for supply of Surgical Dressing material for a period of two years on rate contract basis for the year 2020-21, 2021-22 for S.K. INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES HOSPITAL PURELY ON SAMAPLE BASIS. Tenders to be submitted under TWO BID SYSTEM (TECHNICAL BID & PRICE BID). The detailed tender documents are also available at www.iktender.gov.in & www.skims.ac.in & you can visit the website for detailed information.							
Description		Tender Fee		Earnest Money			
Surgical Dressing Material		Rs 2000/-		Rs 1,50,000/-			

S. No. Nomenclature Schedule							
01	Bid download start date 19/12/2020						
02	Last date of clarification if any 26/12/2020 (up to 2:00 PM)						
03	Bid submission start date 28/12/2020						
04	Sample submission start date 29/12/2020						
05	Bid & sample submission end date 18/01/2021 (up to 2.00 PM)						
06	Technical bid opening date 21/01/2021 at (2.00 PM)						
The tender should be submitted strictly in accordance with the provisions of detailed E-NIT.							
NO: SIMS 325 P 1 <sup>st</sup> E-Tender 09 OF- 2020-1120-24-5809-12 Dated:19/12/2020							
Sd/ MATERIALS MANAGEMENT OFFICER PURCHASE 1 <sup>st</sup>							
NO SIMS: 5812 DT-19.12.2020							

## Sisodia gives 230 phones to students

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday distributed 230 smartphones to the students of Sarvodaya co-ed Secondary Vidyalaya in Rohini.

The Minister said that through the efforts of the school's principal, Awadhesh Kumar Jha, and vice-principal Bharti Kalra, 230 phones were

collected for students in need. The smartphones were distributed to students of Class 9 to Class 12.

Mr. Sisodia said this was a symbol of the collective goodness of people coming together in such dire times.

"The pandemic has had the worst impact on education. Though nobody thought studies could be shifted online, our teachers stepped up despite not being trained for it," he said.

## 2 held for firing at woman for rejecting marriage proposal

2 held for firing at woman for rejecting marriage proposal

Accused had met the victim on TikTok

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man and his friend were arrested for allegedly firing at a woman who refused to marry the former, in Delhi's Mohan Garden, the police said on Monday.

The accused had met the woman on TikTok about 10 months ago.

The accused have been identified as Karan, a resident of Sonipat, and his friend Praveen (22), a resident of Panipat, Haryana.

On Friday, the police received information that woman has been shot at by the accused, a senior officer said. The woman is undergoing treatment, they said.

"On Saturday, following a tip-off, the police laid a trap at Goya Dairy Road near Shyam Kunj Colony in Goya village and apprehended both the accused persons," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said.

The accused confessed that they had shot at the woman in her house

when she refused to marry Karan, the police said.

Karan is married and has two children. However, he did not tell the woman about this.

Three months ago, when the woman came to know about his marriage, she started ignoring him. Her family members then started looking for a suitable match for her.

Karan did not want the victim to marry any other man and made a plan to eliminate her.

He stole a bike from Mohan Garden and used a fake number plate, the DCP said. He procured a country-made pistol and ammunition from his accomplice Praveen.

On Friday, the accused entered the victim's house and fired at her from point-blank range with the intention to kill her. He then fled from the spot, the police said. The pistol, three live cartridges, one empty cartridge and one stolen bike used in the offence were recovered from their possession, they added.

## DU begins admissions under second special cut-off list

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Admissions to merit-based

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR	
Delhi 332	Gurugram 271
Ghaziabad 391	Faridabad 289
Noida 363	Greater Noida 366
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100
Moderate 101-200	Poor 201-300
Very Poor 301-400	Severe >400
Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours)	Source: CPCB

# 'Where do you get money for ads worth crores?'

AAP takes jibe at BJP over non-payment of municipal salaries

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The air quality of Delhi and Noida was in the 'very poor' category on Monday and Gurugram's in the 'poor' category, said the Central Pollution Control Board.

The AQI of Delhi was 332 as per the CPCB's 4 p.m. bulletin, which is an average of the past 24 hours. The values for Gurugram and Noida were 271 and 363, respectively.

Delhi's air quality is likely to deteriorate on Tuesday.

## Till Thursday

A sharp deterioration in ventilation condition is forecast for the next two days. Air Quality Index is forecast to deteriorate to higher end of 'very poor' category on December 22. The air quality is likely to stay in the high end of 'very poor' on December 23 and December 24 too," read a statement by the government-run monitoring agency SAFAR.

Though a gradual rise in minimum and maximum temperature is likely in Delhi, surface-level winds may slow down, SAFAR said.

The surface-level winds were already "low" on Monday, which does not help in dispersion of pollutants.

The effect of stubble burning on the city's air quality was low, and mixing height, which is the height from the ground level up to which pollutants can be dispersed, was also "low". This does not aid pollutants from getting dispersed easily.



AAP leader Durgesh Pathak

and now they are using the taxpayers' money to mislead the citizens of Delhi," said AAP leader Durgesh Pathak.

He alleged that the BJP has done so much corruption within the municipal corporations in the last 15

years of its rule, that the corporations have no money left. "Today, teachers, doctors, nurses, sweepers etc. working under the municipal corporation are protesting and even going on hunger strike to get their hard-earned salaries," Mr. Pathak added.

### AAP Bihar in-charge

Earlier in the day, the Aam Aadmi Party appointed Delhi MLA Sanjeev Jha as the party's State in-charge of Bihar as well as in-charge of the AAP's Delhi purvanchal organisation.

Mr. Jha said he will work hard to strengthen the party in the State.

## First deaths due to dengue and malaria

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Capital has reported one death each due to dengue and malaria so far this year, said a report released by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Monday. The death due to malaria is the first in the city in over six years, it said.

The sole dengue victim this year was a 12-year-old boy, a senior official said.

Sources said the death took place a couple of months ago but the cause was ascertained later.

Details of the malaria patient are not yet known.

The SDMC compiles data on vector-borne diseases for the city, and the report stated that 1,062 cases of dengue had been recorded in Delhi till December 19.

## IIT-Delhi's plant-based mock egg bags award

It may bolster nutrition of vegetarians

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A team of scientists from IIT-Delhi won an innovation contest organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Accelerator Lab-India for their innovation of a "plant-based mock egg".

The team secured the first prize at the Innovate4SDG contest that earned them \$5,000 for their innovation, which could help meet the protein needs of the diet specific, health conscious vegan and vegetarian people.

"The plant-based textured foods, which resemble egg, fish and chicken have been developed with an aim to address the long-standing battle for malnutrition and clean protein food for people. The mock egg has been developed from very simple farm-based crop proteins, which not only looks and tastes like an egg but is also very close in nutritional profile to a poultry egg," said Kavya Dashora from the Centre for Rural Development and Technology, who led the team.

She added that the team has also developed meat analogues for chicken and fish from plant sources using fruits and vegetables. The products were tested on various parameters, including appearance, taste, bite-size, texture, aroma, flavour, shelf life, nutritional profile and customer preference, the institute said.

## Daily COVID-19 cases hit four-month low

Lok Nayak doctors demand city govt. allow non-COVID treatment at the hospital

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The city recorded 803 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours – the lowest in more than four months – taking the total to 6,17,808, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Monday.

The last time the number of new cases was less than this was on August 17 – 787.

A total of 62,440 tests were done in the past 24 hours. Also, 27 more deaths have been reported, taking the total to 10,304. Of the total cases, 5,98,249 people have recovered and there are 9,255 active cases.

7.86%, as per the bulletin.

### Low test positivity

"Delhi witnessed the lowest test positivity of 1.29% for the first time in eight months. Less than 1,000 COVID-19 positive cases after August 16. We still need to take precautions to stay safe," tweeted Health Minister Satyendar Jain.

The test positivity on Monday was lesser compared to the average daily positivity in November, which was 11.65%. The overall positivity till now was



A healthcare worker puts a mask on a woman after testing for COVID-19 in Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

pital in a phased manner.

The hospital was converted into a COVID-19 treatment facility at the beginning of the outbreak. It is the largest Delhi government-run COVID-19 facility.

"Lok Nayak is the teaching hospital of Maulana Azad Medical College [MAMC] where student doctors are trained. Currently, the whole hospital is a COVID-19 facility and because of this, academic activities have come to a standstill.

Earlier in the day, resident doctors of Lok Nayak Hospital protested inside the campus to demand that the government start non-COVID treatment at the hospital, apart

L-G stresses need for more testing

NEW DELHI Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal stressed the need for sustained efforts towards more testing, aggressive contact tracing and strict compliance with COVID-19 norms here on Monday. Mr. Baijal made the observations at a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority, attended by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Dr. V.K. Paul, AIIMS director Dr. Randee Guleria and senior Delhi government officials.

from COVID-19," said the hospital's Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) president Keshav Singh.

"Currently, there is no training happening here...In the long run, the current batch of student doctors will lack experience to treat patients apart from COVID-19," Dr. Singh said, adding the RDA has been writing letters to the Delhi government and has even met the city Health Minister.

The RDA has announced a protest outside the office of the hospital's medical director on Tuesday.

## High Court quashes FIR against man in rape case

Bench says the woman admitted that she had levelled false allegations

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has decided to quash an FIR lodged against a man for rape after the woman admitted that she had made false allegations and sought unconditional apology from the court.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait took the unconventional decision of converting the petition, which was originally filed by the man seeking anticipatory bail to

that of quashing the FIR itself noting that "no useful purpose would be served in prosecuting petitioner [man] any further".

The court's order came after the woman, who was present during the video-conferencing hearing of the man's anticipatory plea, stated that due to misunderstanding, she made false allegations of rape, which culminated in the FIR.

The court was informed that they remained friends for two years and had consensual physical relations with each other.

However, they broke up in February, 2020 and the present FIR is registered on October 27. She said she does not want to pursue the case.

**Apex court says**  
The Supreme Court has in several judgments ruled that FIR should not be quashed in case of a heinous offence.

However, when the woman herself takes the initiative and states that "she made the complaint due to some misunderstanding and now wants to give quietus to the misunderstanding", which arose between her and the man, "in my considered opinion, in such cases, there will be no purpose in continuing with the trial," Justice Kait observed while quashing the FIR.

# SEASON'S GIFTINGS!

This Christmas, gift yourself a brand new Honda! Rush to your nearest dealership for details!



**CR-V**  
GUARANTEED VALUE BUYBACK @ 52% AFTER 3 YEARS\*



**CIVIC**  
BENEFITS UP TO ₹ 2 50 000\*



**AMAZE**  
BENEFITS UP TO ₹ 57 000\*



**ALL NEW CITY**  
BENEFITS UP TO ₹ 54 000\*



**NEW WR-V**  
BENEFITS UP TO ₹ 60 000\*



**NEW JAZZ**  
BENEFITS UP TO ₹ 60 000\*

Buy before Price Hike!!

Honda to increase vehicle prices from January the automaker, which is present in the country through a wholly-owned subsidiary Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL), sells a range of vehicles starting from compact sedan Amaze going up to premium SUV CR-V.

Source: www.indiatimes.com

Low interest rate of **7.10%**<sup>0</sup>

EMI starting from **₹1 427<sup>0</sup>** per lakh

Longest tenure up to **8 years<sup>0</sup>**

Exclusive benefits for Government Employees, Pensioners, Select Corporates, Doctors, Finance Professionals, Lawyers, Architects & Teachers. Select models available through GeM & CSD. T&C apply.

**Honda From Home** Book or Buy your Favourite Honda Car online at [www.hondacarindia.com](http://www.hondacarindia.com)

**Honda AutoTerrace**

**Honda ProCARE**  
CUSTOMER SERVICE



NORTH DELHI		COURTESY HONDA		CHERISH HONDA		COURTESY HONDA		AXON HONDA		SAMARA HONDA		EAST DELHI		PRIME HONDA		RING ROAD HONDA		CENTRAL DELHI		SAMARA HONDA		WEST DELHI	
Wazirpur 0120-4320000 8800933381, 9717993611	Noida 0120-4000400 7428390952	Rohini 8255008008	Oka	40710000 9717002327	Ghazipur 0120-2784002 9599293870	Vaishali 8657589053	Gurgaon, MG Road 0124-4688000 9643320215	Mathura Road 40726500 7428496151	Lajpat Nagar 4655111 8826143300	Patparganj 8657589054	Dilshad Garden 8657589056	Connaught Place 0124-6094000 9891474100	Patparganj 8657589054	Dilshad Garden 8657589056	Connught Place 0124-6094000 9891474100	Palwal 9467800902	Palwal 9467800912	Rewari 9222991310	Meerut 9756799902	Peeragarhi 9873477230	Moti Nagar 42597000 41990000	Hapur 9756799912 0122-2314201	
Faridabad 0120-4907007 7428390952	Ace Honda 0120-4000400 999673820/50	Noida 0120-4000400 8527995500	Crown Honda 0120-2784002 9599293870	Axon Honda 0120-2784002 9599293870	Prime Honda 0120-2784002 9599293870	Ring Road Honda 0124-4688000 9643320215	Gurgaon, Sector-18 0124-4688000 9891474100	Gurgaon 0124-4688000 9891474100	Gurgaon 0124-4688000 9891474100	Gurgaon 0124-4688000 9891474100	Gurgaon 0124-4688000 9891474100	Gurgaon 0124-4688000 9891474100	Gurgaon 0124-4688000 9891474100	Gurgaon 0124-4688000 9891474100	Palwal 7056000033	Pace Honda 9222991310	Rewari 9756799902	Platinum Honda 989777736	Platinum Honda 9756799912 0122-2314201				
Classic Honda 0120-4907007 7428390952	Ace Honda 0120-4000400 999673820/50	Noida 0120-4000400 8527995500	Crown																				

# Gehlot asks Centre to give free vaccine to all

'Announcement will remove misgivings about its availability'

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday urged the NDA government at the Centre to make an "explicit announcement" that the COVID-19 vaccine will be given free of cost to all the citizens.

The Centre's proclamation would remove misgivings about the vaccine's availability and price, and build confidence among the public, he said.

Mr. Gehlot said large sections of population in the country were unable to pay the price of the vaccine because of serious financial impact of the epidemic. "Each citizen should get free vaccine... Like all other vaccinations, this too should be universal and free," he said at a meeting held here to review the COVID-19 situation in the



Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot

said.

The Chief Minister called upon the people to celebrate New Year's eve at home and avoid bursting firecrackers and mass gatherings in view of the pandemic. He said the State government had decided to impose Diwali-like restrictions for the New Year and strictly implement the COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Supreme Court for all the States.

While asking the officials to make robust preparations for vaccination, Mr. Gehlot said the frontline warriors in the medical sector and essential services should get priority. With the micro-planning, the government would focus on making Rajasthan a model State in vaccine management on the lines of its effective COVID-19 management, he

# Prepare for midterm election in Bihar in 2021, says Tejashwi

RJD leader warns of stern action against 'saboteurs'

AMARNATH TEWARY  
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on Monday declared that there would be a midterm Assembly election in Bihar in 2021, and warned of stern action within the party at a review meeting.

"You all should be prepared for midterm Assembly election in the State in 2021. The party will also take stern action against those who damaged the prospects of the official RJD candidates contesting the recently concluded Assembly polls in the State," Mr. Yadav said while addressing party leaders in a review meeting at the RJD headquarters in Patna.

He also announced that the RJD would organise a "dhanyabad yatra" (Thanksgiving journey) after January 14 or Makar Sankranti, for those who voted for the par-



Tejashwi Yadav. FILE PHOTO

ty and made it the single largest party in the Assembly.

Mr. Yadav blamed sabotage from within or outside for the defeat of RJD candidates in the election. "We lost polls not due to rival candidates but because of bhittarghat (sabotage from within)," he said.

Though some party leaders have blamed alliance partner, the Congress, for its poor performance in the polls which prevented the mahagathbandhan (grand

alliance) from coming to power, Mr. Yadav refrained from attacking the Congress.

## Seeks suggestions

The RJD leader called for suggestions and advise in writing from the candidates to prepare the party for future.

Some party leaders like Ritup Jaiswal, who had contested from the Parihar constituency in Sitamarhi district, blamed the local administration for their defeat.

"I and over a dozen RJD candidates were defeated by the local administration. We were leading and winning the polls but at the last minute we were suddenly informed that we had been defeated," Ms. Jaiswal said.

A senior party leader and former State Minister, Abdul Bari Siddiqui, slammed the RJD's polling agents at booths for the defeat of candidates like him.

# First entry-exit point for visitors in Meghalaya

Facilitation centre opened by Dy. CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SHILLONG

vide the complete tour itinerary besides showing proof of confirmed booking (in hotel/guest house/homestay) for the first two nights at least, an official of the tourism department said.

"Governor Satya Pal Malik had okayed the setting up of the facilitation centre which will be functional from today," political department secretary C.V.D. Diengdoh said.

## e-invitation

If the tourist is staying as a guest of any family or friend in the State, then the individual will have to declare the full address and contact details of the family or friend and complete itinerary for an e-invite.

Once the process is completed, the visitors will receive the e-invite which will have to be shown at the entry checkpoint along with a COVID-19 negative certificate.

## OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

### DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

REMEMBRANCE	
3rd Anniversary 03-11-2020	22nd Anniversary 22-12-2020
Thiru. A. VADIVEL (Retired from Forest Dept) 15-09-1912 - 03-11-2017 Beloved Father and Mother "You are ever in our mind. Thoughts and Living in Our Heart" Sons: V.RAJAMANOHARAN & Brothers Daughters-in-law, Grand Sons & Grand Daughters Mobile: 94449 51564	Tmt. S. THANGAMMAL (Retired Teacher) 01-07-1914 - 22-12-1998

### DEATH

SAD DEMISE	
With profound regret we announce the demise of Smt. Jayalakshmi G. Krishnan on 18 December - 2020 Deeply mourned by G V Kumar (Son) and Prema Natrajan (Daughter) friends and family.	

In memory of your loved ones  
To dedicate a space in this section,  
Please contact:  
**011-43579797**  
from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. &  
For Placing Advertisements  
Online log on to  
[www.thehinduads.com](http://www.thehinduads.com)  
DONATE EYES-GIFT SIGHT  
Like us on: [facebook.com/WesternRly](https://facebook.com/WesternRly)

### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

(See Section 82 Cr. PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Sadab Ansari S/o Mumtaz Ayubi R/o C-36, Gali No. 2, Kabuttar Market, Welcome, Seelampur, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 248/2019 u/s 376 IPC PS: Darya Ganj, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrants of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Sadab Ansari could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Sadab Ansari has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person Sadab Ansari of FIR No. 248/2019 u/s 376 IPC, PS: Darya Ganj, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 05.02.2021.

By order  
Sh. Gaurav Sharma  
Metropolitan Magistrate (Central-05)  
Room No.241, 2nd Floor,  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi  
DP/561/CD/2020

### SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a boy namely Manoj Adhikari S/o Dilli Prasad, R/o Village: Burari, Post: Chandigarh, P.S. Chandigarh, has been missing from since dated 18.11.2020 from the jurisdiction of PS Vasant Kunj, North, New Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 42A, Dt.: 24.11.2020 has been lodged at PS, Vasant Kunj, North, New Delhi. The description of missing boy is as under:-

Name: Manoj Adhikari, Father's Name: Dilli Prasad, Age : 30 Years, Height : 5'5", Face : Long, Complexion : Wheatish, Built : Thin, Eyes : Black, Wearing : Red black Colour T-Shirt, Grey Colour pant.  
If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
e-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax : 011-24368639, 24368641  
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641  
DP/424/SW/2020

SHO  
P.S., Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi  
Ph. : 011-26123990, 26892530

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Yash S/o Jagdamba Parsad Pandey R/o H. No. C-298, , Gali No. 06, Brijpuri, Delhi Aged- 11 Years 9 Months 3 Days has been reported kidnapped since 15.12.2020 from his house vide FIR No. 663/20 u/s 363 IPC Dated 15.12.2020 has been registered at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Mind & feet abnormal, Wearing: Black coloured vest, blue coloured jeans, black coloured cap and khaki coloured shoes in feet.  
Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped boy, please inform SHO, Dayal Pur, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641  
Fax No. : 011-24368639  
Mob.: 8750870734  
DP/472/NE/2020

SHO  
P.S., Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi  
Ph. : 011-26123990, 26892530

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Yash S/o Jagdamba Parsad Pandey R/o H. No. C-298, , Gali No. 06, Brijpuri, Delhi Aged- 11 Years 9 Months 3 Days has been reported kidnapped since 15.12.2020 from his house vide FIR No. 663/20 u/s 363 IPC Dated 15.12.2020 has been registered at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Mind & feet abnormal, Wearing: Black coloured vest, blue coloured jeans, black coloured cap and khaki coloured shoes in feet.  
Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped boy, please inform SHO, Dayal Pur, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641  
Fax No. : 011-24368639  
Mob.: 8750870734  
DP/472/NE/2020

SHO  
P.S., Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi  
Ph. : 011-26123990, 26892530

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Yash S/o Jagdamba Parsad Pandey R/o H. No. C-298, , Gali No. 06, Brijpuri, Delhi Aged- 11 Years 9 Months 3 Days has been reported kidnapped since 15.12.2020 from his house vide FIR No. 663/20 u/s 363 IPC Dated 15.12.2020 has been registered at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Mind & feet abnormal, Wearing: Black coloured vest, blue coloured jeans, black coloured cap and khaki coloured shoes in feet.  
Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped boy, please inform SHO, Dayal Pur, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641  
Fax No. : 011-24368639  
Mob.: 8750870734  
DP/472/NE/2020

SHO  
P.S., Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi  
Ph. : 011-26123990, 26892530

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Yash S/o Jagdamba Parsad Pandey R/o H. No. C-298, , Gali No. 06, Brijpuri, Delhi Aged- 11 Years 9 Months 3 Days has been reported kidnapped since 15.12.2020 from his house vide FIR No. 663/20 u/s 363 IPC Dated 15.12.2020 has been registered at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Mind & feet abnormal, Wearing: Black coloured vest, blue coloured jeans, black coloured cap and khaki coloured shoes in feet.  
Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped boy, please inform SHO, Dayal Pur, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641  
Fax No. : 011-24368639  
Mob.: 8750870734  
DP/472/NE/2020

SHO  
P.S., Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi  
Ph. : 011-26123990, 26892530

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Yash S/o Jagdamba Parsad Pandey R/o H. No. C-298, , Gali No. 06, Brijpuri, Delhi Aged- 11 Years 9 Months 3 Days has been reported kidnapped since 15.12.2020 from his house vide FIR No. 663/20 u/s 363 IPC Dated 15.12.2020 has been registered at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Mind & feet abnormal, Wearing: Black coloured vest, blue coloured jeans, black coloured cap and khaki coloured shoes in feet.  
Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped boy, please inform SHO, Dayal Pur, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641  
Fax No. : 011-24368639  
Mob.: 8750870734  
DP/472/NE/2020

SHO  
P.S., Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi  
Ph. : 011-26123990, 26892530

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Yash S/o Jagdamba Parsad Pandey R/o H. No. C-298, , Gali No. 06, Brijpuri, Delhi Aged- 11 Years 9 Months 3 Days has been reported kidnapped since 15.12.2020 from his house vide FIR No. 663/20 u/s 363 IPC Dated 15.12.2020 has been registered at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Mind & feet abnormal, Wearing: Black coloured vest, blue coloured jeans, black coloured cap and khaki coloured shoes in feet.  
Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped boy, please inform SHO, Dayal Pur, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641  
Fax No. : 011-24368639  
Mob.: 8750870734  
DP/472/NE/2020

SHO  
P.S., Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi  
Ph. : 011-26123990, 26892530

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Yash S/o Jagdamba Parsad Pandey R/o H. No. C-298, , Gali No. 06, Brijpuri, Delhi Aged- 11 Years 9 Months 3 Days has been reported kidnapped since 15.12.2020 from his house vide FIR No. 663/20 u/s 363 IPC Dated 15.12.2020 has been registered at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Mind & feet abnormal, Wearing: Black coloured vest, blue coloured jeans, black coloured cap and khaki coloured shoes in feet.  
Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped boy, please inform SHO, Dayal Pur, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Sd/-  
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641  
Fax No. : 011-24368639  
Mob.: 8750870734  
DP/472/NE/2020

SHO  
P.S., Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi  
Ph. : 011-26123990, 26892530

General Public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo) namely Yash S/o Jagdamba Parsad Pandey R/o H. No. C-298, , Gali No. 06, Brijpuri, Delhi Aged- 11 Years 9 Months 3 Days has been reported kidnapped since 15.12.2020 from his house vide FIR No. 663/20 u/s 363 IPC Dated 15.12.2020 has been registered at Police Station Dayal Pur, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-

Complexion: Fair, Height: 4'0", Face: Round, Built: Thin, ID: Mind & feet abnormal, Wearing: Black coloured vest, blue coloured jeans, black coloured cap and khaki coloured shoes in feet.  
Any person having any information/Clue about this kidnapped boy, please inform SHO, Dayal Pur, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Cold wave to severe cold wave conditions very likely at isolated places over east and west Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Kutch region, Telangana, east Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Gangetic West Bengal

**CITY** RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agartala	.....	25.3	-3	Kozhikode	.....	34.2	21.6
Ahmedabad	-	28.0	13.8	Kurnool	.....	30.0	17.0
Aizawl	-	22.0	9.1	Lucknow	.....	21.5	4.4
Allahabad	-	23.0	7.4	Madurai	.....	29.0	20.1
Bengaluru	-	25.2	13.4	Mangaluru	.....	35.0	19.9
Bhopal	-	25.0	7.1	Mumbai	.....	32.0	21.4
Bhubaneswar	-	27.0	12.3	Mysuru	.....	30.5	19.4
Chandigarh	-	21.0	6.2	New Delhi	.....	22.0	5.5
Chennai	-	30.0	21.1	Patna	.....	20.0	8.2
Coimbatore	-	30.0	18.5	Poil Blair	0.8	30.7	26.0
Dehradun	-	19.5	5.2	Puducherry	.....	29.0	19.2
Gangtok	-	15.2	5.9	Pune	.....	28.5	11.8
Goa	-	33.0	19.8	Raipur	.....	26.5	6.5
Guwahati	-	23.0	9.9	Ranchi	.....	22.4	7.2
Hubballi	-	28.0	17.0	Shillong	.....	19.1	6.9
Hyderabad	-	28.7	11.1	Shimla	.....	18.0	9.2
Imphal	-	22.0	3.2	Srinagar	.....	8.2	3.7
Jaipur	-	25.0	7.6	Thiruvananthapuram	.....	31.0	23.5
Kochi	-	32.6	22.4	Tiruchi	.....	31.0	19.6
Kohima	-	18.0	5.9	Vijayawada	.....	29.0	16.5
Kolkata	-	22.5	11.4	Visakhapatnam	.....	28.0	18.0

(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	.69	.56	.88	.121	00
Bengaluru	.4	.31	.24	.144	.106	00
Chennai	.7	.7	.34	.114	—	—
Delhi	27	123	105	.395	.308	00
Hyderabad	19	.27	.14	.114	.108	00
Kolkata	24	.31	.67	.365	.267	00
Lucknow	.3	.51	.40	.414	.367	00
Mumbai	23	.64	—	.319	—	00
Pune	—	.60	—	.129	.106	00
Visakhapatnam	16	.20	.58	.217	.210	00

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh showed an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 426, indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 22.

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

# Nashik farmers to join, support 'brothers from Punjab, Haryana'

This is the first step to consolidate anger against anti-people policies of Centre'

ALOK DESHPANDE  
NASHIK

Three years after a historic long march by thousands of farmers from Nashik to Mumbai, they gathered in the city again to embark on yet another journey, this time to Delhi.

Thousands of farmers from across Maharashtra gathered at Nashik's Golf Club on Monday under the leadership of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) and set off for Delhi to join and support farmers of Punjab and Haryana.

"Last time we walked to Mumbai, raised our demands and won the battle. We are now heading to Delhi to join our brothers from Punjab and Haryana. We are not going to come back without winning this battle," said Santosh Kamdi from Palghar district.



**Capital calling:** Farmers gather at Nashik Golf Club grounds on Monday before starting for Delhi. ■ ALOK DESHPANDE

Launching an attack against the Narendra Modi-led Central government and alleging that he was working for big corporates by bringing in farm laws, the farmers also burned posters of industrialists. The farmers, travelling in over 100 vehicles, will first go to Dhule and hold corner meetings at every town before entering Maharashtra.

"We are marching for our rightful demands. We stand in support of our protesting farmer brothers," said K.K. Rajesh, CPI(M) MP from Kerala.

Hirabai Gavit, from Surgana in Nashik district, said she wants the Modi government to not act with arrogance. "When so many farmers are saying that the laws are not good, then he should listen.

Only farmers would know what is good for farmers," she said.

Farmers and agriculture labourers from Palghar, Nashik, Ahmednagar, Buldhana, Parbhani and other districts joined the march from their home towns. "We are farmers who work hard in summer, monsoon and winter. I don't think Delhi winter will dampen our spirits," said Ashok Yadav from Karad, in western Maharashtra.

Dr. Ajit Nawale, head of State unit of AIKS, said this march is a first step to consolidate anger against corporate-friendly and anti-people policies of the Union government.

"The people of Maharashtra are known to not bow in front of Delhi. We will not let the Centre destroy the lives of farmers and future of our country," he said.

## Varavara Rao to stay at Nanavati till Jan. 7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI



Varavara Rao

seeking release on medical grounds, till January 7.

The Bench directed the Maharashtra government to submit a fresh medical report detailing Mr. Rao's health condition on the next date of hearing.

Mr. Rao's lawyer, Anand Grover, also informed the court that the activist's health condition was improv-

ing. Mr. Grover told the court that Mr. Rao was still being monitored by the hospital staff as his blood pressure continued to fluctuate and he was giddy most of the time.

On the instructions from Mr. Rao's daughter, Mr. Grover also told the HC that Mr. Rao's family was "satisfied" with the treatment being provided to him at Nanavati Hospital. While the State government and the National Investigation Agency urged the court to transfer Mr. Rao from Nanavati Hospital to the Taloja prison hospital, or the State-run JJ Hospital, the Bench said it could not do so without going through his present medical report.

**Delhi Weather** max min  
Delhi City 24 06  
Safdarjang 24 06  
Palam 21 09

**Delhi Palam Today**  
22°C Rise in temperatures marginally. Shallow to Moderate fog in morning and mainly sunny day. Pollution level may turn severe.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
22°C Moderate fog during morning and pleasant sunny day. Pollution level would remain severe.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019  
All rights reserved.

**TO ADVERTISE  
PLEASE CONTACT**

**Mr. N SELVA KUMAR**

**PH: 9820350726**

**selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in**

**THE HINDU**

India's National Newspaper

**READ  
SPORTSTAR  
EVERY  
FORTNIGHT**



THE HINDU GROUP

## A GREETING TO REMEMBER



Be it a birthday, an anniversary, an academic accomplishment or even a promotion. Now you can surprise your loved ones by wishing them on

## CLASSIFIEDS

For more details, email: [classifiedscustomercare@thehindu.co.in](mailto:classifiedscustomercare@thehindu.co.in)  
Contact Toll Free Number: 180030700404  
For Placing Advertisements Online, Log on to [www.thehinduads.com](http://www.thehinduads.com)

THE HINDU  
LIFE MADE SIMPLE

Government of India Department of Atomic Energy Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration & Research No.1-10-153-156, AMD Complex, Begumpet, Hyd-500016			
CORRIGENDUM-I			
Dated: 16.12.2020			
Ref: 1) NIT No. AMD/CD/NR/CORE/2019-20/T-182-183, DATE: 17.11.2020 2) Tender No. AMD/CD/NR/ANJG-(E)/CORE/2019-20/T-183			
<b>Name of Work:</b> 10,000 metre core drilling in Anjngira East area, Sonbhadra District, Uttar Pradesh This is in continuation of above referred NIT published in News Paper on 27-11-2020, please note the following changes. Detailed Tender Notice along with other documents are available on website: <a href="http://www.tenderwizard.com/DAE">www.tenderwizard.com/DAE</a> .			
Sl. No.	Activity	Date and time originally given in NIT	Revised Date and time
1.	Dates of availability of Tender Documents for download (pdf and excel files)	From 27-11-2020 (11.00 hrs) to 10-12-2020 (15.00 hrs) website on <a href="http://www.tenderwizard.com/DAE">www.tenderwizard.com/DAE</a>	From 27-11-2020 (11.00 hrs) to 27-12-2020 (15.00 hrs) website on <a href="http://www.tenderwizard.com/DAE">www.tenderwizard.com/DAE</a>
2.	Period of site visit	From 27-11-2020 (11.30 hrs) to 10-12-2020 (15.00 hrs)	From 27-11-2020 (11.30 hrs) to 27-12-2020 (15.00 hrs)
3.	Last date and time of closing of online submission of tenders	16-12-2020 at 17.00 hrs	31-12-2020 at 17.00 hrs
4.	Last date and time for submission of original DD/FD/BG/BC towards EMD	On or before 23-12-2020 (13.00 hrs) in the office of Incharge, Contract Drilling Group, AMD, Hyderabad	On or before 07-01-2021 (13.00 hrs) in the office of Incharge, Contract Drilling Group, AMD, Hyderabad
5.	Date and time of online opening of technical bid	24-12-2020 at 15:30 hrs in the office of I/C CDG, AMD, Complex, Begumpet, Hyderabad.	08-01-2021 at 15:30 hrs in the office of I/C CDG, AMD, Complex, Begumpet, Hyderabad.
6.	Date of opening of Commercial bids of qualified bidders	Will be notified at a later date	Will be notified at a later date

**Note:** All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

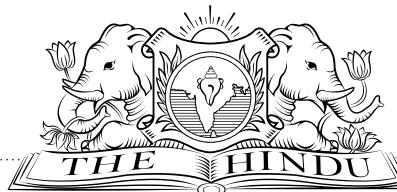
U.P. police declare bounty for accused under new law

Six persons arrested in the case so far

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

The police in Etah district of western Uttar Pradesh on Monday declared a bounty of ₹25,000 each on five persons accused under the new ordinance, according to information



## Nepal in turmoil

K.P. Oli put his greed for power over the interests of democracy and political stability

**N**epal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's recommendation to dissolve Parliament, which has been duly approved by President Bidya Devi Bhandari, has pushed the young democracy into an unprecedented constitutional crisis and political turmoil. Mr. Oli, whose Nepal Communist Party with a near two-thirds majority in Parliament, took the drastic step as he came under increasing pressure from his own party to withdraw an ordinance his government issued last week. Both the opposition and other leaders within the ruling party alleged that the ordinance to amend the Constitutional Council Act would undermine the checks and balances in the system and empower the Prime Minister in making crucial appointments. Mr. Oli had reportedly agreed to withdraw the ordinance in a party meeting. But on Sunday, his Cabinet made the unexpected move to recommend a dissolution of Parliament. Elections will now be held in April-May 2021, a year ahead of schedule. Constitutional experts have challenged the legality of Mr. Oli's decision. Nepal's 2015 Constitution allows the dissolution of the House before its five-year term ends only if there is a hung assembly and no party manages to form a government. Since the President has cleared his recommendation, the issue will now be decided by the Supreme Court.

When Mr. Oli's Communist Party of Nepal (UML) and its alliance partners came to power in 2017 with a huge majority, many hoped that it would be a new beginning. Nepal was in a painful transition from a monarchy to a republican democracy. In less than a year, the CPN-UML and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre), led by former Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal, merged to form the country's largest communist force, the NCP. It was a historic opportunity for the NCP, especially for Mr. Oli, to steer the fledgling democracy out of its many crises. But the merger did not dissolve the fundamental differences between the NCP's two factions. Mr. Oli's authoritarian impulses and refusal to share power with the Maoist faction made matters worse. In recent months, there were calls from within the NCP for Mr. Oli to step down. When the party asked him to withdraw the amendment, it was clear that he had lost internal support. But instead of following the party line, Mr. Oli decided to sink his government. Given the seriousness of the crisis, a split cannot be ruled out. And if that happens, Nepal would be pushed back to political instability, at a time of multiple challenges, from a slowing economy to the coronavirus crisis. Mr. Oli could have gone down in history as a statesman. Instead, he has cut a sorry figure as Prime Minister, and his obsession with power risks unravelling the party he co-founded.

## Virus variant

Increased transmissibility is one more reason to follow non-pharmaceutical interventions

**W**ith nearly a dozen countries in Europe and elsewhere temporarily banning travel from the U.K. after a new variant of the novel coronavirus was found to be causing an increased number of new cases there, India too has followed suit – flights, with some exceptions, have been temporarily suspended from Tuesday night till December 31. On Saturday, the U.K. imposed strict restrictions in greater London and much of southeast England. The variant – VUI-202012/01 (the first 'variant under investigation' in December 2020) – has 23 mutations in all. Though a few of these are seen in the region of the virus that binds to the human receptor, a single mutation – N501Y – has been found to increase the binding affinity, making the variant more transmissible. On December 20, the COVID-19 Genomics UK Consortium, which identified the variant on September 20, said the variant has been "growing in frequency" since November 2020 and is "responsible for an increasing proportion of SARS-CoV-2 cases in the UK". Based on modelling, it has been found to be 70% more transmissible but this is yet to be confirmed in lab experiments. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control says that in a preliminary study, the variant has the potential to increase by over 0.4 the number of people a person can infect. There is no evidence as yet that it can cause any change in disease severity or increase the risk of reinfection.

Though the N501Y and other mutations are found in the spike protein region of the virus, it is unlikely that the mutations would make the two COVID vaccines that have secured emergency use approval and the ones in final stages of testing less effective. This is because vaccines produce antibodies against many regions of the spike protein, and there is also the T-cell immunity that would come into play to clear the virus. However, as the virus accumulates more mutations, there is a possibility that vaccines might require minor tweaking. The emergence of the new variant underlines the compulsion to undertake surveillance following vaccination to track vaccine effectiveness and to look for the appearance of vaccine-escape mutants. SARS-CoV-2 being an RNA virus tends to have a higher mutation rate, but the presence of 23 mutations strongly suggests that the variant has not emerged through gradual accumulation of mutations. According to COG-UK, it is probably due to prolonged infection in a single patient, potentially with reduced immunocompetence. While a few cases caused by the new variant have been reported, the extent of international spread is unknown. Since far fewer SARS-CoV-2 genomes are sequenced at regular intervals in India, it is unclear if the variant is already present here. The emergence of the new variant with increased transmissibility is one more reason why non-pharmaceutical interventions should be strictly adhered to.

# Tamil Nadu politics after the matriarch, patriarch

The State's political future depends crucially on how parties engage changing social forces, with the DMK better placed



NARENDRA SUBRAMANIAN

**T**he elections to the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly next year will be the first since the passing of the State's dominant political leaders of the past three decades – J.Jayalalithaa who led the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) from 1989 to 2016, and M.Karunanidhi who led the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) from 1969 to 2018. Their passing potentially changes the political terrain. The AIADMK's support, which depended crucially on charisma under the leadership of both M.G.Ramachandran and Jayalalithaa, is less sustainable as no credible successor has emerged. By contrast, the DMK's support depended mainly on its ethnic and populist orientations rather than the perceived qualities of its leaders. Moreover, Karunanidhi groomed his son, M.K. Stalin as his successor over three decades. This makes the DMK's prospects much brighter than the AIADMK's in the forthcoming elections and over the coming decade.

### Electoral developments

The results of the 2019 parliamentary elections and Assembly by-elections held since Jayalalithaa's passing underline the DMK's status as the electoral favourite. The United Progressive Alliance led by the DMK won 38 of the State's 39 seats and 54.4% of the vote in the parliamentary elections, in contrast with the tally of the National Democratic Alliance led by the AIADMK of merely one seat and 30.7% of the vote (<https://bit.ly/37Dfswb>). In the Assembly by-elections since Jayalalithaa's passing, the DMK won 13 seats, the AIADMK nine, and the AIAMK one. The gap was much lower in the seats won by the Dravidian parties and their alliances in the civic bo-

dy elections in December last year: District Panchayat Chairs: AIADMK: 13 (NDA: 14), DMK, UPA: 12; District Panchayat Councillors: AIADMK: 214 (NDA: 242), DMK: 243 (UPA: 267); Panchayat Union Chairs: AIADMK: 140 (NDA: 150), DMK: 125 (UPA: 133); Panchayat Union Councillors: AIADMK: 1,797 (NDA: 2,216), DMK: 2,110 (UPA: 2,365). The Assembly by-elections best indicate likely voter inclinations in the forthcoming elections. The DMK's advantage in them is the more significant as the AIADMK was the incumbent in 22 of these 23 constituencies, the two alliances have not changed their main constituents since, and the NDA outpolled the UPA by a mere 1.0% (40.9% to 39.9%) even in the last Assembly elections of 2016 involving Jayalalithaa.

### Dravidianist impact

The political future depends crucially on how parties engage changing social forces. To understand this, I outline how the Dravidian parties shaped party competition, civic life, and socio-economic policy in Tamil Nadu through their over half-century of rule.

Among Asia's most durable ethnic movements, the Dravidian movement initially claimed to represent non-Brahmin South Indians, primarily Tamil-speakers. The DMK's leaders were born in underprivileged middle- and lower-middle-caste families – C.N.Anandurai, a Sengunthar (weaving caste) from a weaver-temple servant family, and Karunanidhi, an Isai Vellalar (musician-dancer-temple servant caste) from a middling farmer family. The Dravidar Kazhagam linked Dravidian identity mainly to the middle castes and the DMK with those primarily communicating in Tamil. The AIADMK associated itself closely with the lower strata and women and asserted Tamil politico-cultural specificity, while underemphasising ancestry and having leaders beyond the movement's early ethnic visions; both MGR and Jayalalithaa belonged to upper castes, and MGR was a Malayalam-speak-



er. The Dravidian parties were also populist, distinguishing the popular community from elites based on caste, language, dialect and occupation. This helped them attract various plebeian groups, increase voter participation, and marginalise Indian nationalist parties far more than in other big States. They changed status relations and public culture much more than income and property distribution.

The DMK built bridges with Brahmins, non-South Indians, and Indian nationalism by abandoning secession and opposing caste inequalities rather than Brahmins. It forsook anti-Malayali nativism which failed to contain early AIADMK growth. As Dravidianism did not seriously sharpen ethnic antagonisms, the AIADMK was the most popular party for the better part of the past five decades despite its leaders' ancestry.

### Reservation, welfare

Tamil Nadu has the highest educational and job reservations (69%), which helped the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) more than Dalits and Adivasis. The Dravidian parties raised the OBC quota from 25% to 50%, but also extended it to a further 27% of the population, including many better-off castes. By comparison, they raised the Scheduled Caste-Scheduled Tribe quota by less than a fifth, from 16% to 19%, below these groups' population share of 21%. However, the introduction of a 1% ST tier and a 3% Arunthathiyar tier helped some lowest-status groups, and the two 10% tiers created for Most Backward Classes and denotified communities aided worse-off OBCs.

Some Dravidianist welfare and development policies had more poorer beneficiaries even after the national and State governments embraced neoliberal reform. The mid-day meal scheme, later adopted nationally, particularly improved nutrition, health and education among the poorest. Along with high educational spending, it propelled primary school enrolment to the third highest level in India. High investments in primary health and widely distributed subsidised food grains, homestead land and housing, the rural employment programme, and women's self-help groups extensively benefited the underprivileged.

The Dravidian parties, however, distributed productive assets mainly to the upwardly mobile. Land ownership and tenurial reforms, and generous agrarian subsidies primarily aided middle-caste tenant farmers, not Dalits and Adivasis. Being closely associated with the middle castes, the Dravidianists did not impede anti-Dalit violence particularly in the southern and western plains. Mobility among middling and lower-middle strata, somewhat egalitarian welfare policies, and an emphasis on language policy gained the Dravidian parties more widespread and durable support than what other Indian caste-focused and language-based parties secured.

### Hindu nationalism

Hindu nationalist parties have been weakest in Tamil Nadu, polling 3.2% at best in Assembly elections. This was because the DMK promoted non-Hindutvavadi norms – Tamil specificity based in middle-caste cultures, rather than Hindu homogeneity based on Sanskritic upper-caste norms – and built cooperative links between OBC Hindus and Muslims. Such networks impeded Hindutva growth and inter-religious violence, which were most limited in DMK strongholds in northern and central Tamil Nadu. As AIADMK leaders more readily accepted Hindu supremacism, Hindu nationalists gained more support

and promoted more violence in AIADMK strongholds in the south and west.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) capitalised on the decline of more established parties through the past two decades in West Bengal, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Assam. In Tamil Nadu, closer party-society engagement limited the space for new political forces more. The erosion of AIADMK support over the past four years has however increased opportunities for the BJP's growth especially in the south and west, where Hindutva social organisations have grown since the 1980s. The BJP's advances are likely to be more limited in the north and centre, where the DMK has retained more support and shaped popular sentiment in ways that still constrain inter-religious antagonisms somewhat.

### Other parties, civil society

The Dravidian parties retreated from mobilising society from the late 1980s, while retaining a slightly diminished electoral dominance. Civil society mobilisation, which transcended Dravidianist visions especially thenceforth, is likely to do so even more hereafter. Many caste associations pressed to change caste policies and other associations opposed certain neo-liberal policies. Some of these initiatives led to the emergence of new parties that mobilised certain MBCs (Vanniyar), de-notified communities (Mukkulathor), OBCs (Kongu Velalar), and Dalits (Parayar, Pallar, Arunthathiyar), but polled no more than 8.4% of the vote although they influenced popular aspirations more. Other new parties, notably the Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) gained support across caste boundaries, but did not poll over 8.4%. The AIADMK's recent decline creates room for the growth of more such multi-ethnic and ethnic parties and movements.

Narendra Subramanian is Professor of Political Science, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

## Key steps to get this spectrum auction right

The government must avoid the 2016 situation, of a swathe of unsold spectrum block; reserve prices must be revisited



S. SRIDHAR & ROHIT PRASAD

**T**he Union Cabinet has cleared the much-awaited auction of radio spectrum in various bands for commercial mobile services. Following this decision of December 16, the auction that will use the well-proven methodology of Simultaneous Multiple Round Ascending (SMRA) Auction will be the seventh of its type and is being held four years after the last one.

Based on the recommendation of the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the government is planning to auction spectrum in the sub GHz bands of 700, 800 and 900 MHz along with mid-band frequencies in bands of 1800, 2100, 2300, and 2500 MHz across the 22 Licensed Service Areas (LSAs) of the country. The total spectrum to be auctioned is about 2,251 MHz, compared to about 2,355 MHz put on the block in 2016. The cumulative reserve price – and hence the potential revenue accrual to the government at reserve prices – is about \$50 billion. Total reserve price of spectrum put on auction in 2016 was about \$90 billion while the realised value was just about one-tenth of that, with none of the 700 MHz spectrum band being sold.

Hence, while the 2016 auction could be considered as a failure from the auctioneer's point of view, will this auction scheduled in March 2021 be successful? There are a number of factors that determine the success of spectrum auction. First is the reserve price. Our research on a cross-country spectrum database shows that the reserve price significantly and positively correlated to the winning bid price. However, a higher reserve price also inhibits bidders from bidding for more spectrum blocks, resulting in lower amounts of spectrum sold. If the quantity effect is more than the price effect, then it results in reduced revenues for the government exchequer, as it happened in 2016.

**Factor of VoIP subscribers**  
Second, the willingness to pay by the telcos depends on their position vis-à-vis Over The Top (OTT) providers who are providing substitute goods such as Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP), and capturing a greater mind share of customers while remaining relatively invisible to government regulators. Our research indicates that the rise of VoIP subscribers could have a positive effect on winning bid prices. However, the erosion of the position of telcos vis-à-vis OTTs in the context of their relationship in the overall digital value network of devices, connectivity and apps, could result in a lower willingness to pay.

Third, is the allocation of unli-

censed spectrum for Wi-Fi. By off-loading mobile data, Wi-Fi supplements the carrier network and reduces the demand for mobile network capacity. A number of countries including the United States have unlicensed the V-band spectrum in 60 GHz – pencil beam band. Referred to as "wireless fibre", the 60 GHz spectrum provides huge capacities in a limited area, ideally to be used for Wi-Fi and fixed wireless access. Wi-Fi 6 (a.k.a. IEEE 802.11 ax) that operates in the 2.4/5 GHz unlicensed band requires additional unlicensed spectrum allocation to provide Gigabit speeds. The more the unlicensed spectrum allocation, the lower will be the demand for licensed spectrum.

**Spectrum visibility**  
Fourth, is the visibility of spectrum that will be up for auction, henceforth. While there is an indication by the government that the spectrum for 5G auction, namely 3.4-3.6 GHz, will be held in late 2021, the amount of spectrum that will be made available is not clear. There is still uncertainty about the

release of 26 GHz by the Department of Space for mobile services. With this limited visibility, the bidders will be in a quandary whether to acquire the spectrum now, or wait for subsequent auctions. Further, some part of the current spectrum holding of all the operators is coming up for renewal in mid-2021, and hence there is additional pressure on them to retain them in the forthcoming auction.

The reserve prices of different bands for the forthcoming auction as recommended by TRAI indicate that the average price per MHz per population (a common metric used for comparing spectrum prices) is around \$3 for sub-GHz band and \$1.70 for mid-band. These are comparable to only some of the higher winning bid prices in other countries.

### The right price

Hence a word of caution. Higher reserve prices, though they increase spectrum prices, may leave again a swathe of spectrum blocks unsold as in the 2016 auction. This will indicate a failure of the auction. Spectrum is a perishable scarce resource. If it cannot be used, then its value is lost. When the whole country is adopting a new norm for Work from Home due to the COVID-19 crisis, it is important for the government to ensure that the spectrum put on the block is sold successfully. Hence, we recommend the following before the auction begins:

A re-visit of reserve prices and lower it further, especially that

700 MHz (even though it was re-estimated to be lower by TRAI) which is the "golden band" for covering the hinterlands of the country;

Releasing more unlicensed spectrum in 2.4/5/60 GHz for proliferating Wi-Fi as a suitable complement to [the] carrier network; this will also augment the deployments of the Public Wi-Fi project which the cabinet approved recently;

Provide visibility of future auctions, especially the quantum of spectrum that can be put on the block in 3.3/3.6/26/28 GHz;

Now that OTT firms have been brought under regulation under the ambit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the government should release guidelines on how they will be regulated and what will be regulated so that the telcos and OTTs can join hands to provide superior services for the benefit of the consumers.

Paul R. Milgrom and Robert B. Wilson, the Nobel Laureates this year in Economic Sciences pioneered the SMRA (partly with Preston McAfee) as a proven methodology for successful auctions. However, the methodology alone cannot guarantee a successful auction without the accompanying features mentioned above.

V. Sridhar is Professor at IIIT Bangalore. Rohit Prasad is Professor at Management Development Institute. The writers acknowledge the research support by dot.econ and the IIM Ahmedabad Telecom Centre of Excellence for their work

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### The Bengal fight

The Trinamool Congress has to blame itself for losing its leaders, walking into the trap of BJP's predatory politics. That influential TMC leaders have joined the BJP shows how ill-equipped the TMC is to handle and address internal dissent and how centralised power in the party is. The crisis in the TMC is not unique. It stems from a structural flaw, common to a lot of regional parties that revolve around one leader or a family and where allegiance to the leader was

the glue that held the party together. Mamata Banerjee is a political fighter and cannot be underestimated, but the TMC has every reason to be concerned about 2021.

YASH PAL RALHAN,  
Jalandhar, Punjab

■ The 'resignation strategy' seems to have kicked in to ensure a successful strategy. This trend is likely to continue in future too given the BJP's efforts to extend its footprint. The lasting damage that such utterly immoral and undemocratic

practices can do to our democracy needs no elaboration. If there is one constitutional amendment this country needs immediately, it is one which will put an end to the practice of MLAs and MPs resigning their seats in order to circumvent the provisions of the existing anti-defection law. One does not expect the NDA government to bring in a legislation to this effect on their own as it would mean forgoing an important tool in the BJP's expansionist strategy. Therefore, it is high time the Opposition and the

public became alive to the implications of the 'resignation strategy' and bring pressure on the government to bring in the necessary legislation.

G.G. MENON,  
Tripunithura, Kerala

■ Defection is not alien to Indian politicians. Nor do they have a fixed ideology for them and they are ready to sacrifice their self-respect for the sake of 'position and power'. The way the BJP is trying to devout State after State using mysterious methods is a matter of

concern. The concept of 'oneness' in everything, could lead to dictatorship. T. ANAND RAJ, Chennai

CLEAR MESSAGE

It is good that Apple has sent

a message to Wistron about setting things right ("Apple

# The greatness of Srinivasa Ramanujan

His works were diverse, original and transcended time; and all this while he surmounted many odds



VARAHASIMHAN

*"In small proportions we just beauties see; And in short measures life may perfect be". "The Noble Nature", Ben Jonson*

In April 1984, when he read the letter thanking him for contributing to a bronze bust in memory of the mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, Takashi Ono was moved to tears. The letter was from Janaki Ammal, Ramanujan's wife. From first hearing about Ramanujan in Tokyo in 1955 from the mathematician Andre Weil and having Ramanujan as an inspiration and then to being one of the few mathematicians in the world to fulfil the wish of Janaki Ammal that a statue of her husband be made, life had come a full circle for Takashi.

There was one more connection that Takashi had with Ramanujan: Takashi's son Ken Ono made key contributions to 'mock theta functions' in early 2000s, a topic that Ramanujan had worked on in the last few months before his death in April 1920. In the mathematical community, it was no surprise that Ramanujan's work was being expanded actively eight decades after his demise: many of Ramanujan's findings anticipated research areas by many years.

#### Research at a feverish pitch

Ramanujan, born on December 22, 1887 was an autodidact who specialised in pure mathematics. While he excelled in mathematics, he neglected other subjects and could not complete his pre-university course. By 1908 he gave up studies, but not his research in mathematics. He struggled in poverty until in 1910, a benefactor, Ramachandra Rao, district collector of Nellore, provided him monthly allowance from his own pocket so that Ramanujan could pursue research. This would continue for a couple of years until Ramanujan managed to become a clerk at Madras Port Trust. He initiated contact with the British mathematician G.H. Hardy under whose insistence Ramanujan travelled to England in early 1914. His partnering with Hardy was productive: Ramanujan published



THE HINDU ARCHIVES

more than 20 research papers between 1914 and 1919. During his stay, he was awarded a doctorate and made Fellow of Royal Society. When he returned to India in 1919, he was "...with a scientific standing and reputation such as no Indian has enjoyed before". Unfortunately he lived only a year after his return succumbing to illness which was diagnosed then as tuberculosis but now revised as hepatic amoebiasis. However, in that one year, he continued his research at a feverish pitch.

Until he left for England in 1914, Ramanujan recorded his mathematical results, mostly equations, in his notebooks. There were three such notebooks (preserved now). One more was added when Ramanujan returned to India. Together there were about 4,000 results. The results were the culmination of research backed by deep intuition and insights. However, Ramanujan did not record proofs of his results: that work would be taken up by future generations of mathematicians.

Ramanujan's work was in number theory, infinite series, analysis (theoretical underpinnings of calculus) and a few other areas in pure mathematics. Specifically, as G.H. Hardy wrote, these subjects were "...the applications of elliptic functions to the theory of numbers, the theory of continued fractions and... the theory of partitions".

A few significant contributions were multiple formulae to calculate pi with great accuracy to billions of digits ( $\pi/7$  is only an approximation to pi), partition functions (a partition is a way to represent a positive integer – for example,  $1+1+1$  is a partition of 3,  $1+3$  is another partition of 4, and so on), modular forms and hypergeometric series (the terms in every consecutive pair in the series form ra-

tional functions).

The importance of many of his works became apparent much later. One such was 'Ramanujan conjecture' which he published in 1916 and was proved in 1973 by Pierre Deligne. The conjecture inspired the development of theory of Galois representation that was employed in Andrew Wiles' proof of Fermat's last theorem published in 1995. In recent years, Ramanujan's works and their extensions have found applications in signal processing to identify periodic information, akin to Fourier analysis. Mock theta functions have found applications in the study of black holes in astrophysics.

But to look for applications of his works is exactly how not to appreciate Ramanujan. As G.N. Watson, a contemporary mathematician of Ramanujan in Cambridge said, "The study of Ramanujan's works gives me a thrill which is indistinguishable from the thrill which I feel... when I see before me the... beauty of the four statues... which Michelangelo has set over the tombs of Giuliano de Medici and Lorenzo de Medici". For Ramanujan, mathematics was art.

Robert Kanigel, the celebrated biographer of Ramanujan, noted: "People will try to explain it in an easy way but I think they are unjustified in doing it. I think some people really are a few steps beyond where the rest of us live. We are forced to view those intellects, those artistic sensibilities, as a little bit mysterious or a little beyond what is the common realm." For Ramanujan, his mathematics was an end in itself. In this he thought like G.H. Hardy who claimed in *A Mathematician's Apology*, "A mathematician, like a painter or a poet, is a maker of patterns... The 'seriousness' of a mathematical theorem lies, not in its practical conse-

quences, which are usually negligible, but in the significance of the mathematical ideas which it connects. We may say, roughly, that a mathematical idea is 'significant' if it can be connected, in a natural and illuminating way, with a large complex of other mathematical ideas."

How did Ramanujan develop his mathematical abilities? Here again we have to look to G.H. Hardy: "...with his memory, his patience and his power of calculation, he combined a power of generalisation, a feeling for form, a capacity for rapid modification of his hypothesis, that were often really startling, and made him, in his own peculiar field, without a rival in his day".

#### Power of intuition and insight

Let's remember that Ramanujan was always precocious in his mathematical talent. And by virtue of working alone on problems and theorems that were advanced for his age during adolescence, day after day, hour after hour, he developed an incredible power of intuition and insight. The problems he worked on were from a book by one Carr. This book was "a spark which ignited the flame... [but] as the depth of Ramanujan's discoveries deepened, Carr's influence certainly waned," the mathematician Bruce Berndt said.

Ramanujan is remembered in many ways. His birthday (today is his 133rd birth anniversary) is celebrated as National Mathematics Day in India. *The Ramanujan Journal* publishes advancements in the areas that Ramanujan contributed to. His home in Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu has been converted to a museum by SASTRA University.

Ramanujan's greatness is not that he was a poor man who travelled to England and did research. It is that he was prolific and that his works were diverse, original and transcended time; and all this while he surmounted many odds coming from indigence. Ramanujan's works, especially to mathematicians, are of enduring elegance. The mathematician and physicist Freeman Dyson said, "Whenever I am angry or depressed, I pull down the Collected papers [of Ramanujan] from the shelf and take a quiet stroll in Ramanujan's garden".

Varahasihaman is a history of science enthusiast based in Chennai

## Humans are still core to Digital India

Intermediaries who deliver last mile governance establish trust between governments and citizens

SARAYU NATARAJAN & GAUTHAM RAVICHANDER

During the pandemic, we came to rely on various individuals to address our daily needs, even as more and more services went online. This transformation is underway in governance. During this time, eGovernments Foundation (eGov) and Aapti Institute came together to explore how digitally excluded communities engage with governance and learnt that even in 'Digital India', humans are significant in brokering trust between governments and citizens. These intermediaries often worked without any formal backing and role.

However, this reality was not considered in the design of most e-governance programmes. Only a few States have built a cadre of individuals for last mile governance. Andhra Pradesh, for instance, rolled out a ward secretariat programme with over 16,000 ward secretaries and volunteers for delivering government services at citizens' doorstep.

#### Overcoming barriers

Intermediaries help citizens overcome barriers to awareness (availability of digital services and rights from the state) and ability, which includes the ability to navigate these solutions with trust. These barriers are worse for citizens who are marginalised, with the poor, women, the elderly, and caste and gender minorities being additionally disadvantaged. Intermediaries support individuals by placing complaints, directing them to the right authorities, and following up. In the words of one of the respondents, "these people help us see the government".

Intermediaries are crucial offline architectures that enable the state to do its work better. Offline intermediaries can be both political and apolitical, individuals or collectives with varying motivations to do this work. Apolitical social workers and community leaders do their work as service. Partisan political individuals see their work as constituency service to secure vote bases. Community-based organisations and NGOs see their work as allied to their core work.

Our research tells us that leaning on intermediaries can unlock the ca-

pacity of the state to serve citizens. Indeed, they are a reality of everyday life for the average Indian, and incorporating this reality in design can be impactful. For instance, the study found that intermediaries struggled with indicating that they were placing a complaint for someone else, and with communicating the impact (for example, the number of houses affected by the problem). This design approach arises from the assumption that technology is for the individual. The reality is at odds with that belief.

**Extension of governance model**  
Various types and forms of intermediation emerge based on regional, social, cultural and economic contexts. A 'one size fits all' approach will not work. It is crucial to think about leveraging the strengths of intermediaries. Equally, it is essential to pay attention to the varying incentives of intermediaries and not romanticise the benefits. We need to see intermediaries as crucial to the realisation of governance outcomes. In this sense, they are as fundamental to governance as delivery agents and drivers are to Swiggy and Uber. Seeing them as a natural extension of the governance model forces us to ask questions of how we can support them to serve citizens better. India has formalised intermediation in traditional markets (such as mutual funds) from which we can learn. In these areas, formal governance mechanisms, structured capacity building, widespread awareness campaigns, and process re-engineering enabled growth and usage.

At a broader level, increasing digitisation of governance across domains including healthcare, financial inclusion, justice and social services is inevitable. We need to ensure that during this transition, we work with intermediaries to raise citizens' awareness, build intermediaries' skills and capabilities, and establish governance frameworks with suitable feedback loops. In doing so, we will be able to support the process of responsible, responsive and data-driven governance across domains.

Sarayu Natarajan is the Founder of Aapti Institute and Gautham Ravichander is Head of Policy Initiatives at eGov Foundation



#### DATA POINT

## Not India's worst Test

India's score of 36 runs in its second innings of the first Test against Australia on Saturday was its lowest total ever and the lowest for any team in the past 65 years. However, if the runs from the first innings are included, this was not the team's worst batting numbers in a Test match by a long shot. Even under Virat Kohli's leadership, India's batting has fared worse in two matches in the past. Also, if all the four innings of the Adelaide Test are considered as a whole, given the significant first innings lead secured by India, this is by no account the team's worst Test performance. By The Hindu Data Team

In graphs 1, 2 and 4, the blue dot corresponds to India's Tests and the red points to the Adelaide Test while the rest are in grey

#### 1. In a single innings

India's second innings total of 36 was the joint fifth-lowest in an innings in Test history where a team has been bowled out (including retired hurt). New Zealand posted the lowest total in an innings when it was bundled out for 26 against England in 1955.

#### 2. In both innings

The chart shows the average runs scored per wicket lost (RSW) by a team in a Test (both innings together) which yielded a result (win, loss or tie). In the Adelaide Test, India managed to score 14.73 runs for every wicket lost. In 16 past matches, India's RSW was worse than its latest in Adelaide, three of those were played in the last six years.

#### 3. Not the first for Kohli

Since 1978, India's RSW has fallen below 15 in only seven matches, including the Adelaide Test. Three such instances have been recorded under Virat Kohli and two under Sourav Ganguly.

#### 4. The match as a whole

The chart plots the difference between the average runs scored per wicket lost (RSW) by the two teams involved in all Test matches that yielded a result (win/loss/tie). For instance, in the Adelaide Test, India's RSW was 14.73, and Australia's was 23.66.

Thus the difference (-8.9) is a measure of how poor India's performance was relative to Australia's in this Test. When this relative measure is plotted for all Tests, it becomes evident that in many past matches, there were poorer performances than India's on Saturday.

#### DATA POINT

## Lessons from Monash

The experiences of other countries could offer ideas to India as it considers establishing international branch campuses



ELDHO MATHEWS

such example which may prove useful.

South Africa's branch campus strategy over the past two decades has been focussed on a dual-track approach in which the IBCs were promoted in parallel with the pre-existing higher education system. The South African regulatory framework permits foreign universities to operate as private entities, legally registered as a company. Although IBCs in South Africa cannot use the 'university' tag, they can offer accredited degrees and diplomas. South Africa has three IBCs. Monash was the first to obtain registration in 2001 to operate an IBC in Johannesburg as 'Monash South Africa (MSA)'. Monash is a public university, currently among the top 100 universities in the QS World University Ranking. It operates IBCs in China and Malaysia.

The student population at MSA had increased to around 4,000 in 2018. While almost half of them were from South Africa, 40% of the remaining were from other African countries. According to a study by Ashley Gunter and Parvati Raghuram, Monash's Australian main campus had invested approximately \$130 million in its South Africa campus until it started operating as a joint venture with U.S.-based majority owner Laureate Education in 2013. Under this partnership agreement, Monash University sold 75% of its shares to Laureate. In 2018, Monash and Laureate jointly decided to transfer the ownership of the campus to Independent Institute of Education (IIE) South Africa, a subsidiary of the AdvTech group, a company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Monash South Africa is now called IIE-MSA. According to reports, the teach out process would be completed by the end of 2022.

#### Facing up to ground realities

These are some of the biggest lessons from Monash University's South Africa experience. One, the public nature of a foreign university may not be reflected in its branch campus. Two, even a university that is among the top 100 could become a local private institution through mergers and acquisitions. Three, ensuring parity with the quality of programmes offered at the home campus would be a challenge. Four, domestic market demand influences course offerings, and there is dependence on contract academic staff. Finally, there are limitations in substituting existing institutions.

The above experience illustrates the big gap between the state's desired objectives and the actual impact on the ground. Therefore, reviewing the various delivery models existing in different national contexts may be helpful in the policy formulation process.

Eldho Mathews is a researcher in higher education based in New Delhi

The Hindu

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 22, 1970

#### ISI building code

The Indian Standards Institution has brought out a national building code to unify and regulate the building regulations throughout the country for use by Government Departments, municipal bodies and other construction agencies [New Delhi, Dec. 21]. The adoption of the code which has been built on the four pillars of safety, namely structural safety, health safety, fire safety and public safety is expected to bring about not only the much-needed uniformity of construction but also the economy. The code contains regulations which can be immediately adopted or enacted for use by various departments. It lays down a set of minimum provisions designed to protect the safety of the public with regard to structural sufficiency, fire hazards and health aspects of the building. So long as these basic requirements are met, the choice of materials and methods of designs and construction is left to the architect and the engineer.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DEC. 22, 1920

#### The return of election expenses

The attention of all persons who stood for election to the Council of State, the Legislative Assembly or the Madras Legislative Council is once more drawn to rule 17(1), (2) and (3) of the Electoral Rules extracted below: 17. (1) Within one month or such longer period as the Governor may allow after the date of the declaration of the election every candidate, either personally or through his election agent, shall cause to be lodged with the Returning Officer a return of his election expenses containing the particulars specified in Schedule III.

(2) Every such return shall contain a statement of all payments made by the candidate or by his election agent or by any persons on behalf of the candidate or in his interest for expenses incurred on account of, or in respect of, the conduct and management of the election, and further a statement of all unpaid claims in respect of such expenses of which he or his election agent is aware.

(3) The return shall be accompanied by declarations by the candidate and his election agent which shall be in the form contained in Schedule III and shall be made on oath or affirmation before a Magistrate.

The penalty for failure to lodge this return is serious. The candidate or the election agent who has failed to lodge the return shall not be eligible for nomination for 5 years from the date of the election.

ANND-DE

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Panel moots law to keep a check on hospitals

The committee observed that in the initial phase of the pandemic, medical insurance was not extended to patients with COVID-19 infection. With exorbitant charges levied by private hospitals, many patients had to suffer.

"There is need to have regulatory oversight on all hospitals in the country to prevent refusal to accept insurance claims. The committee strongly recommends that the target should be to make COVID-19 treatment cashless for all people who have insurance coverage," the report notes.

While appreciating the work done by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in formulating standard operating procedures, creating awareness, and most importantly, acting as a nodal centre for funding manpower deployment to meet exigencies, the committee said the ongoing pandemic was unlike any natural disaster that the NDMA had handled.

The committee recommends that a separate wing may be formed in the NDMA that will specialise in handling/managing pandemics like COVID-19. This wing may take a leading role in building a partnership of government with the public sector, corporates, NGOs and other stakeholders," the report observed.

On the economic front, the parliamentary standing committee said while the government had taken many measures to ameliorate the impact of the pandemic, several schemes have not been implemented properly.

"The committee observes that few of these schemes need effective implementation at the ground level. The problems being faced by farmers, non-corporate and non-farm small/micro enterprises in getting loans need to be addressed," the report pointed out.

Consumption had been severely curtailed due to huge job losses and fall in income due to the lockdown. It would take some time to mend, especially after the GDP having a contraction of 23.9% in the first quarter of 2020-21.

The report said that more interventions and schemes were required to support the recovery and to sustain this economic revival especially for the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) sector.

The committee expressed concern that with schools shut down now for more than nine months, many children were deprived of mid-day meal.

## Markets plunge on news of mutant virus

The NSE Nifty-50 index also fell 3.14% to 13,328.40 points. The top Nifty losers included ONGC down 9.44%, Tata Motors down 9.44% and GAIL down 8.44%.

"Travel restrictions imposed by several countries to and from the U.K. have added concerns of yet another lockdown," said V. Nair, head, Research, Geojit Financial Services.

"The European market witnessed further selling pressure. The vulnerability of the market was high, due to quick gains made in the ongoing rally leading to low margin of safety," Mr. Nair added.

"Despite this, we do not expect a big correction [but] rather a consolidation, in the short term, of not more than 7% to 10% in the main indices," he said.

Ajit Mishra, VP, Research, Religare Broking, said the next round of strict travel restrictions would dent economic recovery.

S. Ranganathan, head, Research, LKP Securities, said, "While the street was bracing for a correction this week after a sharp up move, the sheer velocity of the fall took the bulls by surprise as practically none of the key index constituents was in the green."

(With Reuters inputs)

## No flights to and from U.K. till December 31

All passengers already on their way to India until the ban came into effect would be subjected to a mandatory RT-PCR test on arrival, the government stated.

"Vistara will comply with the government's decision to suspend all flights originating from the U.K. to India. In order to minimise inconvenience to our customers, we will enable one-time free-of-charge rescheduling of affected bookings to any date until 31 December, 2021," said an airline spokesperson.

The announcement comes as a disappointment for the Tata-Singapore International Airline joint venture, which launched its operations to London recently to benefit from the massive "visiting family and relatives" category of passengers that dominates the India-U.K. sector. The launch happened at a time only airlines of the country of origin and destination were al-

lowed to ferry passengers, eliminating via travel and competition from Gulf carriers.

The latest lockdown in the U.K. has been imposed very suddenly by its government, and its comments on the new strain of virus leave other countries with little choice but to restrict travel to and from the U.K. The decision will hurt U.K. airlines a lot, and will also obviously hurt others with U.K. operations too, including carriers operating between the U.K. and India in this peak travel season for NRIs and VFR traffic," said Sanjeev Kapoor, ex-Chief Commercial and Strategy Officer for Vistara and an industry veteran.

The announcement comes at a time when a task force on tourism, comprising airlines, airports and various government ministries, proposed further relaxation of visa norms and reopening of overseas travel

## Suspension of IBC extended till March '21

"Many stressed corporates will find it difficult to fit into the One Time Restructuring option provided by the Reserve Bank of India. The IBC could have allowed such corporates to restructure liabilities and revive," said Rajiv Chandak, partner at Deloitte India.

The Minister said, "The entire year has had the IBC suspended, rightfully so because every industry has gone through major stress because of the pandemic and nobody could be drawn towards the insolvency process for problems that may have occurred."

## Eight apprehended in online loan case

Call centre leaders from Hyderabad and Gurugram apprehended by police from Telangana

ABHINAY DESHPANDE  
HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad cybercrime police have apprehended at least eight persons in the app-based instant loans case.

Those picked up from New Delhi and Hyderabad are believed to be key persons in the loan racket, a senior police officer associated with the investigation said.

"The committee observes that few of these schemes need effective implementation at the ground level. The problems being faced by farmers, non-corporate and non-farm small/micro enterprises in getting loans need to be addressed," the report pointed out.

Consumption had been severely curtailed due to huge job losses and fall in income due to the lockdown. It would take some time to mend, especially after the GDP having a contraction of 23.9% in the first quarter of 2020-21.

The report said that more interventions and schemes were required to support the recovery and to sustain this economic revival especially for the MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) sector.

The committee expressed concern that with schools shut down now for more than nine months, many children were deprived of mid-day meal.

A Division Bench, comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice S. Vishwajith Shetty, passed the interim order on a PIL petition filed by the People's Union for Civil Liberties-Karnataka challenging the legality of the GO.

**Against MPs, MLAs**  
The cases withdrawn include those registered against MPs Pratap Simha and Sumalatha, Law Minister K. Madhuswamy, then Minister C.T. Ravi, Agriculture Minister B.C. Patil, Forest Minister Anand Singh, and MLAs M.P. Renukarcharya and Halappa Achar.

The Bench, on December 1, had declined to stay the GO, but had pointed to a judgment of the apex court that said public prosecutors could agree or disagree with the government's brief for withdrawal of criminal cases, and would have to return the brief if the prosecutors disagree with the request for withdrawal.

Referring to Section 321 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Cr. PC), the Bench said



TELANGANA



KARNATAKA

# Farmers to take decision on talks today

They take exception to PM's statement that 'no one could stop him' from going ahead with the reforms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Appearing set to reject the fresh offer of talks by the Union government, farmer unions spearheading the agitation are of the opinion that the three laws are pro-corporate and promote stocking and black-marketing of the food. The final decision, however, will be taken at a meeting of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a joint front of farmer unions, on Tuesday.

In a virtual meeting during the day, leaders of the farmer unions said the government had selected eight issues that it was now trying to claim were the main issues, claimed sources privy to the meeting. The leaders said the problem lay with the objectives of the laws. They also took exception to the language used by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, wherein he said "no one could stop him" from going ahead



**Driving force:** A woman transporting farmers to the protest site in Delhi on Monday. ■ AP

with the reforms.

The leaders, at the meeting, argued that corporate houses across the world were trying to grab agricultural land and water resources, pitting them (corporations)

against farmers. They were of the view that the government had twisted facts on the talks and claimed modesty, but the representations sent by them for the withdrawal of the laws had been

turned down. Krantikari Kisan Union president Darshan Pal said the letter sent by the Agriculture Ministry Joint Secretary Vivek Aggarwal late on Sunday evening would be discussed on Tuesday and a

decision taken. "It is not an invitation for talks. They have replied to our earlier letter. They have just said that the doors for the talks are open. We will discuss in the meeting tomorrow (on Tuesday) and decide," said Mr. Pal, a Samyukt Kisan Morcha leader.

Earlier, farmer leaders at several protest sites began a relay hunger strike in accordance with announcements made by Samyukt Kisan Morcha on Sunday. The leaders will hold a hunger strike in batches for 24 hours. The Morcha has also given a call to protest toll plazas in Haryana and make them free for the motorists on December 25, 26 and 27.

The All-India Kisan Sangarsh Co-ordination Committee would hold protest in Mumbai on Tuesday at the offices of the Ambani and Adani groups at the Bandra Kurla Complex.

Mr. Cheema said farmer outfits and commission

agents had jointly decided to continue their struggle against the new farm laws. "We will now fight with double the force. Also, we have decided that if anymore raids are conducted, farmers and commission agents will jointly stage peaceful protests at the place where the raid is conducted," he said.

"The government needs to understand that commission agents have their own set of concerns surrounding the new farm laws. We are protesting to save our business and interests. Farmers and commission agents are supporting each other but both have their own concerns," he said. He added the Punjab Arthiya Federation was also participating in the ongoing strike.

"We will soon be holding a joint meeting with farmer

outfits and decide on future course of action. How to mobilise the protests beyond the indefinite strike will be the key issue of discussion," said Mr. Cheema.

Last week, I-T raids were conducted on the premises of several big commission agents of Punjab within a span of just four days of issuing notices, without waiting for responses to the notices, Punjab Chief Minister Amrit Singh had stated.

Meanwhile, farmers under the banner of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ugrahan) held processions in several villages in memory of those who had died during the ongoing agitation. The general secretary of the Bharatiya Kisan Union-Ekta (Dakau), Jagmohan Singh, said the reported suicides in the last few days were a matter of concern.

## Dal Khalsa hits out at BJP, RSS over protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Sikh radical outfit Dal Khalsa on Monday said as a result of the ongoing farmers agitation "the Modi phenomenon created in the last six years by the BJP and RSS has started to dismantle." Dal Khalsa leader Kanwar Pal Singh accused the BJP government of adopting arm-twisting tactics against those who are backing the farmers agitation.

Mr. Singh said since the agitation doesn't belong to any individual or organisation, considering the farmer as one entity, the outfit has decided to name "the protesting farmer as person of the year 2020".

## Govt. has crossed limits of insensitivity: Selja

'Centre is trying to mislead farmers'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Congress chief and former Rajya Sabha MP Kumi Selja on Monday accused the Bharatiya Janata Party-led (BJP) government at the Centre of crossing all limits of insensitivity as farmers' protest against the new farm laws entered the 26th day.

"More than 30 farmers have been martyred in this movement, but yet it did not have any effect on the BJP government. The government has crossed all limits of insensitivity," she said in a statement.

Ms. Selja alleged the BJP government wanted to



Kumari Selja

snatch the rights of farmers and hand over the agricultural economy to big capitalists. "The Central government is pretending to interact with farmer organisations whereas in reality, the government is trying to

mislead them," she added.

## In solidarity, Hyderabad man joins farmers

Manoj quit his job and flew to Delhi to sit on a hunger strike with the protesters

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old engineer from Hyderabad flew to Delhi on Saturday to join the protesting farmers. Having quit his job, he is now on a hunger strike with the protesters and says he is here to say.

Manoj M., a resident of Hymayat Nagar in Hyderabad, sits without a banner or any placard, almost unnoticed. His brother, a doctor, via video call, tells him not to fast for more than three days because of the impact on his health. "My plan is to continue the strike for 15 days. However, I drink water," said Mr. Manoj.

Though he or his family

members are not into agriculture, Mr. Manoj said he was in Delhi to support them because if farmers stop their work, the eventual result would be a huge loss to the economy.

"At the moment, the laws will only impact farmers but in a few years, they will impact everyone. If and when farmers in Punjab and Haryana decide to stop farming, the cost of crops will increase and subsequently, transportation costs will increase and by the time it reaches people like us, the rates would have skyrocketed," he said, adding this should not be only a farmer's movement but a pan-India



**Pitching in:** Manoj M. at the farmers' protest on the Singhu border on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

one. "When the Modi government took over, \$1 was worth ₹48 and now it's worth ₹74. The eventual result of farmers' disappointment will be an economic crisis."

Mr. Manoj, who completed his Bachelor's in Technol-

ogy in 2011 and completed his Masters in Business Administration from Australia in 2015, said he quit his job at the end of November because he wanted to work for the people. "I am glad I quit because now I am able to

join the protest. The company clause to not be associated with any movement would have restricted this."

People back home were not very concerned about the protests. "I was following the news and in Hyderabad, there isn't enough media coverage of the protests but my father exports vegetables after buying from the mandis, so he is indirectly related to farming," he said.

Mr. Manoj has been staying at Guru Teg Bahadur Memorial, having come to the protest site straight from the airport. He understands Hindi and can even speak it haltingly – "thoda-thoda (a little)," he said. "On Sunday, I spent time walking around 25 km of the protest site. People here are accepting me and supporting me," he said.

## Veteran Congress leader Motilal Vora passes away

He served in several positions like M.P.  
CM, U.P. Governor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Congress veteran Motilal Vora passed away at Delhi's Fortis Escorts Hospital on Monday, a day after his 93rd birthday.

He had been admitted to the hospital on Saturday for an urinary infection but developed severe lung infection and was put on ventilator, his family said.

Earlier, the veteran leader was admitted at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) after contracting COVID-19 but was discharged on October



Motilal Vora

nistrative and organisational experience in a political career that spanned decades".

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, in a statement, said Mr. Vora's death had left a huge void in public life and "his life is a

shining example of public service unparalleled commitment to the Congress ideology".

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "Voraji was a true Congressman and a wonderful human being. We will miss him very much."

Starting out as a journalist, Mr. Vora occupied several key positions, including Chief Minister of undivided Madhya Pradesh twice (1985-88 and 1989), Health Minister in Rajiv Gandhi's Cabinet and Governor of Uttar Pradesh in the mid-1990s.

**Eventful tenure**  
His role as Governor was eventful as it was Mr. Vora who recommended Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav

as Chief Minister on June 3, 1995. This followed the 'Guest House' episode when Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati had to lock herself up after SP workers threatened her with physical harm.

Known to be a loyalist of the Gandhi family, Mr. Vora served as the Congress's treasurer for 16 years and represented Chhattisgarh in the Rajya Sabha for four terms, until this April.

Among the rare breed of senior leaders of the All India Congress Committee who would be found in the party headquarters with unfailing regularity, Mr. Vora was well known for following a simple dictum: never leave behind any paper work when you leave your office for the day.

## Mehbooba's 3 associates held on the eve of DDC poll results

PDP chief terms the detention of leaders 'total lawlessness'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

Three senior Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) leaders, who form the core group of party chief Mehbooba Mufti, were detained in Kashmir, a day before the results of the maiden District Development Council (DDC) polls were to be announced.

An official said two south Kashmir-based leaders were detained in the morning and shifted to a police station in Anantnag's Bijbehara town, also the hometown of PDP president Mehbooba Mufti.

"One leader was arrested when he was heading for Srinagar from Anantnag," a police official said.

The arrested leaders have been identified as Sharif Mandani, Ms. Mufti's uncle and ex-deputy speaker of the Assembly, and Peer Mansoor Hussain, a former legislator.

In a separate raid, police arrested former Minister Naeem Akhtar around 9.45 p.m. "The police came



No rule of law in J&K anymore.  
It is out and out  
Gunda Raj  
MEHBOOBA MUFTI  
PDP LEADER

knocking on our door. My father was detained at an unearthly hour. No order or government instruction was shown to us. We don't know the ground of detention or the duration. I cannot relieve the horror of last year but will stand by him always," Mr. Akhtar's daughter Shehryar Khanum said.

The police have neither

confirmed nor denied these detentions nor have they given any details of the case

under which the arrests were made. However, sources said the central investigating agencies have been probing funding and transactions during Ms. Mufti's tenure as Chief Minister. The duo being questioned in a police station in the hometown of Ms. Mufti indicated that the case might involve her too.

The PDP chief has termed the arrests "total lawlessness". "Mr. Madni and Mr. Hussain have been arbitrarily detained today on the eve of DDC election results. Every senior police officer here is clueless as it is 'upar se order' (orders from above)". No rule of law in J&K anymore. It is out and out Gunda Raj," Ms. Mufti tweeted.

She alleged that the J&K administration was on an arresting spree and "Mr. Akhtar has been abducted by the J&K police". "It looks like the BJP is planning to manipulate the DDC results tomorrow and don't want any re-

## Kashmiris celebrate chillai kalan

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

People in the Kashmir Valley are finding unique ways to celebrate the start of 'chillai kalan', a local term for the 40-day period of harshest period that begins annually from December 21. Dozens of local tourists were seen thronging Baramulla's Drang tourist spot, around 40 km away from Srinagar, to witness the formation of very long icicles from water dripping from a hillock. Scores were seen taking selfies on Monday against the backdrop of the icicles, which are taller than humans.

"It is an amazing experience. I have been visiting Drang for the past seven years... This year, many icicle formations were as big as 15 metres (45 feet) long," Mr. Akhtar said. "It is an amazing experience. I have been visiting Drang for the past seven years... This year, many icicle formations were as big as 15 metres (45 feet) long," Mr. Akhtar said.

The Kashmir Valley is reeling under a cold wave as minimum temperatures hover around minus 6 degrees Celsius.

## ODISHA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED

(A Government of Odisha Undertaking)  
Regd Office: Janpath, Bhubaneswar-751022  
CIN: U74901OR2004SCG007553

### E-TENDER NOTICE

For and on behalf of Odisha Power Transmission Corporation Limited (OPTCL), Sr. G.M. (CPC) invites Tenders for enlistment of Firms/ contractors in following rate contracts in OPTCL system as per tender specification.

**Notice No. CPC-26/2020-21:** Execution of Emergency and Normal works pertaining to 400kV, 220kV, 132 kV and 33kV Substation and Transmission Lines.

**Notice No. CPC-30/2020-21:** Carrying out Survey, soil testing, preparation of estimate and detailed project report (DPR) for upcoming transmission line and substation projects.

Interested Bidders may visit OPTCL's official website <http://www.optcl.co.in> & [www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL](http://www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL) for detail specification/bidding document available w.e.f dated 23.12.2020.

For further details, visit: <https://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>

**Ref: MPVL/MAT/2020-21/446/CALL-2 Date: 18.12.2020**

### Re -TENDER NOTIFICATION

Tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers / authorized dealers for supply of the following materials through e-Procurement Portal. The details are as mentioned below:

**e-Tender Notification No.: MPVL/2020-21/IND446/CALL-2**

Re -Tender notification for supply of Silver Nitrate.(1 Item. Estimated value Rs.20.67 Crore). Interested parties may visit [www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in](http://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in), for participating in the tender.

Last date for submission of Tender/Bids is 18/01/2021 at 17:00:00 hrs. Technical Bid Opening on 22/01/2021 at 15:00:00 hrs.

For Mysore Paints and Varnish Ltd.

Sd/- General Manager (Admin) / TIA

DIPR/DDMMYS/MCA/785/2020-21

For Mysore Paints and Varnish Ltd.

Sd/- General Manager (Admin) / TIA

DIPR/DDMMYS/MCA/785/2020-21

For Mysore Paints and Varnish Ltd.

Sd/- General Manager (Admin) / TIA

DIPR/DDMMYS/MCA/785/2020-21

For Mysore Paints and Varnish Ltd.

Sd/- General Manager (Admin) / TIA

DIPR/DDMMYS/MCA/785/2020-21

For Mys

# Govt. alert to U.K. virus strain: Minister

Ready for vaccine rollout any time in January, says Harsh Vardhan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday said the government was alert to the new strain of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the U.K. but added there was no need to panic.

"The Central government is alert and scientists are closely keeping an eye on each development about the discovery of the new strain of coronavirus," Dr. Vardhan said, speaking to the news agency ANI.

## Screening at airports

The Health Ministry's Joint Monitoring Group has directed that all passengers from U.K. be subjected to mandatory RT-PCR tests on arrival at the airports concerned and that State/Union Territory governments set up help desks at the airports to facilitate this.

Following a meeting to discuss the emergence of the

## Best shot

With the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine approved for full use and about seven other candidates authorised for emergency use in many nations, the spotlight has turned on the advance market commitments secured by countries for such shots. India has confirmed 1,600 million dose purchases as of December 18, which amounts to around one shot per person. Canada has bought 10 doses for every citizen



A patient receiving the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at a drive-in vaccination centre in Manchester, England. ■ AFP

new COVID-19 strain, health secretary Rajesh Bhushan in a letter to secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation Pradeep Singh Kharola, said a distinct phylogenetic cluster of SARS-CoV-2 had been detected which was spreading and growing rapidly in the U.K.

"It has also been reported that this variant has an unusually large number of genetic changes, particularly in

the spike protein. This development calls for enhanced containment and other measures to effectively tackle the challenge," the official said.

### 'Safety paramount'

On vaccination, Dr Vardhan said, "In any week of January, we can be in a position to give first COVID vaccine shot to the people of India." "Our first priority has been

safety and effectiveness of vaccines. We don't want to compromise on that."

"The government has done everything that was important to handle the COVID-19 situation in the last one year," Dr. Vardhan said.

Dr. Vardhan also said currently India had around three lakh active COVID cases and its recovery rate was 95-96%, which was signifi-

cantly higher than many developed countries. "But we need to strictly follow COVID-appropriate behaviour and cannot afford to relax on that front," he added.

The Minister added that India's fatality rate was also significantly low at 1.45% now.

"The major tool against COVID-19 will ultimately be masks, hand hygiene and physical distancing that we all need to follow. The troubles that we had to face as a country due to COVID-19 are on the decline," he added.

### 333 deaths in 24 hours

India reported 333 fatalities in the past 24 hours with 10 States/UTs accounting for 81.38% of the new deaths.

Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (98), West Bengal and Kerala followed with 40 and 30 deaths, respectively.

Kerala reported the highest daily new cases at 5,711, followed by Maharashtra with 3,811 new cases, while West Bengal recorded 1,978 new cases," data released by the Ministry said.

# Super Hornet fighter jets being tested for Navy use

Demonstrations held at Maryland in U.S. successful: Boeing



More power: An F/A-18 Super Hornet taking off from a test facility in the U.S. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

Boeing on Monday announced the successful demonstration of the compatibility of its F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jets with the Indian Navy's aircraft carriers as part of its pitch for the Navy's fighter procurement.

The demonstrations, held in coordination with U.S. Navy on a shore-based facility at the Naval Air Station Patuxent river in Maryland, U.S., show that the F-18 Super Hornet would do well with the Indian Navy's Short Takeoff but Arrested Recovery (STOBAR) system and validate earlier simulation studies done over the last two years, a senior company official said.

"The first successful and safe launch of the F/A-18 Super Hornet from a ski-jump begins the validation process to operate effectively from Indian Navy aircraft carriers," said Ankur Kanaglekar, Head, India Fighters

Sales, Boeing Defense, Space and Security.

The F/A-18 Block III Super Hornet would not only provide superior war-fighting capability to the Indian Navy but also create opportunities for cooperation in naval aviation between the U.S. and India, Mr. Kanaglekar said, pitching it as a "lynchpin" for cooperation between Indian and U.S. Navies.

### 'Force multiplier'

He also highlighted the ability of F/A-18 to interface with the Navy's P-8I as a "force multiplier" and also with other platforms under induction.

The Navy has contracted 24 Lockheed MH-60R multi-role helicopters with deliveries to begin next year.

As a part of Boeing's proposed "By India, for India" sustainment program, the Block III Super Hornets could be serviced in partnership with the Indian Navy as well as India and U.S. based partners throughout the life

cycle of the aircraft, Mr. Kanaglekar said.

The Indian Navy currently evaluates responses from aircraft manufacturers received in response to a Request For Information floated in 2017 for 57 twin-engine deck-based fighters. However, with the Defence Research and Development Organisation recently offering to develop a twin-engine deck-based jet, the Navy is in the process of cutting down the number of fighters from 57 to around 36.

As reported by *The Hindu*, Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh said the Navy was trying to do the tender along with the Indian Air Force which, officials had stated, if accepted, the 57 tender would be combined with the IAF's I14 jet tender.

Both the Navy's sole carrier in service, INS Vikramaditya, and the under-construction indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC)-I, Vikrant, have a ski-jump with the STOBAR mechanism.

# Pak. drone dropped 11 grenades in Punjab

Police, BSF opened fire, but it flew back

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab police on Monday said that five days after busting a drone module with international linkages in Amritsar (rural) district, on December 20, they seized 11 Arges-84 hand grenades dropped on the night of December 19 by a drone launched from Pakistan.

The Director General of Police said Border Security Force personnel deployed at BOP Chakri noticed a Pakistan drone entering Indian territory around 11.30 p.m. and they fired multiple shots in an attempt to bring down the drone. At the same time, they alerted the

police. The police fired multiple shots from AK47 and SLRs to bring down the drone but it managed to fly back into Pakistan territory.

A combing operation was mounted the next morning, leading to the recovery of a box containing the 11 Arges-84 hand grenades from near Dhussi Bandh, in the area of Salach village of Dordangla. Austrian in nature, the Arges Type HG 84 series anti-personnel fragmentation hand grenade was a conventional system designed to inflict massive damage to soft targets, spraying shrapnel out to a distance of 30 m at speed, the DGP noted.

Ms. Banerjee said she would hold a rally at Birbhum on December 29. Mr. Shah

+

held a road show at Bolpur in Birbhum on Sunday.

### Outreach programme

Meanwhile, speaking to journalists at the State secretariat, Ms. Banerjee said her government's outreach programme (*Duare Sarkar*), started from December 1, had reached 1.12 crore people. "This is a new model not only in India but in the entire world. We have set up 20,000 camps in the past few days." The Chief Minister announced a cash award of ₹5,000 (paid in two months) to State government employees who actively participated in the drive.

Ms. Banerjee said she

+

would hold a rally at Birbhum on December 29. Mr. Shah

+

held a road show at Bolpur in Birbhum on Sunday.

### Central schemes

Responding to allegations that the State government was not implementing

+

Central

+

schemes such as the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Ms. Banerjee

+

said her government was willing

+

to implement the scheme

+

and funds should be transferred to the State.

+

The State government is

+

already implementing a

+

scheme of direct fund transfer

+

to farmers including share

+

croppers, with death benefit scheme, as had been enumerated in my letter under reference. More than 73 lakh farmers are to be benefited under the scheme," Ms. Banerjee wrote in a letter to Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar.

+

The Chief Minister urged the Centre to kindly "arrange for transfer of funds" and added that after disbursement, a list of beneficiaries would be made available.

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

+

# REVIEW

# The 12th showdown

If you have set your sights on the iPhone 12 series but no specific model, we have put together a comprehensive comparison to help you out

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

**W**hen the iPhone 12 series was unveiled, most loyal users were thrilled at the comeback of the iPhone 5's wraparound flat band, replacing the rounded edges that made an appearance from iPhones 6 to 11 series.

Usually when something comes returns, it means something leaves. In the case of the 12 series, Apple made the surprising move to start omitting the power charger and wired EarPods to go more eco-friendly. After seeing the amount of e-waste that accumulates in an average household, this was a good decision on Apple's part.

Display-wise, all models of the new series feature Super Retina XDR displays which use organic light-emitting diode (OLED) technology, meaning Apple did not compromise on high contrast ratio and high resolution with no annoying backlight - all on a thinner display too, so these phones are noticeably lighter. An off-angle glance at these displays offer a slight difference in hue, which Apple says is normal behaviour of OLED displays, but this is thankfully not bothersome.

Equipped with Apple's new Ceramic Shield, which comprises nano-ceramic crystals, the screen leverages Apple's dual ion-exchange process used on the back glass to make it scratch-resistant. All of these devices have been dropped and bumped at some point, but there have not been any scratches. This durability was sadly absent in the iPhone 11 series, particularly in the 11 Pro. This screen strength is extended right to the edges of the 12 series itself so do not fear for vulnerable points.

What ultimately separates the iPhone 12 series from its somewhat similar predecessor is the performance, powered by the latest native A14 Bionic chipset. However, each model has its ups and downs.

So for those still wondering which iPhone 12 is worth the splurge, our comparison should be comprehensive enough.



## iPhone 12

The base model is a pretty decent leveler at a starting price of ₹79,900. So which specs make the 12 an upgrade from the Mini? Design is where the difference in price really is - but only in the wraparound band. The Mini's has a plastic feel, while the upgraded 12 has an aluminium material with a glass back.

Aside from the larger display and higher resolution and ppi, as well as a marginally better battery life, there really is not much of a difference, performance-wise: recording and photography formats are the same, as are the camera systems. Therefore, it is odd that the base device seems to be a wild card here. This will see more people investing in the Mini to save ₹10,000. In these pandemic times, who wouldn't want to save while still splurging?

## iPhone 12 Pro Max

Considering the disappointing iPhone 12 Pro's battery life, the Pro Max is a smartphone for the long haul, optimised further by A14 Bionic. Yes, it is pricey at its ₹1,29,900-starting price point but it offers the best value for money.

A device for the purse and not the pocket (due to its size), it takes a while to get used to the 6.7-inch display. The iPhone 12 Pro Max is catnip for the smartphone addict and, here, I am playing the enabler. While the 12 Pro Max had its downfalls, such as a lower refresh frame rate, the 12 counterpart proves Apple has finally listened to the complaints of A14 Bionic, and has resolved these performance issues to a great extent. So gaming on the 12 Pro Max is a breeze, and the battery is able to hold up pretty well.

The best part? Over the December 19 weekend, Apple finally released iOS 14.3, which comes with Apple ProRAW shooting capability. Yes, the raw images are big - at around 25 megabytes each - but they are print-ready. Shooting in and editing ProRAW gave me more sovereignty over white balance, noise reduction, sharpening, and more. Notably, ProRAW wins where Apple's general multimedia algorithms may struggle, such as instances of mixed indoor lighting, and extreme low light.



## iPhone 12 Pro

This was the first of the 12 series I had tested, but was disappointed in a day. Despite its design indulgence same as those of the 12 Pro Max, both models come in those gorgeous matte finishes, I found myself charging the 12 Pro twice a day, sometimes thrice on a busier phone day. After the significant battery improvement that came with the 12 series, this was a sad oversight on Apple's part. This incites a head-shake at the starting price of ₹1,19,900, when there are smartphones from Xiaomi, Samsung and Google Pixel that have more stable battery lives for much less.

Battery aside, there are upgrades from the base model. The Telephoto lens with higher optical zooms, and the LiDAR Scanner for Night mode are a photographer's dream. The Dolby Vision HDR recording at 60 frames per rate makes videos more life-like and these are not too compressed when uploaded to most social media platforms.



**Family of four** The iPhone 12 series is a mixed bag ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Phone 12 Mini

**Y**es, it is adorable, but it is also a smart addition on Apple's part. Being part of the flagship series, the Mini is not a rival to the SE, which was released this spring but it is the most affordable in its resident range. Being the smallest iPhone so far, thanks to its 5.4-inch display, it is also the lightest, due to its aluminium body. The Mini, understandably has made its compromises but they are not to be mourned: look forward to a great 2340x1080-pixel resolution at 476 pixels per inch. Despite this, the Mini has a great camera system, too; it records video in the same Dolby Vision HDR and frame rates as the iPhone 12 and 12 Pro, on its rear Wide and Ultra Wide cameras and front True Depth camera.

**I**s it worth ₹69,900? Given it comes packed with the A14 Bionic which fuels a more sustainable battery life as well as responsive graphics, this is one you should consider if you are new to Apple's ecosystem but still want the plushness of an iPhone 12.



## GAMESPOT

# Dance those WFH blues away



**Break it down** Screenshots from the video game ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**J**ust Dance 2021 provides wholesome family entertainment to make being stuck at home a bit more fun

JULIAN ALMEIDA

Despite lockdowns phasedly lifting, the pandemic is still raging. But confining yourself to your home can get boring and you need excuses to move around. On top of that, we miss going out with clubs being closed. That said, Just Dance 2021 is precisely the thing to make you bust a move, an experience that is especially fun if you have your family joining.

Ubisoft's Just Dance series of games are year-on-year re-

leases, much like EA Sports' FIFA, except the focus here is a arcade-like dance simulation with every release packing in some of the hottest tracks of the year. Though it is weird for a game with 2021 in its title to have tracks from 2020. All of this unfolds through digitally rotoscoped versions of Ubisoft's own dancers. Fun fact: Just Dance mostly comes out of Ubisoft Pune.

### Switch to Switch

We reviewed it on the Nintendo Switch, and we believe that is the best version of the game. It is easy to set-up and my eight-year-old daughter was able to dive right in easily. Just make sure one of the motion-sensing Joy-cons are in one hand, with a strap for safety, and you are ready to go. While the game is available on every other system, you will need a connected smartphone app that the game uses to accurately map the dance moves. Ho-



wever, there is always a danger of your smartphone flying out the window - a too-real possibility, given Just Dance 2021's tricky dance moves.

Getting into the game is as the title suggests, you just dance by mimicking the movements of the colourful on-screen characters with the help of handy illustrations. I

### JUST DANCE 2021

**DEVELOPER:** Ubisoft, Ubisoft Paris

**PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft

**PRICES:** ₹2,999  
Playstation 4, Xbox One ; ₹3,499 for Nintendo Switch

This mismatchedness was present on a few songs, and evoked inadequacy in me. I may have two left feet, but my daughter, a natural, also found it hard to follow. Ultimately, we were playing catchup to the professional dancers doing the motion capture and not having much fun.

### Mixes for days

That aside, the track list is excellent and well-rounded, featuring songs from my favourite K-pop groups BLACKPINK's 'Ice Cream' and K/DA's 'Drum go Dum', to 'Magenta Riddim'

by DJ Snake, to evergreen hit 'Bailando'. There was a lot of fun to be had. What was especially good was the mix of songs, from 'Village People' to 'You got a Friend In Me' from Toy Story, to some hot hits from Eminem.

On the upside, the game has a bunch of modes, and I did like the cardio 'sweat' mode to squeeze in some exercise. There is a kiddie mode, too, aimed at toddlers and small children, well-timed for the movement-inhibiting lockdown.

You will need to dance away to unlock the full tracklist. However, if you want more songs you will need to opt for Just Dance Unlimited subscription service, which has more than 600 tracks, which makes the yearly game a bit pointless, as Just Dance Unlimited will work on last year's titles too. You can put that same money to good use with a Spotify or Apple Music subscription and dance the way you wish.

Just Dance 2021 is a great first game for those who are curious about the series. However, the 40-plus initial songs are just a paid demo that tries to upsell you to its Unlimited subscription; this is only worth it if you really like the dance choreography. Our advice? Just keep an eye out for sales.

*The writer is a tech and gaming enthusiast who hopes to one day finish his sci-fi novel*



## All for the user

How will lifestyle choices drive the wearable market in the near future?

ISHAN PATRA

India's wearables market recorded its highest quarterly shipment in the September-ending quarter, driven by products in the earwear and smartwatch categories. Lifestyle tech brand, Noise, led the smartwatch category in the quarter, according to research firm International Data Corporation (IDC).

The wearable brand retained its top spot with a 28.5% share in the smartwatch category in the third quarter. In an emailed interview with *The Hindu*, Noise's co-founder Gaurav Khatri shared his views on the brand, the pandemic, and the wearables market.

Gaurav says the pandemic has led to a lot of changes in the market. "The most important of them is how focused people have become about their health and lifestyle, which has had a positive impact in the sales of wearables."

The wearables market expanded 165% year-on-year with 11.8 million (about 118 lakh) units shipped in the September-ending quarter.

The demand for TWS (true wireless stereo) devices has increased in the last few quarters. Gaurav says the rising importance of streaming content, and the work-from-home scenarios have changed users' audio consumption. "TWS devices will become smarter and serve broader use cases beyond audio entertainments, such as calling, payment, and health and fitness," he adds.

"We see the upward trend to continue in the wearables market. When compared to smartphones, wearables have just single-digit penetration but great market potential," Gaurav notes.

CM YK

# What's on the CARDS?

DIY cards and handwritten messages make a comeback as people connect via post

SARASWATHY NAGARAJAN

Tired of emojis, abrupt texts and banal printed messages, Mumbai-based Sonal Shah (@calligraphersonalsonalshah) began making personalised cards for different occasions. "There is something personal about handwritten cards and although we have mails and lovely online cards, I have been making my own since 2013," says Sonal.

Seeing the popularity, she now sells customised handmade cards with messages in calligraphy to corporates, young couples, families and friends.

For many making DIY cards this year, it began as an attempt to make their own to send to friends and family. When appreciation began to flow, it encouraged a clutch of small business ventures.

This is how Shraddha Rajani in Panaji began Meraki ([www.merakicards.com](http://www.merakicards.com)), which has a portfolio of handmade cards, ribbons, presentation boxes, hair accessories and so on. So popular were her products that she began collaborating with boutiques in different cities. In November, she started showcasing her products at Fiore in Alwarpet, Chennai.

"I wanted a card to announce the birth of my nephew and I could not find one in Panaji. So I made some for the occasion and everyone liked it. I did the same when my niece was born and then people began approaching me to do personalised cards for functions in their families. Eventually, Meraki was born," says



Shraddha. Each card is still handmade by her with some help from her family, she says.

In the case of Alfa Zareena Hisham, a software engineer in Thiruvananthapuram, it is a family tradition that she is continuing.

"We always used to give or send cards for birthdays, New Year, Christmas... and they were all made by us at home. I still have all the cards I have been sent over the years," she says.

Alfa adds, "My sister, Amiya Jemeemah Hisham, an architect in Bengaluru, is better than me. She made cards

with pressed flowers. Last year, we had participated in a flea sale in Bengaluru with memory books, handmade cards, etc and everything was sold out."

Although Alfa knows a fair bit of calligraphy, she encourages customers to write their own words.

This year, she has again made cards to be sent to family and friends "but there is no sale. I don't have the time for that, this time around. It takes a lot of effort. I make them for my mother and might give some to my friends," she adds.

Architect-artist Maya Gomez has made handpainted cards for her mother, Daphne Gomez. "She sends cards by post even now to our relatives and friends. So she had been pestering me to make cards for her and that is how I designed and made cards for Christmas and New Year," says Maya, a resident of Thiruvananthapuram.

For M Ashi Jamir, a social science teacher in Dimapur, her love for the crafts is manifested in her cards.

Alfa believes that the lockdown has prompted more people to started making their DIY cards. Maya insists that nothing beats handmade cards with handwritten messages.

"Even in olden times, there were people who used to type letters if they did not have a good hand. I feel when you write, no matter how good or bad your writing is, it is a part of you that comes through, in that letter," says Maya. She adds, "I enjoy looking at old letters, the lettering, the ink...there are so many sentiments attached to it."

## Playtime with the lion-tailed macaque

The Centre for Wildlife Studies brings together artists and storytellers, for a children's book on endangered species

ANASUYA MENON

Around 5,000 children living close to the Western Ghats in Karnataka have a new book to read and learn from. The picture-story book *Will You Play With Me?* featuring endangered wild animals of the Western Ghats has been created solely to distribute among children of the region to create understanding and empathy towards animals.

The bilingual book (in Kannada and English) came together when Krithi K Karanth, chief conservation scientist and director of the Centre for Wildlife Studies, and Raghava KK, an artist, received grants from National Geographic to create a book on the endangered wildlife species in the Western Ghats. They collaborated with Kokaachi, an independent storytelling studio based

in Kochi, to bring out the book.

The interactive book contains pull-out masks of lion-tailed macaque, elephant, and tiger, says Tina Thomas, co-founder of Kokaachi. Other animals featured are dholes, gliding frogs, langurs, gaur and hornbills.

The story by Netra Srikanth was adapted by Tina, which was then translated to Kannada by K Ullas Karanth, a conservation zoologist. The animals are illustrated by Raghava and the scenery, typography and publication design are by illustrator Prabha Mallya.

The book is shaped like an accordion, which will make it interesting to the students, observes Tina. "We created a storyline around these animals and when the children pull the masks out, a second story is revealed. The masks enable the chil-



**Page turner** The book includes pull-out animal masks • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

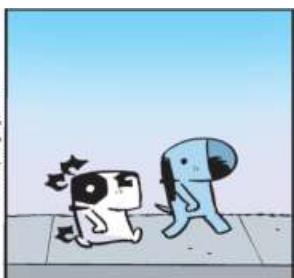
dren to take on the persona of the animals," says Tina.

"Though the children live close to the Western Ghats, not many are aware of species endemic to the region. The book would serve to pique their interest in them," says

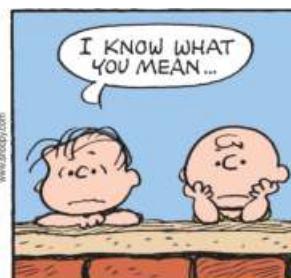
Tina. Which is why the first edition, published by Kokaachi, was distributed for free to 5,000 children.

The second edition has gone to print. The creators plan on including other languages such as Malayalam, Tamil and Marathi to benefit more children.

## POOCH CAFE



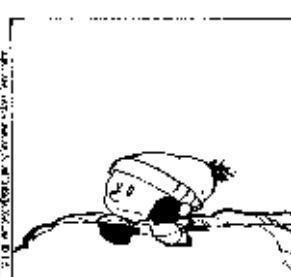
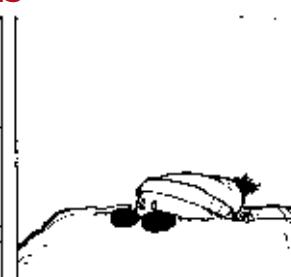
## PEANUTS



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



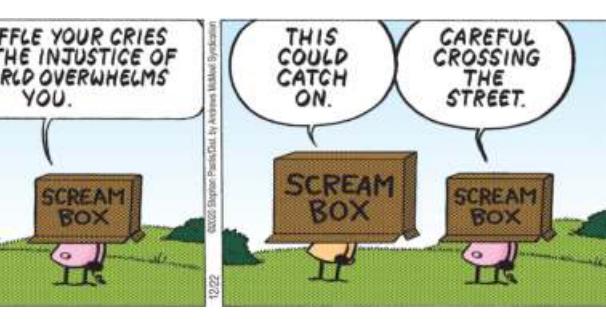
## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



# Last Christmas for no. 1

A global group of George Michael fans are hoping that this year at least they will be able to put the song on the top of the trending list

SUNALINI MATHEW

At a party in Delhi recently Jyotsna Gokhale, 50, told people of how she was a part of a group that aimed to make 'Last Christmas' by Wham! a no. 1 worldwide hit. "Please do listen to it on repeat," she announced, to a slightly bewildered audience. Gokhale is part of a worldwide group of people who hope to make the song trend every Christmas - it never has.

Growing up in Kanpur in the 80s, she and many like her remember the great times they'd had with friends and cousins, and 'Last Christmas' forms a part of those memories and wonder years. She recalls the 1984 hit being released the same year as Band Aid's 'Do they Know it's Christmas'. The late George Michael (GM) who wrote the lyrics and music for 'Last Christmas', was also a part of Band Aid's charity single to raise funds for the famine in Ethiopia that included other greats like Bono, Phil Collins, Sting and many

more. That year 'Do they Know it's Christmas' made it to number 1.

Last year, Gokhale joined the Facebook group Last Christmas for UK Number 1 that has 7.3k members. S Anand, from Maharashtra is one of the group admins, helping out Tanya Davies who initially created the group in October 2018. Anand, 33, who is a part of about 10-15 GM groups, because of his "angelic voice", recalls her own father belting the song out when she was very young, the large speakers reverberating with bass. "We had a tape then, and it didn't have a cover, but I remember playing it over many times," she says, citing three other songs she remembers clearly: 'Faith', 'Careless Whisper', 'One More Try'.

The Facebook group mostly has members from the UK, followed by the US and the rest of Europe. Anand's

friends are Justin Bieber fans who cannot understand her passion. "I remember when he died on Christmas day in 2016. My whole body was numb; I couldn't believe he was no more," she says, of the irony of losing her icon on a day he had sung about.

This year, there's also an Annual International George Michael Tribute on Christmas Day on Facebook, where they "hope to set global and national records, for the most streams of a song in one day for 'Last Christmas'".

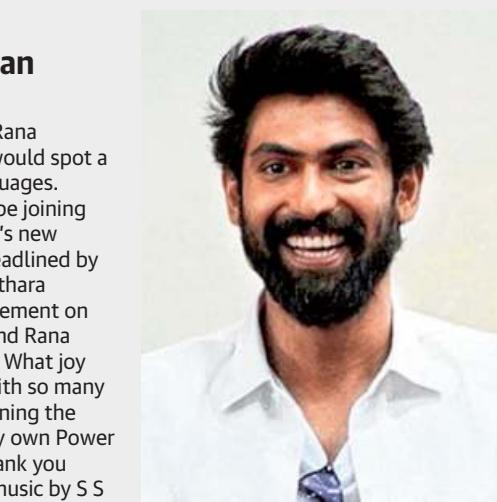
Today, the most competition the group has is from "that horrible Mariah Carey song" as Gokhale puts it, referring to 'All I want for Christmas is You'. *The Guardian* thought fit to do a 'Mariah Carey v Wham! - who should finally get their festive No 1?' piece where two writers slug it out, one saying Carey's song "sounds as if it was blessed

with the twinkling stardust that seems to be falling in its opening notes," and another saying, "George's tale

of woe maybe has the edge in the narrative stakes."

Many musicians have attempted the song after - including Whigfield and Taylor Swift - but fans agree that the GM original was truly the best. Gokhale is already playing 'Last Christmas' on repeat across Spotify and Apple Music. She hopes everyone around the world is too.

**Got your back** File photo of British singer George Michael performing at the 2012 London Olympic Games • AFP



## Rana Daggubati in Pawan Kalyan's next

A casual glance at actor-producer Rana Daggubati's filmography and one would spot a bunch of multi-starrers across languages. Adding another to this list, he will be joining the team of director Sagar Chandra's new untitled Telugu film that's being headlined by Pawan Kalyan. Production house Sithara Entertainments made this announcement on social media on Monday morning and Rana tweeted, "Another Journey begins! What joy this is, I've been able [to] work with so many stars across industries! And now joining the coolest [one] back home – our very own Power Star @PawanKalyan! Can't wait, thank you @SitharaEnts!" The film will have music by SS Thaman and the shooting will commence in January. Meanwhile, Rana is looking forward to the release of the multilingual film *Haathi Mere Saathi* (Aranya in Telugu and Kaadan in Tamil), directed by Prabhu Solomon, in which he plays a character inspired by 'The Forest Man' Jadav Payeng, and director Venu Udugula's *Virata Parvam* in which he stars alongside Sai Pallavi.

# Oli defends move to dissolve Parliament

Opponents challenge 'constitutional coup'; three petitions are under process, says SC spokesperson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
REUTERS  
KATHMANDU

Nepal's embattled Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli on Monday defended his move to abruptly dissolve Parliament, saying he was forced to seek a fresh mandate through elections as the rift within the ruling Nepal Communist Party severely affected his government's functioning.

Mr. Oli on Sunday sprang a surprise on his rivals and got the President to dissolve Parliament, a controversial move amidst a prolonged tussle for power between him and former premier Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' within the ruling dispensation. In a special address to the nation, Mr. Oli said that he was forced to



**Blow back:** Police detaining activists protesting against the dissolution of Parliament in Kathmandu on Monday. • AFP

dissolve Parliament and announce mid-term elections after he learnt about a plan to move a vote of no-confidence against him.

"I was forced to seek a fresh mandate through elections as attempts were made against my government, not to allow it to function properly," he said while defend-

ing his decision to dissolve Parliament and announce dates for mid-term elections.

"The elected government was pushed to a corner and picketed against and was not allowed to work so I decided to dissolve the house," he added. "Against the people's mandate and their will, national politics was dragged

into an endless and goalless direction by creating controversy, making Parliament meaningless as the elected government could not receive its support but always faced opposition and dragged into the controversy." He accused some of his own party leaders for forcing him to take this step. "When the Prime Minister of the majority government was not allowed to work, I did not want to indulge in unfair practices behind closed doors and reach a compromise with them."

"This move could be seen as an abrupt step for now, but some of my party leaders should be held responsible for creating this situation who did not cooperate with my government," Mr. Oli added.

## Pakistan signs \$1.7 bn debt relief deal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has secured a \$1.7 billion debt relief agreement to help offset the financial headwinds sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said on Monday.

The deal, following months of negotiations with creditors, will provide a moratorium on debt payments for large swathes of the current fiscal year and help ease the cash-strapped country's massive financial obligations.

"The Government of Pakistan has successfully negotiated and concluded rescheduling agreements with 19 bilateral creditors, including members of the Paris club," said the Ministry of Economic Affairs.



Nancy Pelosi, left, and Chuck Schumer after a press conference on Sunday.

U.S. lawmakers agreed on a nearly \$900-billion COVID-19 relief package for millions of Americans on Sunday, in a deal that follows months of wrangling and which comes as the nation battles the world's largest COVID-19 outbreak.

The package includes aid for vaccine distribution and logistics, extra jobless benefits of \$300 per week, and a new round of \$600 stimulus checks – half the amount provided in checks distributed in March under the CARES Act.

Months of partisan debate and finger-pointing, as well as last-minute negotiations, culminated in a deal lawmakers said they hoped to for-

"We've agreed to a pack-

age of nearly \$900 billion. It is packed with targeted policies to help struggling Americans who have already waited too long," Republican Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell said in a statement.

Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer confirmed an agreement had been reached on a deal that "delivers urgently needed funds to save the lives and livelihoods of the American people as the virus accelerates".

The agreement also contains \$25 billion in housing aid to prevent evictions and nearly \$100 billion to help schools and childcare facilities re-open, a statement from Ms. Pelosi and Mr.

Schumer said. "The House will move swiftly to pass this legislation immediately, so it can quickly be sent to the Senate and then to the President's desk for his signature," Mr. Schumer and Ms. Pelosi said in a statement.

In the wake of the deal, President-elect Joe Biden, who has promised to pass another cash injection when he takes office in January, welcomed the agreement, but said more will need to be done.

"Immediately, starting in the new year, Congress will need to get to work on support for our COVID-19 plan, for support to struggling families, and investments in jobs and economic recovery," Mr. Biden said in a statement.

Meanwhile, opponents of Mr. Oli turned to the Supreme Court on Monday to challenge the dissolution of Parliament and denounced the move as a "constitutional coup". Seven Ministers stepped down after the dissolution, saying it was violation of the "popular mandate" given to them in a 2017 general election.

Supreme Court (SC) Spokesman Bhadrakali Pokharel said three petitions against the dissolution were "in the process of being registered".

"Under the constitution, the Prime Minister has no prerogative to dissolve Parliament," lawyer Dinesh Tripathi, who is one of the petitioners, told Reuters. "It's a constitutional coup. I'm seeking a stay order from the court."



K.P. Sharma Oli

PM Oli hit back at his critics on the COVID-19 issue in his own style and cited the "southern border" of Nepal – a synonym for India – as the reason for the increasing COVID-19 count. His critics pointed at a hint of scandal in the health sector because of the government's allegedly non-transparent purchases to deal with the pandemic requirements. Nepal is yet to zero in on a viable vaccine as a result of the disorder in this crucial matter.

### NEWS ANALYSIS

As COVID-19 infections increased in Nepal, Mr. Prachanda kept up his attack on the Prime Minister. Mr. Oli responded by resorting to diversionary tactics. He repeatedly raked up the 'Indian hand' issue, and even went to the extent of claiming that the existence of the "real" Ayodhya is inside Nepalese territory.

Sensing an opportunity, the critics in the standing committee of the party, led by Mr. Prachanda and former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal, urged Mr. Oli to agree to the "one man, one post" formula. Under this, Prime Minister Oli would cease to be a co-chair of the party and give organi-

zational control to the other co-chair, Mr. Prachanda. Both the leaders held around a dozen meetings on this issue, which, however, failed to reach any consensus. In the face of a continued deadlock, the standing committee, with its block of pro-Prachanda members, repeatedly summoned the PM to explain the government's functioning, but Mr. Oli, on more than one occasion, skipped such consultations.

**Hunger for power**

"The breakdown in the political dialogue within the Nepal Communist Party is largely because of Mr. Oli's hunger for power," said Swarnim Wagle, who chairs the Kathmandu-based Institute for Integrated Development Studies. "It's a suicidal move for PM Oli to call for election as there is no scope for such a move under the Constitution. At least eight writ petitions have been filed in the Supreme Court

already and there is no way that he can win a case in the court."

At the end, Mr. Oli failed the test set up by powerful members within the party, such as Mr. Prachanda, which led to his lack of majority in the parliamentary party of the NCP. He has, therefore, acted to avert a no-confidence motion that was being mooted by some of his colleagues. Mr. Oli made the first move and has succeeded with help from the President. But for the success of his "coup", he also requires support from the judiciary and parts of the NCP. The coming days will determine if Mr. Oli will pass the biggest test of his career.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

Mr. Shapps said getting the bans lifted as swiftly as possible was his priority but given British preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period, the country was well prepared for disruption.

"I'm in touch with my opposite number in France and we're doing everything we

can to get that restarted, in fact they've said to us they want to restart the hauliers as quickly as possible," Mr. Shapps told Sky News.

</div

## MARKET WATCH

	21-12-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	45,554	-3.00
Gold	50,297	1.32
Brent oil	49.92	-3.44

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	444.25	-19.05
Asian Paints	2554.65	-46.85
Axis Bank	582.50	-27.00
Bajaj Auto	3238.25	-109.30
Bajaj Finserv	8846.75	-368.85
Bajaj Finance	5041.85	-210.65
Bharti Airtel	490.90	-19.75
BPCL	367.35	-26.50
Britannia Ind	3624.05	-96.45
Cipla	778.50	-14.95
Coal India	132.95	-8.75
Divis Lab	3634.15	-198.75
Dr Reddys Lab	5068.55	-160.20
Eicher Motors	2396.40	-84.55
GAIL (India)	114.70	-10.35
Grasim Ind	877.35	-32.30
HCL Tech	870.45	-20.20
HDFC	2414.80	-64.60
HDFC Bank	1372.65	-38.70
HDFC Life	629.20	-24.90
Hero MotoCorp	2994.10	-141.20
Hindalco	232.30	-17.60
Hind Unilever	2305.95	-27.50
ICICI Bank	494.50	-22.65
IndusInd Bank	842.70	-62.50
Infosys	1177.30	-12.50
Indian Oil Corp	87.10	-6.85
ITC	202.95	-11.55
JSW Steel	353.50	-10.70
Kotak Bank	1920.85	-28.50
L&T	1234.85	-46.70
M&M	685.95	-47.65
Maruti Suzuki	7376.10	-183.65
Nestle India Ltd.	18192.60	-170.15
NTPC	97.50	-6.25
ONGC	89.85	-9.15
PowerGrid Corp	185.50	-8.40
Reliance Ind	1939.70	-51.85
SBI Life	840.85	-16.30
State Bank	254.70	-16.75
Shree Cement	23717.50	-856.90
Sun Pharma	552.55	-22.45
Tata Motors	164.55	-16.00
Tata Steel	595.85	-35.40
TCS	2820.15	-40.85
Tech Mahindra	906.85	-26.95
Titan	1471.65	-47.70
UltraTech Cement	5007.85	-144.65
UPL	437.30	-23.00
Wipro	353.95	-9.60

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.58	73.90
Euro	89.33	89.75
British Pound	97.27	97.72
Japanese Yen (100)	70.87	71.21
Chinese Yuan	11.23	11.28
Swiss Franc	82.59	82.99
Singapore Dollar	54.90	55.15
Canadian Dollar	56.87	57.14
Malaysian Ringgit	18.15	18.25
Australian Dollar	55.03	55.32

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



**Positively impacted 10 lakh SMBs: Amazon India**  
BENGALURU  
Amazon India said on Monday it had positively impacted the operations of more than 10 lakh Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs) including sellers, delivery and logistics partners, neighbourhood stores, enterprises, developers, content creators, and authors in India in 2020. These SMBs, in turn, provided livelihood to lakhs of people, the e-tailer said.

## NIIF master fund gets \$107 million investment

MUMBAI  
The National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) on Monday announced a \$107 million investment into its 'master fund' from Canada's PSP Investments, US International Development Finance Corporation and Axis Bank. After the new commitment, the overall size of the 'master fund' has touched \$2.34 billion and NIIF announced the final close of the master fund. PTI

## Edelweiss to raise up to ₹200 crore via NCDs

MUMBAI  
Edelweiss Financial Services Ltd. has announced a public issue of secured, redeemable non-convertible debentures (NCDs) amounting to ₹100 crore, with an option to retain oversubscription of up to ₹100 crore aggregating to ₹200 crore. About 75% of the funds raised through the issue would be used for repayment/prepayment of interest and principal of existing borrowings, it said.

## Nayar to chair KKR India, Trehan is head of PE unit

MUMBAI  
Global investment firm KKR has announced that Sanjay Nayar, CEO of KKR India, will transition to a new role as chairman of KKR India, effective December 31 and Gaurav Trehan will head its private equity business in the country. "As chairman, Mr. Nayar will advise and assist KKR's India business by leveraging his connectivity and experience across the country," KKR said.

# Rising input costs drive four auto firms to bump up prices

CVs from Tata Motors and Isuzu, M&M tractors, BMW cars to cost more from Jan.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Four automobile firms – Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M), Isuzu Motors India and BMW Group India – on Monday announced an increase in prices of their products, passing on rising input costs to consumers.

Industry analysts attributed this to the sharp rise in prices of commodities that go into the manufacture of automobiles.

"All input costs have gone up substantially. Be it steel, rubber [or] copper, all commodity prices have gone up," said Jinesh Gandhi, auto analyst, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"The magnitude of the



**Tough ride:** The rise in commodity prices is such that firms are unable to absorb even half of it, say analysts ■ T.E. RAJA SIMHAN

price hike is such that the auto companies do not have the capacity to absorb even half of it," he added.

The farm equipment sector of Mahindra & Mahindra said it would raise prices for

its tractors across models effective January 1, citing the rise in commodity prices..

Tata Motors said there would be a price increase across its commercial vehicle range, effective January 1.

"The steady rise in material and other input costs, impact of forex and transition to BS6 norms, have cumulatively escalated the cost of manufacturing vehicles," it said in a statement.

## Increasing by ₹10,000

Isuzu Motors India also announced an increase in the prices of its commercial pick-up range – D-MAX Regular Cab and D-MAX S-CAB – by approximately ₹10,000 with effect from January 1.

BMW Group India said it would introduce the revised 2021 pricing for all BMW and MINI models effective January 4. Prices will increase by up to 2% across the portfolio, it said.

## SsangYong Motor files for receivership

## REUTERS

SEOUL

South Korea's SsangYong Motor Co. Ltd. filed for court receivership on Monday after it defaulted on loan repayment of about 60 billion won (\$54.4 million), the South Korean automaker said in a statement.

"SsangYong Motor applied for the court receivership procedure as a massive disruption in the operation is expected after the company could not reach an agreement to extend its loan repayment deadlines with foreign banks," it said in a statement.

Indian automaker M&M, which holds a 74.65% stake in SsangYong, said last week the total payment was due on December 14.

# 'Can't stop Amazon from writing to regulators on FRL'

Authorities to decide on the deal: HC

## SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday declined to restrain U.S.-based e-commerce major Amazon from writing to Indian statutory authorities such as the SEBI and CCI about an arbitral order against the assets sale deal between Future Retail Ltd. (FRL) and Reliance Retail.

The high court said that though a prima facie case was made out by FRL for grant of interim injunction, "the balance of convenience lies both in favour of FRL and Amazon".

FRL had stated in its plea that it was a listed company with more than three lakh shareholders and more than 25,000 employees, operating retail chains in more than 400 cities in every State of the country through digital platforms and also through about 1,534 physical stores across India.

It said the pandemic had had a devastating impact on the Indian retail sector, including FRL, which is in serious economic peril. FRL's financial condition was rapidly deteriorating with notices being received from banks, financial institutions, creditors, landlords and vendors, it added.

FRL said that Reliance was acquiring the retail and wholesale business as also the logistics and warehousing business from the Future Group as going concerns, also transgress to 'control' over FRL requiring government approvals and in the absence thereof are contrary to FEMA FDI Rules'. Another reason for declining FRL's plea, the high court said, was that both FRL and Amazon had already made their representations and counter representations with the statutory



authorities/regulators and now it was for the latter to take a decision.

FRL had stated in its plea before the high court, had accused Amazon of interfering with its assets sale deal with Reliance by writing to various regulatory authorities about an order passed by the Singapore International Arbitration Centre on October 25, restraining FRL from taking any steps to transfer its retail assets. Amazon has 49% stake in Future Coupons Pvt. Ltd. (FCPL), which holds 9.82% in FRL.

Justice

Mukta

Gupta

opined

that

a

combination

of

the

shareholding

agreements

(SHA)

of

FRL

and

FCPL

and

the

FCPL

SSA

(share

subscription

agreement)

, besides

"creating

protective

rights

in

favour

of

Amazon

for

its

investments

, also

transgress

to

'control'

over

FRL

requiring

government

approvals

and

in

the

absence

thereof

are

contrary

to

FEMA

FDI

Rules

".

Another

reason

for

# 'Rahul should replace Shaw as opener'

Gavaskar also wants the promising Gill to bat in the middle-order in the Melbourne Test

## INDIA IN AUS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ADELAIDE

Legendary Indian batsman Sunil Gavaskar wants K.L. Rahul to open in place of an out-of-form Prithvi Shaw and the promising Shubman Gill to play in middle-order during the second Test against Australia at the MCG from December 26.

"First, maybe Rahul should replace Prithvi Shaw as an opener. At No. 5 or No. 6, Shubman Gill should come in. His form has been good. Things can change if we start well," said Gavaskar on the possible changes in the line-up.

He did caution that if India doesn't stay positive, a 4-0 drubbing might be on the cards.

### Stay positive

"India have to believe that they can come back in the remainder of the Test series. If India don't find the positivity, then a 4-0 series loss can happen. But if they have pos-



**Form and experience:** India should go with Gill and Rahul in the second match, feels Gavaskar.

itivity, why not? It can happen (comeback)," Gavaskar said. "India should start the Melbourne Test well, it's necessary for them to step onto the ground with a lot of positivity. Australia's weak point is their batting," he said.

The Indian team management will also be keenly monitoring Ravindra Jadeja's progress. If fit, the allrounder could walk into the playing XI in place of Hanuma Vihari.

Jadeja, who suffered a

concussion during the first T20I, also suffered a hamstring injury which ruled him out of the first Test.

Should Jadeja be declared fit, the axe will fall on Vihari, not because of his low scores in the Adelaide Test, but

purely based on the best combination that Ajinkya Rahane and Ravi Shastri can put on the field.

The Indian team had a scheduled practice session at the Adelaide Oval on Monday but due to steady rain, it had to be cancelled.

With skipper Virat Kohli set to leave for India on Tuesday and the squad travelling to Melbourne, the skipper apparently had a chat with his team on the way forward.

### Rohit in quarantine

Senior batsman Rohit Sharma can start training from January 3 ahead of the Sydney Test. He is currently in quarantine in a two-room apartment in Sydney.

Cricket Australia has already flown David Warner and Sean Abbott from Sydney to Melbourne due to restrictions imposed by the New South Wales government in the wake of another surge of COVID-19 cases.

The BCCI, at the moment, can't shift Rohit in the middle of the quarantine.

# Hazlewood – simply devastating!

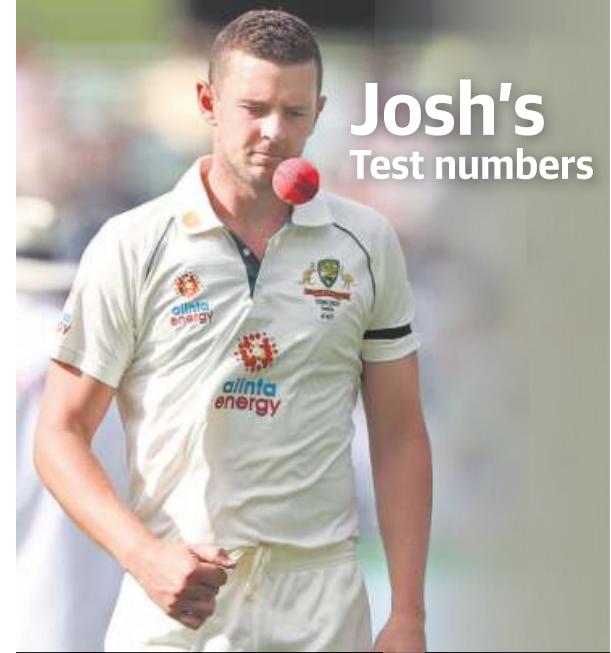
Sticking to the basics has fetched handsome rewards

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

Richard Hadlee's eyes swept around the charming Hagley Oval where New Zealand was gradually asserting itself over India in the second Test earlier this year.

The Kiwi pace bowling legend was following the action from his seat in the pavilion, his gaze picking out little, not-so-obvious elements from the middle.

With skipper Virat Kohli set to leave for India on Tues-



	M	Inns	Wkts	BBI	Avg.	SR	5W/10W
Overall	52	97	201	6/67	25.69	55.5	8/0
vs. India	12	22	40	6/67	27.50	63.2	3/0

**He makes the batsman play, he is on or around the off-stump, and moves it both ways**

HADLEE

slightly wide of the stumps, hit the good length area on the off-stump – this meant the batsman had to play the delivery – and got the ball to straighten or move slightly away.

His height and high-arm action fetched bounce, even from the good length area. And the edges flew thick and fast.

The Indian batsmen, lacking footwork, were caught at the crease but Hazlewood's length was such that they were in two minds – whether to play forward or back. By then, the pacey deliveries had found the nick.

**Complete bowler**  
The 29-year-old Hazlewood is a complete bowler; he swings and seams it both

ways, has accuracy and speed, and can hustle batsmen with short-pitched stuff.

Not surprisingly another man who keeps it simple, the formidable former Aussie pace predator Glenn McGrath said: "Hazlewood reminds me of myself. He bowls a mean off-stump line, doesn't give away anything, builds pressure, can bowl in partnerships."

Hazlewood keeps it simple with laser-guided precision. And the results are devastating.

## IPL 2021 likely to remain an eight-team event

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India's (BCCI's) Annual General Meeting (AGM) on December 24 is set to approve the addition of two new teams to the Indian Premier League, but IPL 2021 may still be an eight-team tournament, with the familiar round-robin league followed by the Playoffs.

"Approval on inclusion of

2 (two) new teams to the Indian Premier League," states one of the 23 points on the agenda of the AGM, to be held in Ahmedabad on Thursday. *The Hindu* understands that the proposal will be passed unanimously on the floor of the meeting, but the "office-bearers will be authorised to chalk out the nitty-gritty".

"Once the addition of the two new teams is approved

in principle, the office-bearers will figure out whether it's feasible to add two new teams right away," revealed an insider. "At the moment, they have been advised that eight teams should be persisted with for IPL 2021. Once the market improves, the teams can be added for IPL 2022."

It is learnt that the BCCI hierarchy is all but convinced about waiting till IPL

2022 for a ten-team tournament. Considering the challenging economic situation, primarily due to the pandemic, the Board is unlikely to get the best deal either from prospective bidders or the broadcaster. Besides, the inclusion of two new teams will lead to an overhaul of all the existing teams – a logistical and tactical nightmare for the BCCI executives and IPL franchises to pull off at

■ AGM set to approve the addition of two teams, but BCCI may wait till 2022 to debut new format

short notice.

A couple of franchise officials confirmed that despite "not having any say in decision-making", they have been informally told to be ready for IPL 2021 with "the same format".

He attained accuracy from his first delivery. He ran in smoothly, delivered from

## India Open to be the last Olympic-qualifying event

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

The twice-cancelled \$400,000 India Open will be held here from May 11 to 16, 2021, and will be the final Olympic-qualifying event.

As per the tournament schedule released by the Badminton World Federation on Monday, points earned from 17 tournaments – commencing with the Swiss Open (March 2-7) and culminating with the India Open – will help players stake claim for a berth in the Tokyo Olympics.

The All England Open (March 17-21) and Malaysia Masters (April 6-11) will, however, not be part of the Olympic qualifying cycle, popularly known as the 'Race to Tokyo'.

Olympic qualification will be based on the 'Race to Tokyo' rankings published on May 18. These will also be used to determine Olympics seedings.

Meanwhile, an Indian

team comprising P.V. Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, B. Sai Prajna, K. Srikanth, Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, Chirag Shetty, Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy will travel to Bangkok for back-to-back million-dollar Thailand Opens, from January 12-17 and January 19-24.

Though the BWF World Tour Finals will follow from January 27-31, the chance of an Indian participant looks remote. Only Srikanth, placed eighth in the BWF World Tour rankings, has

Defending champion Sindhu is ranked 22nd – five behind Saina Nehwal – and looks unlikely to make the cut. Till last season, the defending champion enjoyed an automatic entry into the next edition of the Finals. However, in October, a change in BWF regulations forced Sindhu to search for World Tour points, in order to be among the top-eight ranked players.



Sindhu and Saina will play in two tournaments in Thailand.

## Ramkumar wins title



**Trophy time:** Ramkumar, right, with coach Emilio Sanchez, left, and the sponsor. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SPORTS BUREAU  
NAPLES (USA)

Ramkumar Ramanathan continued to have a fruitful time at his training base in Florida, as he won the \$25,000 UTR Pro tennis event here.

Ramkumar defeated Cristian Rodriguez Sanchez of Mexico 6-2, 6-0 in the final to emerge victorious in his third successive tournament in the circuit. In six matches, Ramkumar dropped one set, to Alexander Bernard. He beat compatriot Aditya Vashistha, a student in New

York, in the quarterfinals. Ramkumar has been training at the Sanchez Casal Academy in Florida after completing his schedule in the professional circuit.

**The results:**  
Final: Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Cristian Rodriguez Sanchez (Ita) 6-2, 6-0.

**Semifinals:** Ramkumar bt Dusty Boyer (USA) 6-3, 6-4; **Quarterfinals:** Ramkumar bt Aditya Vashistha 6-1, 6-2.

**League:** Ramkumar bt Logan Zapp (USA) 6-1, 6-2; bt Gabriele Guzauskas 6-3, 6-2; bt Alexander Bernard 7-6(4), 3-6, 6-1.

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13124

FANCIED SHMUCK  
RAMIGUP ACCESSION  
SIGIW KHC  
TOILERS SOILAGE  
DINTN NGNR  
ANGRY EGREGIOUS  
YCHINSTRAP ASPIRE  
ONALUEAR  
VITALITY GAROTTIE  
EELUANOIT  
RURITANIA BREDA  
SIEKNINNIR  
AMUSES TACITLY

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

## FAITH

### Meaningful quest

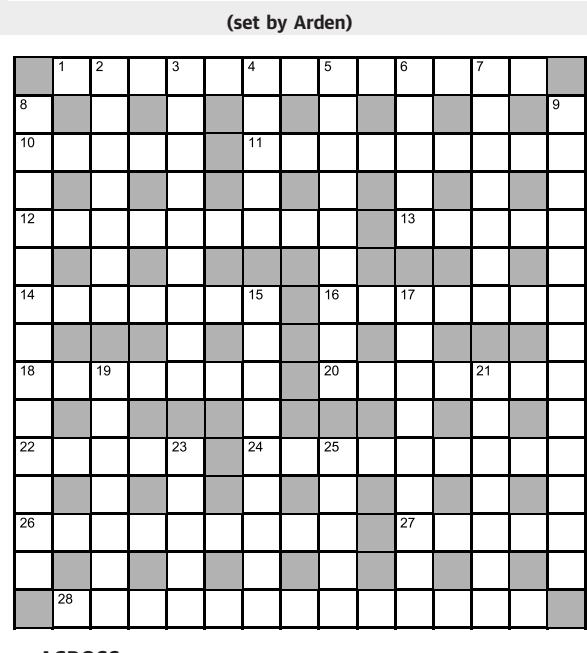
As individual life time is brief and the things to be learnt inexhaustible, scriptures reiterate that one should be selective in choosing to learn only what is really worthwhile and meaningful. Just as the swan sifts the milk from water, and the bees target only the honey from flowers, the wise seek what is most beneficial, the highest truth, pointed out Asuri Sri Madhvachariar in a discourse.

There are sastras that oppose the Vedas and these have to be ignored. Again, the Karma Kanda section in the Vedas dealing with yagas and yagnas as means for the accomplishment of worldly desires or for attainment of swarga loka, etc, can be ignored. These are impermanent and short lived. But sastras also say that for a jivatma, to be aware of God and to worship Him is a grace that is derived from one's past good deeds or samskaras. Each one's desire and outlook of life is under the influence of inbuilt impressions or vasanas in association with the gunas and the impact of individual karma. Prompted by these forces, the jivatma seeks the help of God or other deities as shown in the scriptures.

In the Gita, the Lord classifies the jivatmas who propitiate Him on the basis of their desires, worldly and spiritual. Some seek him for wealth, some for relief from the sufferings of samsara, some wish to attain jnana while only a very few desire moksha. Even when some seek other deities with faith for fulfilment of their specific desires, the Lord who is the indweller and prime force in those deities grants their desires. The Lord says He grants even such prayers that seek only fleeting joy and satisfaction only to strengthen the jivatma's faith in sastras. Perhaps with time the jivatma would realise the worthlessness of worldly goals and seek the highest Purushartha, moksha, which He alone can grant.

## CROSSWORD + 13125

(set by Arden)



Never go off the grid.

We are digital now. Come solve online.  
at <https://www.ergo.page.link/jjpTn>



16 Entertainment kills and how! (3,4)

18 Appeal to get sponge cover for dish (7)

20 Agreed to manufacture gas-filled bomb (7)

22 No scarcity, some get award (5)

24 Brief season leads to deficit (9)

26 Any sharp pain initially will upset and bother a child (5,4)

27 Go back and study in Mormon town (5)

28 Stephen Ball is off to sing (5,3,5)

Indian men  
will end year  
in fourth place

## HOCKEY

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LAUSANNE

The Indian men's and women's hockey teams will finish 2020 in fourth and ninth positions after a major part of the year was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The FIH on Monday confirmed that the Belgium men's team and the Netherlands' women will finish the year at the top of the world rankings.

In January, the world body introduced its new match-based model for calculation of world rankings, with the FIH Hockey Pro League matches that were played in early part of the year seeing regular fluctuations in standings before the outbreak of COVID-19.

According to a statement issued by the FIH, the "brief but wonderful return" of the competition between September and November saw further exchanges of points between the men's and women's national teams of Belgium, Germany, Netherlands and Great Britain.

The FIH moved away from the previous tournament-based rankings system to a match-based method where opposing teams exchange points in official, FIH sanctioned games.

## TV PICKS

**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Wednesday)  
**ISL:** Star Sports 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

## Races advanced

BENGALURU  
The stewards of the Bangalore Turf Club have decided to advance the ninth day (Saturday) December 26 races to (Friday) December 25, 2020.

## NEW DELHI CRICKET ROUND-UP

## Haryana CA takes title

Haryana Cricket Academy (HCA) retained the 30th all-India Om Nath Sood title after stopping Lal Bahadur Shastri Club by four runs in an exciting finish. After Sumeet Verma (107) and Devender Lohchab helped HCA reach 232 for six in 40 overs, Tejas Dahiya smashed a 24-ball 64 to almost pull off a dream win for Shastri Club, but was out off the last ball of the match.

**The scores:** HCA 232/6 in 40 overs (Sumeet Verma 107, Devender Lohchab 65, Vikas Dixit 3/24) bt L.B. Shastri Club 228/9 in 40 overs (Tejas Dahiya 64, Priyansh Arya 39, Sumit Chikara 38).

## Karan, Ravi, Harshit excel

Karan Sharma (101), Ravi Thakur (91) and Harshit Sethi (5/16) set up Noida Wonder's 38-run victory over Swami Shraddhanand College in the first Choudhary Shyam Singh memorial tournament.

**The scores:** Noida Wonder 232/5 in 20 overs (Karan Sharma 101, Ravi Thakur 91) bt Swami Shraddhanand College 195 in 18.3 overs (Anuj Rawat 44, Arjunn Rapria 41, Ankush



**Triumphant:** Haryana Cricket Academy retained the Om Nath Sood title. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vains 38, Harshit Sethi 5/16, Ayush Jemwal 4/34).

## Taif, Aryan shine

Mohammad Taif (56 n.o.) and Aryan Vashisht (3/18) helped Sonnet Club beat host Bal Bhawan School, Dwarka, by 86 runs in the Bal Bhawan (u-15) Premier League.

**The scores:** Sonnet Club 151 in 39.5 overs (Mohd. Taif 56 n.o.) bt Bal Bhawan 65 in 22.3 overs (Aryan Vashisht 3/18).

## Saksham hits century

Saksham Negi (104) and Amir Khan (3/24) were the stars of Telefunken Club's 232-run triumph over GRM Academy in the Airliner Winter Cup tournament.

**The scores:** Telefunken Club

305/5 in 40 overs (Saksham Negi 104, Chinmay Vashisht 91) bt GRM Academy 73 in 22 overs (Amir Khan 3/24).

## Six-wicket haul for Zihaan

Zihaan Rawal (6/7) wrecked Cricket Academy of Prasad and helped Maulana Azad score an eight-wicket win in B. R. Sharma tournament.

**The scores:** Cricket Academy Of Prasad 48 in 17.4 overs (Zihaan Rawal 6/7) lost to Maulana Azad Club 52/2 in 9.2 overs.

## Adarsh, Vaibhav shine

Unbeaten centuries from Adarsh Srivastava and Vaibhav Sharma laid the foundation of Golden Hawks' 210-run triumph over G. K.

Club in the first Tripathi Premier League.

**The scores:** Golden Hawks 276/5 in 35 overs (Adarsh Srivastava 119 n.o., Vaibhav Sharma 117 n.o.) bt GK Club 66 in 24 overs (Milind Tandon 4/25).

## Sanskar slams 121

Sanskars Bhati (121) and Harshit Tyagi (53) scripted Sunshine Academy's 60-run win over R.P. Academy in the Raghav memorial tournament.

**The scores:** Sunshine Academy 220/2 in 30 overs (Sanskar Bhati 121, Harshit Tyagi 53) bt R. P. Academy 160/5 in 30 overs (Rahul Sharma 34, Manish Kumar 32).

## Ahamed declared champion

Premier Pro-Stock 301-400cc result was withheld after a protest



Ahamed was in line with prescribed technical regulations.

Ahamed finished with a tally of 121 points in the championship, five ahead of Bengaluru's Anish Damodar Shetty (Race Concepts).  
**The 2020 National champions:** Pro-Stock 301-400cc: Rider:

K.Y. Ahamed (Chennai, TVS Racing). Team: TVS Racing. Manufacturer: TVS.

**Pro-Stock 165cc Open:** Rider:

Jagan Kumar (Chennai, TVS Racing). Team: TVS Racing. Manufacturer: TVS.

**Novice (Stock 165cc):** Rider:

Mohan Babu (Chennai, Privateer). Team: Sparks Racing. Manufacturer: Yamaha.

**Girls (Stock 165cc):** Rider:

Anne Jennifer (Chennai, Sparks Racing). Team: Gusto Racing. Manufacturer: Yamaha.

**One-make Championship: TVS Open:** Abhishek Vasudev (Bengaluru); **Novice:** Navaneeth Kumar (Puducherry); **Girls:** Jagruti Kiran Penkar (Kalyan); **Media:** Zaran Mody.

**Idemitsu Honda India Talent Cup: Open (NSF 250R):** Sarthak Chavan (Pune); **Novice (CBR 150R):** Shyam Sundar (Chennai).

## Williams' super strike seals it for ATKMB

His peach of a goal proves the difference in the match against BFC

## ISL 2020-21

## SPORTS BUREAU

David Williams shrugged off his indifferent form this season with a peach of a goal to give ATK Mohun Bagan a 1-0 win over Bengaluru FC at the Fatorda Stadium on Monday.

The Australian's decisive strike came just after the after the half-hour mark when he expertly controlled defensive midfielder Carl McHugh's long ball before cutting in and creaming one into the top-right corner from just outside the penalty box. It was Williams' eighth ISL goal - four of which have come against BFC - and the

## Real level on points with Atletico

Benzema scores one and creates two in win over Eibar

## EURO LEAGUES

## AGENCIES

## MADRID

Karim Benzema scored the opening goal and created two others as Real Madrid won 3-1 at Eibar on Sunday to move level on points with Atletico at the top of LaLiga.

Benzema and Luka Modric scored inside the first 13 minutes to put Zinedine Zidane's men on their way to a fourth straight league win, with Lucas Vazquez scoring a late third after Garcia Kike pulled one back for Eibar.

Real sits behind Atletico on goal difference, but has the better head-to-head record, which is how level teams are split at the end of the season. Diego Simeone's Atletico has two games in hand, though.

## United demolishes Leeds

In the Premier League, Manchester United demolished Leeds 6-2 in the first league meeting between the sides for 16 years to bolster its title



**Flexing his muscles:** Benzema came up with a stellar show for Zidane's men on Sunday. ■ AP

## Important results:

**LaLiga:** Eibar 1 (Kike 28) lost to Real Madrid 3 (Benzema 6, Modric 13, Vazquez 90+2).

**Premier League:** Manchester United 6 (McTomney 2, 3, Fernandes 20, 70+pen, Lindelof 37, James 66) bt Leeds 2 (Cooper 41, Dallas 73); West Brom 0 lost to Aston Villa 3 (El Ghazi 5, 87+pen, Traore 84).

**Serie A:** Atalanta 4 (Zapata 59, Gosens 70, Muriel 72, Ilicic 85) bt Roma 1 (Dzeko 3). Lazio 2 (Immobile 9, Alberto 56) bt Napoli 0.



**Well done:** David Williams is the toast of his teammates after netting his eighth ISL goal. ■ SPORTZPICTURES/ISL

 Piramal

## WORRIED ABOUT VIRUSES\*?

TAKE

ourdaily™  
VITAMIN C & ZINC



Daily  
Immune  
Support



Protects  
from Cold\*



Fights Viral  
Infections\*

Available at your nearest chemist or: [amazon.in](http://amazon.in) | [Flipkart](http://Flipkart) | [PharmEasy](http://PharmEasy)

\*Builds immunity to fight cold and viral infections | In case of symptoms of any serious illness or infection, please consult a doctor | Creative Representation

For feedback or queries, contact customer care officer at Toll Free No. 1800 22 9898 or [consumercare@piramal.com](mailto:consumercare@piramal.com)