



Karnataka not sharing Krishna details, A.P. and Telangana tell SC  
page 7



Why only a few claims for COVID-19 ex gratia compensation, asks SC  
page 12



## IN BRIEF



Trinamool to tweak its party constitution

KOLKATA  
The Trinamool Congress on Monday announced its move to tweak its constitution to induct more members in its panels from other States.  
NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Gehlot's advisers not to get ministerial status

JAIPUR  
The Rajasthan Government is finding it tough to appoint MLAs as advisers to the CM as the BJP has opposed the move.  
STATES ▶ PAGE 6

LIVE ONLINE/OFFLINE  
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## Parliament clears Farm Laws Repeal Bill without a debate

Opposition members protest as House managers refuse to allow a discussion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021 was passed by both Houses of Parliament on Monday without debate amid protests by Opposition MPs on being denied a debate.

On the first day of the winter session, as expected, the Government had listed the Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021 for taking back the three contentious farm laws – Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020, Farmers' Empowerment and Protection Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 –



PM Narendra Modi addressing the media on the first day of the winter session in New Delhi on Monday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

but it was not clear that any debate would be allowed before the repeal.

Opposition leaders had expressed apprehension even before the Business Advisory Committee (BAC)

meetings of both Houses that the Government would want to clear the Bill without discussion. No consensus on a discussion was reached in the BAC meeting.

In the Lok Sabha, which

was adjourned till 12 noon after it convened due to ongoing protests by the Opposition on farm Bill related issues, the Repeal Bill was taken up as soon as the House reconvened.

Opposition MPs from the DMK and the Trinamool were in the Well when Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar stood to introduce the Bill, demanding that discussion be allowed. Congress MPs were in their seats but they too raised the demand for a discussion.

Speaker Om Birla said unless the House was in order he would not allow a discussion.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

RELATED REPORTS ▶ PAGE 11

12 RS MPs suspended for 'misconduct'

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

Twelve Opposition members of the Rajya Sabha were suspended for the entire winter session on Monday for "unprecedented acts of misconduct", and "unruly and violent behaviour" on August 11, the last day of the previous monsoon session.

This is the first time RS members have been suspended for misconduct during the previous session. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said as the incident happened on the last day of the monsoon session so no action could be taken then. In response, the Opposition mulled several options including boycotting the entire winter session.

OPPOSITION CHARGE ▶ PAGE 11

## Omicron poses very high global risk: WHO

It urges nations to boost health systems

REUTERS  
GENEVA

The heavily mutated Omicron coronavirus variant is likely to spread internationally and poses a very high risk of infection surges that could have "severe consequences" in some places, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Monday.



Medical staff wait for people at a vaccination centre in Rome on Monday. ■ AP

## States gear up for new protocols

States across the country have scurried to implement the testing, tracing and quarantine for international passengers from a few countries where the Omicron variant of the coronavirus has been recorded. Passengers coming from these 'at risk' countries have to undergo an RT-PCR test on arrival.

FULL REPORT ▶ PAGE 12

agreement on preventing future pandemics.

"Omicron has an unprecedented number of spike mutations, some of which are concerning for their potential impact on the trajectory of the pandemic," it said.

+

"The overall global risk related to the new variant ... is assessed as very high."

"The emergence of the highly mutated Omicron variant underlines just how perilous and precarious our situation is," Mr. Tedros said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

## 'Clear the air on construction activities in Delhi'

SC seeks Centre's reply to plea on Central Vista work proceeding despite building ban

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to clear the air on construction activities in areas falling within its domain in the Capital amid a clamour in court that the Central Vista project was proceeding "full steam" despite the reimposition of a building ban by the Supreme Court to loosen pollution's iron grip on Delhi.

A Special Bench led by Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana directed the Centre to respond by December 2, the next day of hearing. "Despite your [Supreme Court's] ban, the Central Vista work is going on... Lives of people should be more important than the Central Vista! The Central Vista work is on full steam right under the nose of the Supreme Court," senior



Full steam ahead: Work in progress for the Central Vista revamp near Vijay Chowk in New Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

tal. Chief Justice Ramana said the focus of the court was pollution, pure and simple. "We will not let anyone go. If the pollution has to do with Central Vista, we will ask him [Mehta]... Our focus is on pollution, whether it has to do with the Centre or the States," the CJI reacted orally to Mr. Singh's submissions.

General is directed to file response to the submission made by Mr. Vikas Singh and get instructions in this behalf on the next date of hearing.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre, questioned the intentions of the petitioner in focusing only on the Central Vista work. The Supreme Court had earlier given the green signal for the project in the heart of the power corridors of the Capital.

BAN ON CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES EXTENDED ▶ PAGE 4

advocate Vikas Singh, for the petitioner's side, submitted.

The court had reimposed the construction ban in Delhi NCR as an interim measure on November 24. However,

in its order, the court said: "Mr. Vikas Singh has raised certain issues with regard to construction activities being carried out in the NCT of Delhi, which according to him, is the major cause of air pollution in Delhi..." Solicitor

## Delhi won't do away with fair price shops: Govt. to HC

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The AAP Government on Monday told the Delhi High Court that its scheme for doorstep delivery of ration was optional and would not result in fair price shops being wound up.

Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, representing the Delhi Government, said

similar schemes are being run in other States and doorstep delivery is in sync with the march of technology.

Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, representing the Centre, said its concern lay in safeguarding the architecture of the National Food Security Act.

DETAILS ▶ PAGE 4

Crypto trade not tracked, says Govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Government does not collect information on cryptocurrency or Bitcoin transactions in the country and has no plans to recognise Bitcoin as a currency, the Finance Ministry told Parliament on Monday.

Responding to separate queries from Lok Sabha MPs on the booming trade in cryptocurrency in the country and whether the Government has legally permitted their exchanges to do business, the Ministry said "cryptocurrencies are unregulated in India" and it "does not collect information" on their trading.

RBI raises concerns

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has been raising serious concerns about cryptocurrency in the context of macroeconomic and financial stability and has called for more "well-informed" public discussions to understand the "far deeper issues" involved.

The Government has already said it plans to introduce a Bill to regulate cryptocurrency.

It might possibly ban all private cryptocurrencies and facilitate the creation of the official digital currency, in the ongoing winter session of Parliament.

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## Dengue cases cross 8,000 mark in Delhi

1,148 cases reported last week; season's total is the highest since 2015

MUNEEF KHAN  
NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 1,148 cases of dengue over the past week (till November 27), taking this month's caseload to 6,739, a civic report said on Monday. The season's total has reached 8,276 cases, the highest since 2015 when the city reported close to 16,000 cases. The death toll stands at nine.

North Delhi saw the highest number of cases last week at 273, followed by

south Delhi with 242 cases and east Delhi with 192 cases.

Till November 20, Delhi had recorded 7,128 cases. Between November 13 and 20, north Delhi saw 543 cases, followed by south Delhi with 444 cases, while east Delhi reported 221 cases.

A majority of Delhi's dengue cases for this season were recorded in November. In October, the Capital reported 1,196 cases, while there were 217 cases in Sep-

tember. "Dengue cases have dropped at a swift rate but people should continue to monitor mosquito-breeding sites at their homes. The halt in rain has been a major factor for the dip in cases," a civic body official said.

In the current season, north Delhi has recorded 2,389 cases, followed by south Delhi with 2,298 cases. East Delhi has reported 931 cases, the lowest among the three municipal corpora-

tions. Apart from the corporations, the New Delhi Municipal Council recorded 72 cases, while Delhi Cantonment and other areas reported 132 and 17 cases respectively, for this season.

"We are hardly seeing any new cases, not even for consultations at the OPD. There is no new admission as well. The change in the weather can be attributed to the drop in cases," a doctor at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said.

## Govt. is prepared to deal with new COVID-19 variant: Sisodia

RT-PCR test compulsory for all passengers from high-risk countries, says DDMA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal on Monday chaired a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), which was also attended by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, to assess the COVID-19 situation in light of the Omicron variant.

Sources said the DDMA had decided to conduct RT-PCR test on passengers from the high-risk countries, genome sequencing of the positive cases, and enforce mandatory isolation/quarantine as per the guidelines laid down by the Central Government.

As advised by experts, Government sources said, it was decided to continue with the test, track and treat strategy with emphasis on surveillance, isolation of positive cases, contact tracing and strict enforcement of COVID-19-appropriate behaviour.



A vaccination drive under way at a centre in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

According to sources, it was stressed that necessary institutional mechanism be put in place for surveillance of international passengers and isolation of positive cases.

Speaking about the Omicron variant, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said they are already prepared and taking measures to ensure availability of hospital beds. "If cases rise, then some beds which were di-

verted for dengue will be re-served again for COVID-19 once the dengue cases drop," he said.

Mr. Sisodia further said that it will take some time to get clarity on how deadly the new variant is or how it will affect those who are vaccinated.

**Dedicated hospital**  
The Delhi Government on Monday designated Lok Nayak Hospital for treatment

of any patients found infected with the new variant. "Lok Nayak Hospital is hereby designated as the dedicated hospital which will treat patients detected with the new variant of SARS-CoV2. The hospital will designate one or more separate wards (as per need) for isolating and treating such patients, as per the provisions circulated by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare," an official order said.

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Three held for aiding students crack exams by unfair means

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Cyber Cell on Monday arrested three persons for allegedly helping students crack various certification courses through fraudulent means. The accused used to hack into the exam site and get the desired score for the candidates.

DCP (Cyber Cell), K.P.S. Malhotra, said the accused have been identified as Deep Shah, 19, who hailed from Ahmedabad in Gujarat, his father Rajesh Shah, 45, and Akhlakh Allam, 29, who hailed from Delhi. The father-son duo was running a coaching institute in Ahmedabad.

According to the police, they received a tip-off that several services were available on the dark web in which some hackers claim to hack the examinee's device to get the desired score. They charge hefty amounts from the aspirants, the DCP said.

A decoy candidate was arranged through which the accused were arrested.

They had helped more than 200 aspirants in attempting online exams, the police said.

## Matiala church body refutes charges of forced conversion

Police presence beefed up in area following Sunday's attack

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A day after a church in west Delhi's Matiala was vandalised and the Sunday mass disrupted by "local miscreants", some followers went back to Punjab where the Christian body operating the church has its headquarters, while a few others stayed inside their homes, refusing to speak about the incident.

The main gate of the church remained locked, its signboard vandalised, on Monday. Police presence was beefed up in the area with one officer from the Bindapur police station deployed there for round-the-clock surveillance.

FIRs against both parties DCP (Dwarka) Shankar Choudhary visited the spot on Monday. He said FIRs have been lodged against both the parties, the miscreants and those holding the prayers, while one of the locals has been arrested.

Vivaan George, part of the Christian body, said all the prayers on the intervening night but when the news broke, I came here and found the church vandalised... They were peacefully

carrying out the prayers and bothering no one," he said.

A local who stays opposite the church, requesting anonymity, said they were not in favour of the church being constructed and the worshippers "created ruckus in the neighbourhood".

The police had earlier said that the premises, which was a godown, was turned into a church overnight.

Bajrang Dal spokesperson Vinod Bansal said they had sent a team to the church after they received information about some boys being forced to convert". "Our team protested and raised slogans as it was a fake church which was forcing locals to join them... The allegations of people being beaten up are not true," he said.

## 4 held for stealing money through SIM blocking

'Kingpin' is a person of African origin'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Four men have been arrested for allegedly siphoning off money from several bank accounts through clickjacking and SIM blocking, the police said on Monday.

The kingpin of the gang is a person of African origin who used to send phishing emails to his victims to get information like bank account number, user ID and password.

The police said that on Wednesday, one Harish Chander approached them and said that he received a message on his phone

about an alternate mobile number changing request. The complainant said that he took the request as a normal message.

However, in the evening, his SIM was found to be blocked and when he checked his email ID on Thursday, he found that there was a netbanking password generating request.

When he approached the bank and checked his account, ₹10 lakh was found to have been transferred in three transactions into two accounts located in Bihar and West Bengal.

## Afghan national found murdered

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old Afghan national was found murdered on a street in north Delhi's Wazirabad, the police said on Monday.

DCP (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi said they received a call from a passerby that a man was lying unconscious on the street.

The man was identified

as Shiraj and prima facie it was suspected that he died of a bullet injury.

An autopsy report will ascertain the reason behind the death, the police said.

The crime scene was analysed and the suspects were identified. "It is suspected that the incident took place due to family issues," an officer said.

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### BID/OFFER SCHEDULE

## BID/OFFER OPENS TODAY

BID/OFFER CLOSES ON : THURSDAY, DECEMBER 02, 2021<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>UPI Mandate end time and date shall be at 12:00 pm on Friday, December 03, 2021.

In case of any revision in the Price Band, the Bid/ Offer Period will be extended by at least three additional Working Days after such revision in the Price Band, subject to the Bid/ Offer Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. In cases of force majeure, banking strike or similar circumstances, our Company and the Selling Shareholders may, in consultation with the GCBRLMs, BRLMs and the Co-BRLMs, for reasons to be recorded in writing, extend the Bid/ Offer Period for a minimum of three Working Days, subject to the Bid/ Offer Period not exceeding 10 Working Days. Any revision in the Price Band and the revised Bid/ Offer Period, if applicable, shall be widely disseminated by notification to the Stock Exchanges, by issuing a public notice, and also by indicating the change on the respective websites of the GCBRLMs, BRLMs and the Co-BRLMs at the terminals of the Syndicate Members and by intimation to the Designated Intermediaries and the Sponsor Bank.

The Offer is being made through the Book Building Process, in terms of Rule 19(2)(b) of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Rules, 1957, as amended ("SCR") read with Regulation 31 of the SEBI ICDR Regulations and in compliance with Regulation 6(2) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations wherein not less than 75% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to Qualified Institutional Buyers ("QIBs") (the "QIB Portion"), provided that our Company and the Selling Shareholders in consultation with the GCBRLMs, BRLMs and the Co-BRLMs may allocate up to 60% of the QIB Portion to Anchor Investors on a discretionary basis. In the event of under-subscription, or non-allocation in the Anchor Investor Portion, the balance Equity Shares shall be added to the QIB Portion. One-third of the Anchor Investor Portion shall be reserved for domestic Mutual Funds, subject to valid bids being received from the domestic Mutual Funds at or above the Anchor Investor Allocation Price. 5% of the QIB Portion (excluding the Anchor Investor Portion) shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to Mutual Funds only, and the remainder of the QIB Portion shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to all QIB Bidders (other than Anchor Investors), including Mutual Funds, subject to valid bids being received at or above the Offer Price. However, if the aggregate demand from Mutual Funds is less than 5% of the QIB Portion, the balance Equity Shares available for allocation in the Mutual Fund Portion will be added to the remaining QIB Portion for proportionate allocation to QIBs. Further, not more than 15% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation on a proportionate basis to Non-Institutional Bidders and not more than 10% of the Net Offer shall be available for allocation to RIBs in accordance with the SEBI ICDR Regulations, subject to valid bids being received from them at or above the Offer Price. Further, Equity Shares will be allocated on a proportionate basis to Eligible Employees applying under the Employee Reservation Portion, subject to valid bids received from them at or above the Offer Price. All Bidders (except Anchor Investors) are required to mandatorily utilize the Application Supported by Blocked Amount ("ASBA") process providing details of their respective bank account (including UPI ID for RIBs using UPI Mechanism), in which the corresponding Bid Amounts will be booked by the SCSBs or the Sponsor Bank, as applicable. Anchor Investors are not permitted to participate in the Offer through the ASBA process. For details, see "Offer Procedure" on page 423 of the RHP.

**Bidders/ Applicants should ensure that DP ID, PAN, Client ID and UPI ID (for RIBs bidding through the UPI mechanism) are correctly filled in the Bid cum Application Form. The DP ID, PAN and Client ID provided in the Bid cum Application Form should match with the DP ID, PAN, Client ID available in the Depository database, otherwise, the Bid cum Application Form is liable to be rejected. Bidders/ Applicants should ensure that the beneficiary account provided in the Bid cum Application Form is active. Bidders/Applicants should note that on the basis of the PAN, DP ID, Client ID and UPI ID (for RIBs bidding through the UPI mechanism) as provided in the Bid cum Application Form, the Bidder/Applicant may be deemed to have authorised the Depositories to provide to the Registrar to the Offer, any requested Demographic Details of the Bidder/Applicant as available on the records of the depositories. These Demographic Details may be used, among other things, for giving Allotment Advice or unblocking of ASBA Account or for other correspondence(s) related to the Offer. Bidders/Applicants are advised to update any changes to their Demographic Details as available in the records of the Depository Participant to ensure accuracy of records. Any delay resulting from failure to update the Demographic Details would be at the Bidders/Applicants' sole risk. Investors must ensure that their PAN is linked with Aadhaar and are in compliance with CBDT notification dated Feb 13, 2020 and press release dated June 25, 2021.**

**Contents of the Memorandum of Association of the Company as regards its objects:** For information on the main objects of the Company, please see the section "History and Certain Corporate Matters" on page 204 of the RHP and Clause III (A) of the Memorandum of Association of the Company. The Memorandum of Association of the Company is a

material document for inspection in relation to the Offer. For further details, please see the section entitled "Material Contracts and Documents for Inspection" on page 444 of the RHP.

**Liability of the members of the Company:** Limited by shares

**Amount of share capital of the Company and Capital structure:** As on the date of the RHP, the authorised share capital of the Company is ₹ 8,000,000,000 divided into 800,000,000 Equity Shares of ₹10 each. The issued, subscribed and paid-up share capital of the Company is ₹ 5,532,899,440 divided into 553,289,944 Equity Shares of ₹10 each. For details, please see the section entitled "Capital Structure" beginning on page 78 of the RHP.

**Names of signatories to the Memorandum of the Company and the number of Equity Shares subscribed by them:** The names of the signatories of the Memorandum of Association of our Company are Syed M. Salahuddin, Arif Buhary Rahman, Ahmed Syed Salahuddin, Hameed Syed, Salahuddin, Mohamed Hassan, Abdul Qadir A Rahim Buhary, and Venkatasamy Jagannathan. For details of the share capital history and capital structure of our Company, please see the section entitled "Capital Structure" beginning on page 78 of the RHP.

**Listing:** The Equity Shares to be Allotted through the Red Herring Prospectus are proposed to be listed on the Stock Exchanges. Our Company has received 'in-principle' approvals from BSE and NSE for the listing of the Equity Shares pursuant to their letters dated August 3, 2021 and September 23, 2021, respectively. For the purposes of the Offer, the Designated Stock Exchange shall be NSE. A signed copy of the Red Herring Prospectus and the Prospectus shall be delivered to the RoC in accordance with Sections 26(4) and 32 of the Companies Act, 2013. For details of the material contracts and documents available for inspection from the date of the Red Herring Prospectus up to the Bid/ Offer Closing Date, see "Material Contracts and Documents for Inspection" on page 444 of the RHP.

**Disclaimer Clause of the SEBI:** SEBI only gives its observations on the offer documents and this does not constitute approval of either the Offer or the specified securities or the offer document. The investors are advised to refer to page 392 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of SEBI.

**Disclaimer Clause of NSE (Designated Stock Exchange):** It is to be distinctly understood that the permission given by NSE should not in any way be deemed or construed that the Offer Document has been cleared or approved by NSE nor does it certify the correctness or completeness of any of the contents of the Offer Document. The investors are advised to refer to page 396 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of NSE.

**Disclaimer Clause of BSE:** It is to be distinctly understood that the permission given by BSE should not in any way be deemed or construed that the RHP has been cleared or approved by BSE nor does it certify the correctness or completeness of any of the contents of the RHP. The investors are advised to refer to page 396 of the RHP for the full text of the disclaimer clause of BSE.

**Disclaimer Clause of IRDAI : Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India ("IRDAI") does not undertake any responsibility for the financial soundness of the insurance company or for the correctness of any of the statements made or opinion expressed in this connection. Any approval by the IRDAI under the IRDAI**

**Issuance of Capital Regulations shall not in any manner be deemed to be or serve as a validation of the representations by our Company in the Red Herring Prospectus. This Offer has not been recommended or approved by IRDAI, nor does IRDAI guarantee the accuracy or adequacy of the contents/ information in this Red Herring Prospectus. It is to be distinctly understood that the Red Herring Prospectus should not in any way be deemed or construed to have been approved or vetted by IRDAI.**

**General Risks:** Investments in equity and equity-related securities involve a degree of risk and investors should not invest any funds in the Offer unless they can afford to take the risk of losing their entire investment. Investors are advised to read the risk factors carefully before taking an investment decision in the Offer. For taking an investment decision, investors must rely on their own examination of our Company and the Offer, including the risks involved. The Equity Shares in the Offer have not been recommended or approved by the SEBI, nor does SEBI guarantee the accuracy or adequacy of the contents of the RHP. Specific attention of the investors is invited to "Risk Factors" on page 26 of the RHP.

Kotak	AXIS CAPITAL	BofA SECURITIES	Citi	ICICI Securities	CLSA	CREDIT SUISSE
Kotak Mahindra Capital Company Limited* 1st Floor, 27 BKC, Plot No. 27, G Block, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 051, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 4336 0000 E-mail: starhealth.ip@kotak.com Investor grievance e-mail: kmcreddress@kotak.com Website: https://investmentbank.kotak.com Contact Person: Ganesh Rane SEBI Registration No.: INM000008704	Axxis Capital Limited* Axis House, Level 1, C-2 Wadia International Centre, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai - 400 025, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 2135 2183 E-mail: starhealth.ip@axiscap.in Investor grievance e-mail: complaints@axiscap.in Website: www.axiscap.in Contact Person: Simran Gadh SEBI Registration No.: INM000012029	BoFA Securities India Limited* Ground Floor, A Wing, One BKC, G Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 051, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6632 8000 E-mail: dg.star_ipo@bofa.com Investor grievance e-mail: dg.india_merchantbanking@bofa.com Website: www.ml-india.com Contact Person: Deepa Salvi SEBI Registration Number: INM000011625	Citigroup Global Markets India Private Limited* 1202, 12th Floor, First International Finance Centre, G-Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 025, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6175 9999 E-mail: starhealth.ip@citibank.com Investor grievance e-mail: Website: www.online.citibank.co.in/rhtm/citigroup/obscards1.htm Contact Person: Shashank Pandey SEBI Registration Number: INM000010718	ICICI Securities Limited* 102, 12th Floor, First International Finance Centre, G-Block, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 025, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6807 7100 E-mail: star.ip@icicisecurities.com Investor grievance e-mail: Website: www.icicisecurities.com Contact Person: Anurag Byas / Kristina Dias SEBI Registration Number: INM000011179	CLSA India Private Limited 8/F Dalmal House, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 021, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6650 5050 E-mail: starhealth.ip@clsa.com Investor grievance e-mail: investor.helpdesk@clsa.com Contact Person: Sarfaraz Agbowala / Siddhant Thakur Website: www.india.clса.com SEBI Registration No.: INM000010619	Credit Suisse Securities (India) Private Limited 9th Floor, Ceejay House, Plot F Shivasgar Estate, Dr. Annie Besant Road, Worli, Mumbai - 400 018, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6777 3885 E-mail: list.starhealth@credit-suisse.com Investor grievance e-mail: list.collemer-bnk@credit-suisse.com Website: https://www.credit-suisse.com/en/investment-banking-apac/investment-banking-in-india/po.html Contact Person: Abhishek Joshi SEBI Registration No.: INM000011161

Jefferies	AMBIT	DAM	IIFL SECURITIES		K FINTECH	COMPANY SECRETARY AND COMPLIANCE OFFICER
Jefferies India Private Limited 42/43, 2 North Avenue, Maker Maxity, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai - 400 051, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 4356 6000 E-mail: starhealth.ip@jefferies.com Investor grievance e-mail: igj.grievance@jefferies.com Website: www.jeffries.com Contact Person: Aman Puri SEBI Registration No.: INM000011443	Ambit Private Limited* Ambit House, 449 Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400 013, Maharashtra, India Tel: +91 22 6623 300					

CBI books  
Rajkot firm  
for bank fraud

DEVESH K. PANDEY  
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered a case against a Rajkot-based company and others on the allegation that they cheated the Union Bank of India of ₹44.64 crore.

The accused have been identified as Mandeep Industries and its functionaries, Ashish B. Talaviya, Kishorbhai H. Vaishnavi, Ramjibhai H. Gajera, Kalpesh Pravinbhai Talaviya and Bhavesh M. Talaviya.

"Searches were conducted at seven places, including the office and residential premises of the accused persons at Upleta and Rajkot (Gujarat)," said a CBI official. Some bank officials are also under scrutiny.

#### Oil supplier

The company is engaged in extraction of oil from groundnut cake. The oil is supplied to poultry industry and also exported to West Asian countries.

It was alleged that from 2014 to 2020, the accused persons induced the bank to sanction various credit facilities including cash credit and term loans, amounting to ₹47.30 crore.

The loan account of the borrower company was later classified as non-performing asset on January 15 last year due to non-servicing of interest and installments. This allegedly caused a loss of ₹44.64 crore to the bank.

A forensic analysis of the financial transactions revealed that the company had made payments to certain parties which were shown as debtors. While the stock statements were falsified, inflated payments were made to certain entities, it is alleged. The company also availed itself of the drawing power against the book debts of sister concerns, according to the First Information Report.

## Will form the next govt. in Punjab with BJP, Akali faction: Amarinder

Punjab Lok Congress chief meets Haryana CM, denies any political angle to it

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH



Former Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh. ■ FILE PHOTO

Former Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday said his party will form the next government in the State along with the BJP and a breakaway Akali faction as he held a surprise meeting with Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal here.

Capt. Amarinder described his meeting with Mr. Lal as a courtesy call.

"There was no political development. I had a very nice cup of coffee with the Chief Minister," said the former Punjab Chief Minister after meeting Mr. Lal.

However, when asked whether "big faces" will join his party, Punjab Lok Congress, ahead of the Assembly elections, he said, "Wait for

the time. Everything is going fine. People are very upbeat and our membership drive is going good."

"God willing, we and with our seat adjustment with the BJP and with Mr. (Sukhdev Singh) Dhindsa's party (SAD Sanyukt), we will form the government," he said.

Capt. Amarinder had quit the Congress following his

resignation as the Punjab Chief Minister after a bitter power tussle with State Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu.

His meeting with Mr. Lal came on a day when a Bill to repeal the three contentious laws, against which farmers have been protesting for over a year, was passed by the Parliament.

"I have met the Chief Minister does not mean that when you meet someone it is political something. This is just a normal courtesy call," he told reporters replying to a query on any talk of an alliance with the BJP.

In the photographs of their meeting released by the Haryana Government, Mr. Lal is seen receiving Capt. Amarinder with a

warm hug.

Asked if he will meet BJP leaders for a seat sharing arrangement for the Punjab elections, the former Punjab Chief Minister said he will go to Delhi and certainly call on them.

#### 'There is no issue left'

Replying to a question on the farm laws, he said, "Everything is now over. The three bills (laws) have been repealed by Parliament." Capt Amarinder said the Centre has agreed to other six to seven issues raised by farmers. "So, there is no issue left," he said.

On the farmers' demand for the withdrawal of police cases against protesters, he said the Centre will take a look at these cases.

## Caution and hope



**Youngsters to the fore:** Students of Gurukul School of Art give finishing touches to posters that raise awareness of Omicron, the potentially more contagious new variant of COVID-19 first detected in South Africa, at Lalbaug in Mumbai on Monday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

## ED quizzes ex-Minister of TN. in Kerala under PMLA

He allegedly purchased gold from a firm

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

The woman informed the ED that she had received around ₹2.5 crore as commission for linking Mr. Vijayabaskar with the jewellery firm for buying gold. The central agency suspected that he may have used black money in his possession to purchase gold worth several crores.

Officials of the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) in Tamil Nadu

had searched the houses of Mr. Vijayabaskar and his relatives in Pudukkottai and other places on October 18 after booking a disproportionate assets case against him and his wife.

The DVAC had filed an FIR on information that Mr. Vijayabaskar had indulged in corrupt practices and enriched himself by acquiring assets in his and dependents' names.

It is learnt that the company management had lodged a police complaint against the woman alleging that she had not remitted the money due towards the gold purchased from them.

## Rajasthan CM's advisers may not get ministerial status

Governor has sought clarification on 'office of profit' issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

The ruling Congress in Rajasthan is finding it difficult to appoint MLAs as advisers to the Chief Minister as well as Parliamentary Secretaries after the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party took the issue to Raj Bhavan through a memorandum.

Governor Kalraj Mishra has sought a clarification on the issue of "office of profit".

The six advisers appointed after the expansion and reshuffle of the Council of Ministers on November 21, and the Parliamentary Secretaries likely to be appointed shortly may neither get the Ministerial status nor any perks. With this, the Congress is set to face the ire of its legislators who could

tional as they were offices of profit.

In an attempt to avoid the charge of flouting the law on holding of office of profit and bypassing the constitutional provisions, the State Government has made up its mind to not give the perks of office to the MLAs.

**'Needless controversy'**

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot had said here on Sunday that he was only taking advice from the six MLAs without giving them any new status and it was a "needless controversy".

"I can appoint an MLA, MP, journalist, intellectual or litterateur as my adviser. That is my prerogative... nobody can question the CM for doing this," he had said.

Arrangements are being made for institutional separation of passengers who test positive for COVID-19, he added.

Meanwhile, authorities have sent the blood sample of a 32-year-old resident of Dombivli, who arrived from South Africa last week and tested Covid-positive, for genome sequencing to ascertain if he has been infected with the new Omicron variant. Officials said he was sta-

## Tracking of passengers from South Africa begins

No need to panic: Maharashtra Minister

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

As many as 1,000 passengers from South Africa landed at Mumbai International Airport since November 10 and the process of tracking them and contact tracing had begun, Aaditya Thackeray, the Guardian Minister for Mumbai Suburban District, said on Monday.

At a meeting of the State cabinet on Monday, held amid rising concerns over the Omicron variant, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said it would be easier to trace passengers and their contacts if airlines regularly shared passenger information.

State Health Minister Rakesh Tope said there was no need to panic as no case had been detected. He said schools would reopen for Class I to 7 students from December 1 and asked parents not to worry about sending their children.

In a letter to health officers of all districts and civic bodies, the Health Services Director said it was mandatory to follow COVID-19 appropriate behaviour in schools.

## Help desks at airports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
RAJPUR

The Chhattisgarh government on Monday ordered the setting up of help desks at three airports in the State for effective screening of passengers flying in from abroad in view of the new Omicron variant of the COVID-19, officials said.

The State health department, in a letter to all District Collectors, also directed that fresh guidelines for interna-

tional travellers issued by the Union Health Ministry for tackling the new COVID variant must be followed strictly, a public relations department official said.

#### Fresh guidelines

The fresh guidelines stressed on effective surveillance and screening of passengers coming to India from 'at risk' countries where the new variant was found, the letter informed.

#### TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

PH: 9820350726

selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in

#### SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

#### TENDER NOTICE FOR ENGINEERING WORKS

E-Tender No. 191-Fire-Detection-Coach, Date: 24.11.2021.

Name of Work : Provision of Fire Detection system in 34 AC Coaches of Coaching depot, Bilaspur on open tender basis.

Tender Value : ₹ 1,66,61,836/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Six Lakhs Sixty One Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty Six Only) (Inclusive of all expenditure and GST).

Opening of Tender : 12:00 hrs. on 16.12.2021.

Further all details are available in Railways' website [www.reps.gov.in](http://www.reps.gov.in). Except E-tender no other modes of submission will be accepted.

Sr. Div. Mech. Engineer  
CPR/10/261 S.E.C. Railway, Bilaspur  
f South East Central Railway @Sceral

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Opening of Tender : 12:00 hrs.

IN BRIEF



TTD officer on special duty passes away

TIRUMALA  
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) officer on special duty Dollar Seshadri, 74, died of cardiac arrest on Monday at Visakhapatnam. He joined the TTD in 1978 and served the institution in various capacities for 43 years. He remained the face of TTD and was known for his close association with several politicians. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family.

Most districts in Kerala put on yellow alert

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
Low pressure areas are likely to form in the Arabian Sea off the Maharashtra coast and the south Andaman Sea this week. Indications are that the weather systems will not impact Kerala much, although the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued heavy rainfall warnings for Gujarat and Maharashtra. However, Kerala can expect isolated heavy rain till Tuesday. All districts except Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam are on yellow alert.

Bajrang Dal activists barge into prayer hall

HASSAN  
A group of Bajrang Dal activists allegedly disrupted a prayer meeting at Jesus Prayer Hall in Belur town here in Karnataka on Sunday, alleging that "forced religious conversions" were happening there. The incident came to light on Monday when the video clips of the incident went viral on social media platforms. The group of about 20 people attempted to barge into the prayer hall, even as more than 40 people were engaged in prayer. Police rushed to the spot and dispersed the mob.

# Karnataka not sharing Krishna details'

Telangana and A P. tell SC that they have no information on how much river water has been diverted

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

Telangana and Andhra Pradesh submitted in the Supreme Court on Monday that there is no information forthcoming from Karnataka for the past 14 years about how much Krishna river water it has diverted.

In turn, Karnataka argued that a lot of water is going waste – "flowing down into the ocean" – and there is a need to harness it for irrigation and to replenish dry regions.

Karnataka has sought the vacation of a November 16, 2011 of the Supreme Court which stopped the Centre from publishing in the Official Gazette the final order of the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal II (KWDT) pronounced in December 2010,

allocating the river water to Karnataka, erstwhile Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Karnataka has argued that its dam and irrigation projects worth thousands of crores to provide water to its parched northern areas have been stalled for all these years because of the 2011 order of the

Projects hit hard'

Karnataka has argued that the dispute raised by Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was between them and did not concern it. It referred to the



Water sharing woes: An aerial view of the Prakasam Barrage on the Krishna in Vijayawada. ■ V RAJU

Supreme Court to not publish the KWDT decisions in the Official Gazette under Section 6(l) of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act of 1956.

Karnataka has argued that the dispute raised by Andhra Pradesh and Telangana was between them and did not concern it. It referred to the

final order of allocation of water.

The Centre successfully sought two weeks' time. A Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud posted the case for December 13, but not before exclaiming that seven years have elapsed since the KWDT had pronounced its modified final report and order.

Issue of 'grave urgency'

Senior advocates Shyam Divan and Mohan Katarki, for Karnataka, said the issue was of "grave urgency" as far as the State was concerned.

"The life of the KWDT award is 40 years, out of which 10 years have already lapsed and 10 years is required to complete the work... As a result, Karnataka will not be in a position to utilise water 20 out of 40 years," Karnataka said.

## Kerala HC comes down on 'ego and arrogance of khaki'

Pink Police officer falsely accused eight-year-old girl of theft

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHEE

The Kerala High Court on Monday berated a former Pink Police officer who had humiliated an eight-year-old girl by accusing her of stealing her mobile phone. The court termed the officer's behaviour towards the girl "ego and arrogance of khaki".

Justice Devan Ramachandran made these observations when a petition filed by the girl seeking a directive to the State Government to take strict action against civil police officer Rejitha came up for hearing.

The judge, who watched a

Will the girl have confidence in the police now? Will she regard the police as protector now?

JUSTICE DEVAN RAMACHANDRAN  
Kerala High Court

video of the incident that happened in August, termed it disturbing. He said he was moved by the sight of the child crying upon being confronted by the woman officer. The girl was terrified. The family belonged to a vulnerable section of society. When the missing phone was found (in the police vehicle), the police officer could have apologised to the child.

The matter would have ended there, the judge said. "Will the girl have confidence in the police now? Will she regard the police as protector now?"

The court asked what would have happened if the missing phone was in silent mode. The girl and her father would have been put behind bars. "It all happened because of the carelessness of the police officer," he said. The court directed the State Police Chief (SPC) to file a report on the issue.

The SPC was also asked to produce the order transferring the police officer out of the Pink Police unit.

## Two workers die in pharma cluster in Vizag

They are said to have inhaled toxic gas

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM

Two workers aged around 25 died after reportedly inhaling some poisonous gas near the pump house of the effluent treatment plant at Ramky Pharmacy in Jawaharlal Nehru Pharma City, Parawada, here, in the early hours of Monday.

The deceased were identified as Manikanta and Durga Prasad, both contract workers.

According to managing director and CEO of Ramky Pharmacy P.P. Lal Krishna, the pharma city had one common effluent treatment plant for around 100 companies housed in the facility.

Effluents from most of the

companies flow into the treatment plant through pipelines.

On Monday, the two workers went to check the working of the pumping process. While one was at the pump, his colleague, who had gone to check the levels of the tank, fell unconscious near the manhole of the tank. Seeing this, the other worker rushed to his rescue and he too fell unconscious, Mr. Krishna said.

They were shifted to hospital, but were declared brought dead.

A few workers associations blamed the management for negligence and for not taking adequate safety measures.

## Trapped miners dig their way out after 60 hours

Abandoned BCCL mine in Jharkhand caved in during illegal excavation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

Four people who were trapped inside an abandoned coal mine in Bokaro, Jharkhand, dug their own way out early on Monday morning and reached home after over 60 hours.

Lakshman Rajwar (42), Anadi Singh (45), Ravana Rajwar (46) and Bharat Singh (45), all residents of Tilatand village of Chandankary block in Bokaro district, were among the six who had gone to excavate coal illegally in an abandoned Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) mine at Parbatpur on November 26 when it caved in trapping them. Two, however, managed to come out.

"We had alerted BCCL officials, and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel were deployed

locate the trapped villagers. All the four survived on water and kept digging day and night. They finally emerged from the mine in the early hours of Monday.

"For the first few hours we waited for help, but then realized we will have to dig our own way out. We took turns to dig day and night to conserve our torch battery and the limited amount of water. Thankfully, we were going in the right direction," said Lakshman Rajwar.

The villagers and family members who had lost all hope of seeing them alive celebrated their home coming.

Jharkhand accounts for 29% of India's coal reserves and three big coal companies, BCCL, CCL (Central Coalfields Limited) and ECL (Eastern Coalfields Limited), operate here.

According to a BCCL official, there are hundreds of abandoned coal mines in Bokaro, Dhanbad, Hazaribagh, Ramgarh, and others areas of Jharkhand where poor tribal people are engaged by coal mafias to excavate coal worth of several crores. On the road near Ramgarh, one can see a long line of villagers pulling their bicycles loaded with coal excavated from abandoned mines.

## Search for tiger stepped up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MAHABUBABAD

The Forest department's frontline staff are constantly monitoring the movement of the tiger, the pug marks of which were last

found in Kothaguda forest area of the district on Sunday morning.

The tiger reportedly entered the Kothaguda forest

area from the forest fringe areas of the neighbouring Bhadrak-Kothagudem or Mulugu districts a few days ago.

Killed a cow

The big cat, which killed a cow near Nelavancha in Gudur reserve forest area, on Friday night, remained elusive since then.

## CID to probe death of man in custody in Mysuru

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MYSURU

The case of death of a 31-year-old man in police custody, which was reported from the Nanjangud rural police station limits in Mysuru, has been transferred to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for a probe.

The deceased was identified as Siddaraju. He was reportedly handed over to the police by local residents of Byalaru village on Saturday evening after he was allegedly harassing women in a drunken state.

The police claimed that their personnel reached the village after receiving a call on its emergency number 112 by when about six local residents had reportedly beaten him and secured him.

The police then took him into their custody. "He was taken to a hospital, but the doctors refused to admit him saying he was drunk. So, he was brought to the police station," said Inspector General of Police, Southern Range, Praveen Madhukar Pawar.

On Sunday morning, a FIR was lodged against him under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), based on a complaint given by a woman from the village of allegedly outraging her modesty.

**Police deny charges** Siddaraju took ill around Sunday afternoon and was taken to the hospital, where the doctors said he was dead. "But, there has been no wrongdoing on the part of the police," said Mr. Pawar.

Siddaraju's mother has lodged a complaint with the police. The judicial magistrate carried out an inquest on Monday after which the case was handed over to the CID.

## Samples of S. African visitor sent to ICMR

Tests revealed a variant that was different from Delta strain: Karnataka Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Amid growing concern over the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, Karnataka Health and Medical Education Minister K. Sudhakar on Monday said the sample of one of two South African travellers who had tested COVID-19 positive recently in Bengaluru has features of a variant that is "different from the Delta variant."

The Minister said he was in touch with the Union Health Ministry and the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) on this.

"One of the samples of a 63-year-old man is found to be Delta while the other is different. We have sought ICMR's assistance in ascertaining the variant. The report is expected by Tuesday," the Minister said. Chief

Minister Basavaraj Bommai also said the State is awaiting confirmation from ICMR.

Contrary claims

Both the State Health and BBMP officials had said on Friday that two travellers were infected and both had tested positive for Delta var-

iant. However, on Monday, following the Minister's statement, K.V. Trilok Chandra, BBMP Special Commissioner (Health), said the samples had been resent to the NCBS Genome Sequencing lab for reconfirmation. "There will be some clarity after we get the report on Tuesday," he said.

State Health Commissioner D. Randeep said there was some confusion as the two travellers had tested positive on different dates. While the sample of the person who arrived on November 11 was sequenced and found to be infected with Delta, the other sample was sent to the NCBS only on November 27.

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai made it clear on Monday that there was no proposal before the State Government to impose a lock-

down now. He further clarified that authorities had been told to keep vigil on schools and colleges, but not close them.

Don't panic, says CM

Speaking to the media in Davangere, Mr. Bommai asked people not to panic over the new variant, but follow COVID-19 protocol.

He said the Government would be maintaining a strict vigil over people visiting India from countries where the new variant was found, and contact tracing was being carried out.

"We are conducting tests at airports and only those with COVID-19 negative report are being allowed to enter Bengaluru. Only those students from Kerala who have a negative report should be allowed," he said.

## Never seen such an atrocious Government at Centre: KCR

BJP wants to push farmers back into poverty, says CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has said he had never come across a Central Government as the present one led by the BJP and that he will never see one like this in future.

His words came at a post-Cabinet media conference in the context of the Centre's refusal to purchase paddy produced in the State in the current rabi and its failure to commit itself to the quantity that it proposed to lift in the recent kharif.

He warned that the Centre was bent on seeing farmers in the State doomed for its political gains. This was because it was unable to digest the highest production of paddy here which was manifest in the three farm laws repealed in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

Government will fight it going to any extent. "Drive this Government out, if the country has to prosper," he appealed to intellectuals.

Centre's job'

He said food security was the statutory responsibility of the Centre by building up adequate buffer stocks through procurement and releasing them for public distribution. But the Government shed the responsibility and resorted to anti-farmer and anti-poor policies which was manifest in the three farm laws repealed in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

The Centre had lakhs of crores of budget for the purpose but behaved as a "kiran shop" owner looking at profit and loss.

Touching a new record of 141 lakh tonnes last year.

Set for a fight

The BJP wanted to push farmers back into poverty after they started prospering in separate Telangana due to the welfare measures of the State Government. If the trend continued, it posed a grave threat to the social ecosystem. The State Go-

## A ₹1 bounty on giant African snails

Walkers' group in Kerala buys the pests from households to eliminate them



Unique solution: Morning walkers with the snails they bought as a public service. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

An offer to buy the highly invasive African giant snails is not something one comes across very often. But posters, complete with contact numbers, making exactly such an offer are turning heads in the coastal panchayats of Nayarambalam and Narackal in Kerala. The rather novel initiative is the brainchild of Sunrise, a combine of morning walkers. Since putting up the posters a week ago, they have been flooded with calls from affected people, as the invasive African snails are crop pests apart from posing health hazards.

"We buy the African snails at ₹1 each. In the one week since we started the initiative, we have bought

over 3,500 snails, which were later killed en masse using a saline lotion. In one case, we bought about 600 snails from a single household," said Avraham Parakkal, an active member of the group.

The group of walkers has

been hitting the road every morning without fail for the last four years.

The menace posed by African snails came to their notice after they frequently came across them in large numbers on their usual stretch spanning two

panchayats. "We started killing them using saline lotions and even sanitisers. But we realised that it was far from adequate, since a majority of snails inhabited private property, which we cannot trespass into without permission. That is when we decided to mobilise funds to buy them," said Ouseph Valooraan, another member of the group.

Purchase and elimination of snails is only the latest of many initiatives by Sunrise, which has been taking up issues of public interest, whether it is waterlogging or bad roads.

"We bring raise the matter with the authorities, and if they fail to act, we do whatever we can," said Jiju Jacob, another member of the 22-member group.

The menaces posed by African snails came to their notice after they frequently came across them in large numbers on



## Regulation, not ban

India should regulate trading of virtual currencies through monitored exchanges

Eight years after the RBI issued its first advisory cautioning holders of virtual currencies about the potential financial and security risks, and two years after drafting a Bill to ban cryptocurrencies, the Government is set to introduce legislation that would, if passed, officially proscribe such currencies. Its concerns appear to be the risks associated with cryptocurrencies, including their potential use for money-laundering and financing of illegal activities. The risks investors and consumers face in dealing with these so-called currencies, given that they are neither 'a store of value nor are they a medium of exchange', and the ostensible threat they pose to financial stability, are also key factors. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in a video address to the Sydney Dialogue earlier this month said: "It is important that all democratic nations work together on this [cryptocurrency] and ensure it does not end up in wrong hands." The Centre and the RBI's deep disquiet with cryptocurrencies notwithstanding, there has been an exponential jump in investment in virtual currencies, especially after the Supreme Court last year struck down an RBI notification barring financial entities from facilitating customer transactions related to virtual currencies. Industry estimates now peg cryptocurrency holdings in India at about ₹40,000 crore, held by about 15 million investors, and advertising trends show an upsurge in ads promoting brands associated with investment in virtual currencies.

That the ground has shifted since an Inter-Ministerial Committee set up to study the issues related to virtual currencies first proposed the ban in 2019 is beyond doubt. From the emphatic assertion in that panel's report that "no country across the world treats virtual currencies as legal tender" to a situation where earlier this year El Salvador – admittedly a small and heavily indebted nation – officially declared 'bitcoin' as legal tender, much has changed in the adoption of private virtual currencies worldwide. The pandemic has accentuated the global embrace of all things digital and investment in the technologies enabling cryptocurrencies including blockchain, appear to be no different. Canada, Japan and Thailand permit the use of virtual currencies as a payment method, with some jurisdictions regulating them as a digital asset, and others as a commodity. Canada and the U.S. closely monitor virtual currency activity to ensure they do not run afoul of laws on financial crimes, with the former also earning tax revenue on transactions. All things given, India should eschew the temptation to join China in proscribing virtual currencies and instead aim to tightly regulate their trading through monitored exchanges and earn revenue. Simultaneously, it should expedite the RBI's pilot of the Central Bank Digital Currency so as to offer an alternative to cryptocurrencies.

## Mixed colours

Scholz's success depends on how he balances the competing agenda of the three parties

For the first time in 16 years, Germany will have a Social Democrat as Chancellor with three parties from opposite ends of the political spectrum agreeing to form a coalition that will end the era of Angela Merkel. In the run-up to the elections, not many expected that Olaf Scholz, leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) that is a junior partner in Ms. Merkel's coalition, would succeed her. The SPD, Germany's oldest political party that placed itself as a centrist platform with a focus on social security measures, has faced an identity crisis of sorts as Ms. Merkel emerged as the country's quintessential centrist leader. On the other side, a relatively new leftist party, Die Linke, ate into the SPD's traditional leftist base. This year's election, whose main theme was to pick Ms. Merkel's successor, opened political opportunities. While Ms. Merkel's conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) tried to turn the Chancellor's popularity into votes with the message of continuity, the SPD, under Mr. Scholz, who is the Finance Minister in the outgoing government, promised incremental reforms, including higher spending, while not completely disowning Ms. Merkel's legacy. Results showed that he was more successful than his contenders in persuading reluctant voters. After taking a narrow lead over the CDU, the SPD started coalition talks with the Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats (FDP) to form a 'traffic light' coalition (named after the colours of the parties). The pace and the discipline with which the parties announced the coalition suggest that they are serious about forming a stable government.

Each party has gained and conceded something in the coalition agreement. The SPD got the green light for its proposal to raise minimum wages from about €10 to €12 an hour. It has also proposed to build some 400,000 housing units to cool the housing market. The parties also agreed to phase out the use of coal for electricity production and increase the share of renewables to 80%, by 2030. In return for the FDP's support for their spending and climate agenda, the Social Democrats and Greens agreed not to raise taxes. While the coalition agreement clears the way for government formation, it does not mean that governance would be smooth for Mr. Scholz. He lacks Ms. Merkel's popularity and has to lead a diverse coalition that was formed based on convenience and compromise rather than any ideological commonality. Germany also faces economic, political and geopolitical challenges – from the COVID-19 crisis to cracks in the EU and challenges emanating from an aggressive Russia. His success as an administrator would depend on his ability to balance the competing agenda of the three parties and to put forward a common governance programme for Germany.

# The three farm laws were never a solution

True agricultural reform rests with local governments, and States need to go back to the basics and expert suggestions



SUDHA NARAYANAN

**T**he recent announcement by the Prime Minister that the Union Government would seek to repeal the three Farm Laws in the winter session of Parliament has prompted diverse reactions. On November 29, the first day in Parliament, the Farm Laws Repeal Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha without discussion. These laws are the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; the Farmers' Empowerment and Protection Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act (ECA), 2020. Regardless of how this specific step is viewed and the motivations attributed to it, the prolonged protests by farmers and extended impasse offer a rare teachable moment for policy making for Indian agriculture.

**Purpose, 'creation', passage**  
To recall, the three laws each intended to remove constraints on buyers to stock, contract and purchase agricultural commodities. Whereas the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020 (ECA) was largely the prerogative of the Centre, the Farmers' Empowerment and Protection Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020 governing contract farming and the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 (henceforth, the APMC Bypass Act), focusing on the public regulated markets were hitherto issues that were under the State-level Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Acts, therefore under the purview of the States.

The most troubling aspect of these laws was the way they were

written and passed. First, little is known to the public even today on who authored these laws or who was consulted before their introduction as ordinances.

Second, these were passed in Parliament in haste by voice vote, in what is viewed by experts as a violation of established procedures. That Acts with serious ramifications for States should be passed without deeper discussions even within Parliament, let alone with specific inputs from stakeholders and experts, is bewildering. Attempts by some to deflect such criticism by noting the long history of discussion on agricultural market reform only serves to shine a light on the departure from such a tradition in the case of these three laws. Such opaque processes increase the likelihood of poorly framed laws; indeed, many critics have pointed out serious flaws in these laws.

**Centre-State agri-relations**  
Crucially, the APMC Bypass Act mandated that States can only regulate, via their respective APMCs, designated physical premises called the 'market yards'. Via this Act, the Centre essentially wrested control of market areas outside these yards, now called 'trade areas', from the States. The dominant popular narrative was that the Centre was doing what the States had failed to do, i.e., free agricultural trade from the clutches of the APMCs, an idea that finds support in the Economic Survey 2014-15.

Yet, perversely, the APMC Bypass Act particularly hurt States that had the most deregulated systems. A State that had no APMC Act, for example, suddenly found that all deregulated areas within the State would now come under the Centre's regulatory ambit and control, subjecting private players hitherto operating freely in a deregulated environment to the regulations of a whimsical Centre. Further, by absolving private players from adhering to any State law in agricultural marketing, it ef-



fectively nullified the power of States to shape the nature and functioning of agricultural markets.

Such transfer of regulatory authority from the States to the Centre might in principle be justified if there was systematic evidence to suggest that the Centre was better informed and better equipped to regulate agricultural markets. Here, the Centre's own actions following the three laws do not inspire confidence. For example, barely weeks after the ECA was amended, the Centre imposed restrictions on stocking, in October 2020 for onions and July 2021 for a range of pulses, apparently undermining the purported spirit of the reformed ECA it championed.

**During the pandemic**  
Our analysis of COVID-19 lockdown management in the agricultural sector too found that the Centre was always a step behind, implementing relief measures for agricultural marketing reactively rather than proactively. In contrast, States, regardless of the ruling parties, offered a more timely, relevant and nimble response to manage the fallout of the COVID-19 lockdown on agriculture. Beyond agricultural marketing, the central government's efforts in the past such as One Million Ponds, 10,000 FPOs and One District One Product are often disconnected from local needs for robust and sustainable solutions for agriculture.

Another key concern is that to the extent that these Acts enable centralisation of authority to influence the functioning of trade

areas, this would facilitate consolidation of big business, a trend that is evident globally. The underlying premise of these three Acts was that freedom to operate in agricultural markets would attract capital-rich private players to a sector in sore need of rejuvenating investments; and that the proliferation of efficient value chains and competition would enable benefits to be passed on to the farmers in the form of higher, and perhaps more stable prices.

While it is hard to disagree with the purported goal of these Acts, many critics question the premise itself, pointing out that it was naive at best, and insidious at worst; the Acts in fact load the dice in favour of corporates with deep pockets who would now use this freedom, not to compete but to sidestep competition to gain control over supply chains at the expense of the farmer. Global evidence based on data from 61 countries between 2005-15, after all, suggests that farmers receive, on average, just 27% of consumer expenditure on foods consumed at home, the share falling significantly as national incomes rise.

### Digital consolidation route

These fears of consolidation have been further stoked by recent memoranda of understanding that the Government of India has signed for building data stacks with Cisco, Jio, ITC, NeML, NinjaCart, Microsoft, Amazon, ESRI India Technologies, Star Agribazaar and Patanjali Organic Research Institute. While claiming to not involve private sector players, these select few have been granted limited access to "data from the federated Farmers' database" for specific areas. This, it seems, might be the thin edge of a wedge. A "trade" area under full control of the central government would potentially offer big business a digital data consolidation route to controlling supply chains.

The solution to the many problems of Indian agriculture and of Indian farmers was never going to

be solved by the three farm laws, even within the realm of marketing. Nor is the repeal of these three Acts going to reverse or slow the rapid growth of private players in agricultural marketing in the past two decades, as seen by the 2019 Situation Assessment of Agricultural Households in India.

### What needs to be done

The agricultural marketing space has seen significant reform in many States in the past decade, even if such reform has happened at a leisurely pace and often piecemeal in its approach. While the Centre has the capacity to make landmark changes, true reform and action rests with local governments. States are better placed to assimilate and respond to the diversity of institutional and socio-economic contexts and agroclimatic regions. They are often better placed to incorporate local concerns for robust and sustainable solutions.

The central national challenge is that different States have different regulations and a different pace of reform in part due to the political stakes involved in tackling trader collusion in these markets. States need to go back to the basics and to the suggestions that many expert committees have proposed for agricultural market reform – for a start, delinking the regulatory and operational roles of the APMCs. The Centre for its part should turn its attention in the short term to offering a stable and predictable policy environment vis-à-vis imports and exports, the functioning of national commodity exchanges and futures markets, and providing inclusive platforms for discussions on State-level market reform, public procurement and price support, designing safeguards against consolidation of corporate interests and framing data policies.

*Sudha Narayanan is Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal*

## A launch window for India as a space start-up hub

The sector is in an embryonic stage and there is scope to build a feasible business model



RAJESH MEHTA &  
UDDESHYA GOEL

**T**he great space race of the 20th century was kicked off by the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik in 1957. It was a competition between the world's great powers, a test of their ideologies, which proved to be a synecdoche of the entire Cold War between the capitalist United States and the socialist Soviet Union. The space race is on again, but this time, private players are on the power field to take the next leap for mankind and democratising space usage to build commercial value. This has huge implications for original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) in the space sector in India and is a promising venture for global investors.

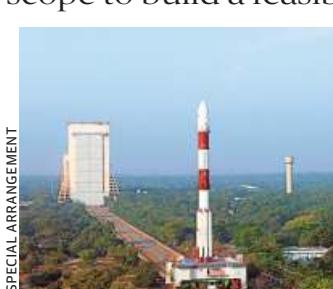
**India, a very marginal player**  
Last year, according to a report, the Government of India created a new organisation known as IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre) which is a 'single window nodal agency' established to boost the commercialisation of Indian space activities. A supplement to the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), the agency promotes the

entry of the Non-Government Private Entities (NGPEs) in the Indian space sector. The agency will also facilitate a swift on-boarding of private players in the sector through encouraging policies in a friendly regulatory environment and by creating synergies through already existing necessary facilities, the report says.

Today, the space economy is a \$440 billion global sector, with India having less than 2% share in the sector. This is despite the fact that India is a leading space-faring country with end-to-end capabilities to make satellites, develop augmented launch vehicles and deploy inter-planetary missions. While total early-stage investments in space technologies in FY21 were \$63 billion, India was on the fourth place with investments in about 110 firms, totalling not more than \$2 billion.

**The hurdles**  
Another aspect to throw light on is the extensive brain drain in India, which has increased by 85% since 2005. This can be linked to the bottlenecks in policies which create hindrances for private space ventures and founders to attract investors, making it virtually non-feasible to operate in India.

Currently, a report on a leading news portal says: the reason for the lack of independent private participation in space includes the absence of a framework to provide transparency and clarity in laws. The laws need to be broken down



into multiple sections, each to address specific parts of the value chain and in accordance with the Outer Space Treaty (or the United Nations resolution, the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies). Dividing activities further into upstream and downstream space blocks will allow legislators to provide a solid foundation to products/services developed by the non-governmental and private sectors within the value chain, it adds.

### Licences, liability

It says: "with the technicalities involved in the space business, timelines on licensing, issuance of authorisation and continuous supervision mechanism need to be defined into phases, like in France, where there are four obtainable licences in addition to case-by-case authorisation, with lack of clarity surrounding costs".

Another crucial aspect of space law is insurance and indemnification

clarity, particularly about who or which entity undertakes the liability in case of a mishap. In several western countries with an evolved private space industry, there is a cap on liability and the financial damages that need to be paid. In fact, space operators are required to hold insurance of up to AUD\$100 million under Australian space law.

### As a part of the system

Currently, many of the private entities are involved in equipment and frame manufacturing, with either outsourced specifications or leased licences. However, to create value, Indian space private companies need to generate their intellectual property for an independent product or service (e.g. satellite-based broadband) with ISRO neither being their sole or largest customer nor providing them IP and ensuring buy-backs (which was how most suppliers in the Indian space ecosystem were born over the last three decades). This will help open the door to global markets.

Mature space agencies such as the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) of the United States, China's China National Space Administration (CNSA), and Russia's Roscosmos (Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities) seek support from private players such as Boeing, SpaceX and Blue Origin for complex operations beyond manufacturing support, such as sending

crew and supplies to the International Space Station. These companies have revolutionised the space sector by reducing costs and turnaround time with innovation and advanced technology. For such purposes, NASA and the CNSA award a part of their annual budget to private players. Until 2018, SpaceX was a part of 30 missions of NASA, getting over \$12 billion under contract.

India currently stands on the cusp of building a space ecosystem and with ISRO being the guiding body, India can now evolve as a space start-up hub for the world. The sector is in the embryonic stage where the possibilities are limitless with a scope to build a feasible business model. Already 350 plus start-ups such as AgniKul Cosmos, Skyroot Technologies, Dhruva Space and Pixwell have established firm grounds for home-grown technologies with a practical unit of economics. However, to continue the growth engine, investors need to look up to the sector as the next "new-age" boom and ISRO needs to turn into an enabler from being a supporter. To ensure that the sky is not the limit, investor confidence needs to be pumped up and for the same, clear laws need to be defined.

*Rajesh Mehta is a leading consultant and columnist working on market entry, innovation and public policy. Uddeshya Goel is a financial researcher with specific interests in international business and capital markets*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### CJI's remarks

It was disturbing to read the report, "Rajya Sabha leaders express annoyance at CJI's remarks" (Inside pages, November 29). It is understandable that "if the norms of functioning are being violated in the legislatures, other constitutional agencies should not comment adversely". But the way Parliament has been functioning these days is a development that deserves to be condemned by all right-thinking citizens of India who believe that democracy must function in a disciplined manner. The remarks of the Chief

Justice of India, that it is a "sorry state of affairs", must be understood and accepted in that spirit.

E.P. MENON,  
Bengaluru

■ All democratic-minded citizens will welcome the CJI's remarks. Pandemonium in Parliament has become the norm rather than the exception. People are generally disillusioned with the behaviour of our elected representatives, who have made it a practice to paralyse the functioning of Parliament. Matters of far-reaching importance have either been deferred or stalled not to speak of the

women's reservation bill which has yet to see the light of day. If viewed in the proper perspective, the CJI's comments are only a reflection of the people's disenchantment.

P.K. VARADARAJAN,  
Chennai

■ Those in charge of Parliament must ensure that its dignity and decorum are restored. The quality of debates too needs review. The CJI's comments should be an eye-opener to all MPs as about 70% of the functional time is lost to persistent disruptions.

T. SATYANARAYANA RAO,  
Bhimavaram, Andhra Pradesh

■ Persistent disruptions, unruly behaviour, violent actions and even disrespect to presiding officers have become the order of the day in Parliament. This is a main reason why important Bills are never discussed. One fails to understand why the Opposition members in particular disrupt the proceedings. The CJI's comments must cause MPs to introspect and do justice to their place in Parliament.

J.P. REDDY,  
Nalgonda, Telangana

■ Tripura and beyond Mamata Banerjee and her Trinamool Congress party must be gracious enough to accept the people's mandate in Tripura, instead of attributing the BJP's total sweep to 'rigging and intimidation'. The Tripura result also shows that Ms. Banerjee's acceptability is still within the boundaries of her home State, West Bengal. The TMC leader seems to be in a hurry; by dividing the anti-BJP votes and targeting the moribund Congress, she is betraying her political short-sightedness. Her dream of being a pan-India leader with wider acceptability, does appear, at the moment, to be still a dream. She needs to concentrate on improving the lot of her own people in

Bengal and reaching several developmental indices.

S.K. CHOWDHURY,  
Bengaluru

**On discrimination**  
Former India leg-spinner L. Sivaramakrishnan saying that he has been 'colour discriminated' all his life, including in his own country is disturbing. When racist comments were made against our sportspersons in other countries, we were up in arms. What the authorities concerned do now will be watched with interest.

C.G. KURIAKOSE,  
Kothamangalam, Kerala

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# The many challenges before trade unions

The agitations of trade unions against the Labour Codes have failed unlike the protests of the farmers



K.R. SHYAM SUNDAR

The repeal of the three farm laws has set in motion expectations, if not talks, about the possible revival of other agitations, such as the one against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and the repeal of the contentious Labour Codes passed in 2019-20. Trade unions have intensified their agitation against the Codes in the wake of the government's decision to repeal the farm laws.

There were significant factors responsible for the farmers' victory apart from the well-known political reasons for which the farm laws were repealed. In industrial or social conflicts, staying power, unflinching solidarity, political legitimacy, social visibility, and the capacity to inflict hurt to the opponents all matter in effecting favourable outcomes for the agitators. All these conditions characterised the farmers' agitation. The protests enjoyed political legitimacy as the government had passed the three laws without consulting the farmers' groups and had also not referred the laws to the Parliamentary Standing Committee (PSC). We need to assess the possible revival of the protests of the industrial workers for repeal of the Labour Codes while considering these aspects.

#### Problems with the Codes

The Central Trade Unions (CTUs) have criticised the Codes on three principal grounds. The Labour Codes were passed with little debate and discussion as the Opposition parties had staged a boycott in the Lok Sabha then. Trade unions, including the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), criticised the Central government for not holding adequate consultations with them on the Codes contrary to the government's claims. The absence of effective dialogue contradicts the International Labour Organization treaty, the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention of 1976 (C.144), which India had ratified in February 1978. The Labour Codes contain many clauses that deprive la-



SANDEEP SAXENA

bourers of hard-won labour rights.

The Codes merit repeal for other major reasons as well. The drafting is shoddy and incomplete. The Codes are an insult to the collective legal and industrial relations intelligence in the country. The government introduced changes in major contentious clauses (hire and fire, contract labour) which were not based on robust empirical evidence; diluted good clauses (standing orders and inspections); made matters unduly complex (industrial tribunal, minimum wages) and made promises that were not backed by credible systems (social security fund, universal minimum wages and social security). Liberalisation of thresholds relating to major legal aspects (contract labour, hire and fire, standing orders) and the act of retaining existing thresholds even after several decades (provident fund, medical insurance) would intensify informalisation of the workforce. The government has left many substantive and procedural clauses to the rule-making processes which result in considerable divergences as States frame different rules on the same subject. These will introduce chaos in the governance of industrial relations.

As opposed to the success of farmers' protests, the failure of the trade unions' agitations in achieving their demands present a conundrum. In fact, there exists an organised consultative framework due to the aforementioned ILO Convention. Trade unions have a long history and most of them have political affiliations. Though declining, trade unions still

command a claimed membership of 90-100 million, which includes unorganised workers. The CTUs claimed that 150 to 250 million workers participated in the recent countrywide strikes. If that is the case, they should have shaken the government and had the Codes repealed, which did not happen. So, what ails the industrial working class's cause?

#### Why strikes are unsuccessful

The CTUs are divided thanks to their political affiliations. Out of the 12 major CTUs, 10 have been jointly spearheading agitations calling for the repeal of all four Codes while the BMS has been conducting its own limited agitation: it is fine with the Wage and Social Security Codes but demands "review" of the Industrial Relations and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Codes. Again, thousands of enterprise-based unions lacking political consciousness do not always support the CTUs' agitations. The claimed strikes resulted in symbolic acts of nominal consultations with the CTUs by the United Progressive Alliance or National Democratic Alliance governments. The reform mandate was always alive.

Second, though the CTUs for long succeeded in blocking labour law reforms at the national level, substantial reforms of laws and inspections have happened at the regional level. Further, with the sly support of the government, employers have been able to achieve labour flexibility (the rampant contractualisation of the workforce) denied to them by formal

laws. Hence, the Labour Codes matter less even if they are repealed.

Third, though there are around 400 million unorganised and informal workers, they are scattered and not organised in a consolidated manner to mount significant political opposition and demand labour market securities. More informality thanks to labour reforms will further hurt unions' agitational power.

Fourth, unlike farmers, the industrial workers cannot organise longer and larger strikes as they would lose their jobs and wages. The presence of the huge army of underemployed or unemployed and informal workers weakens their bargaining power. At best, they can organise short protests. In short, their strikes do not hurt either the economy or the government. The failures of the Railway strike of 1974 and the Bombay textile workers' strike of 1982-83 haunt the labour movement.

Fifth, a larger labour reforms agenda comprising privatisation, flexible labour markets, etc., are supported and even pushed by global financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Many countries are witnessing labour reforms. Unions are fighting in essence against the neoliberal order for which they require intellectual sinews.

Sixth, the four Codes were scrutinised by the PSC. It is another matter that the Codes did not reflect several of the PSC's recommendations or included clauses not mentioned in the draft Bills sent to the PSC. These procedural deficiencies may not be perceived as stark as those related to the farm laws. Finally, the 'hurt' government and the powerful reform-lobbying interest groups would ensure that there would not be more rollbacks, including of the Codes.

In the wake of these realities, unions must come up either with agitational strategies to hurt the electoral image and prospects of the government and economy and/or exploit the possibility of legally challenging the Codes as has been done in case of big workers. The delay in implementing the Codes thanks to adverse economic conditions or possibly due to political factors can be a short-term consolation, if any.

K.R. Shyam Sundar is Professor, XLRI-Xavier School of Management, Jamshedpur

# Boosting green hydrogen

Hydrogen is the most promising solution to decarbonise sectors like cement, steel, and refineries



PAWAN MULUKUTLA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently announced that India would aim for net-zero carbon emissions by 2070. The announcement was given credence by the country's solar achievements since 2015. India is the only major economy whose policies and actions are on track to limit global average temperature rise below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, as envisioned in the Paris Agreement.

#### India has a head start

As of now, 75% of India's energy demand is met by coal and oil, including imports. This is expected to increase. Therefore, the synergy between renewable energy and green hydrogen must be tapped to tackle the dependence on fossil fuel and take greater advantage of India's solar capacity. Hydrogen - green hydrogen, in particular - is a crucial weapon in India's arsenal to fight climate change as it improves the long-term energy storage capabilities of renewable energy.

The simplest element in the periodic table is also the most promising solution to decarbonise sectors like cement, steel, and refineries. "Hydrogen can provide the lowest-cost decarbonization solution for over a fifth of final energy demand by mid-century - contributing a cumulated reduction of 80Gt of CO<sub>2</sub> - and is thus an essential solution to reach the 1.5°C climate scenario," read a recent statement from the Hydrogen Council. Several major economies which are adopting legislation to reduce carbon emissions are also catalysing global efforts towards transitions to green hydrogen.

A low-carbon source of energy is required to generate hydrogen through electrolysis - the splitting of a water molecule into hydrogen and oxygen. The hydrogen produced is coded with a colour, depending on the method of its production. While hydrogen generated through renewable energy sources is green, it is blue when the carbon generated from the process is captured and stored without dispersing it in the atmosphere. When the carbon is not captured, the generated hydrogen is labelled grey.

Nearly 70% of the investments required to produce green hydrogen through electrolysis goes into generating renewable energy. With India's solar capacity increasing nearly 3,000 times in less than a decade, the cost of solar energy has reached a low of ₹2 per kWh. This gives India a unique head start in

scaling up the use of green hydrogen.

India can reduce its carbon emissions and make a dent in its annual import bills by developing a value chain for hydrogen from its production to its diverse applications, including production technologies, storage, transport and distribution, infrastructure (ports, refuelling stations), vehicular applications, and electricity/gas grid.

#### Solutions

Government funding and long-term policies that attract private investments within the standards and a progressive compliance framework are essential to boost green hydrogen. Hydrogen's cross-sectoral capabilities should be exploited according to each sector's cost and ease of adoption. A few key sectors with low transition costs, such as refineries, fertilizers and natural gas, should be mandated to use hydrogen to bring down costs as part of near-term goals. New demand from steel, cement and road mobility should be mandated as part of medium-term goals. Heavy-duty vehicles should receive State and Central incentives. Shipping, aviation, energy storage and solutions towards power intermittency should be mandated to use green hydrogen in the long run.

Enforcing time-bound mid- and long-term policies would inspire the private sector to invest more in green hydrogen and give the boost it requires in its nascent stages. India's current grey hydrogen production is six million tonnes per annum, which is around 8.5% of global annual production. India should replace this with green hydrogen and reduce dependence on imported ammonia. It should aim to produce 4-6 million tonnes of green hydrogen per annum by the end of the decade and export at least 2 million tonnes per annum. India has already taken the first step with the Indian Oil Corporation floating a global tender to set up two green hydrogen generation units at the Mathura and Panipat refineries.

At present, more than 30 countries have hydrogen road maps and over 200 large-scale hydrogen projects across the value chain. If all the projects come to fruition, total investments will reach \$300 billion in spending by 2030. Governments worldwide have committed to more than \$70 billion in public funding, according to Hydrogen Council, to develop a hydrogen economy. With its abundant and cheap solar energy, India has the upper hand to tap into these investments and lead global efforts in transitioning to green hydrogen.

Pawan Mulukutla is the director for energy technology and green mobility at World Resources Institute India. Views expressed are personal

#### STATE OF PLAY

## Mismanaging the monsoon

The recurring floods in Chennai serve as a wake-up call to the government to rethink urban planning

B. ARAVIND KUMAR

to shorter, intense spells, thus necessitating a change in urban planning.

The AIADMK government dropped the Singara Chennai plan. It could have created a Greater Chennai to cater to the needs of the people on East Coast Road, the IT Expressway and the GST Road that connects the south, but it failed to do so. For two decades, the second airport project has been on paper. The Bus Rapid Transport System remains a report. The IT Expressway awaits a Metro. Clearly, there is a lack of vision in urban planning.

The bureaucracy is also to blame for this. The Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority has largely turned a blind eye to massive violations of building plans and FSI norms in core business districts.

Despite 50 years of Dravidian rule that has propelled the State on several fronts, the city's rivers - Adyar and Cooum - hold the mirror to the failure of successive governments.

Former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa was known to be unapproachable. Allegations surfaced after the 2015 floods that the delay in reaching her was also one of the factors responsible for the severity of the floods. After her demise, with no elected representatives in the urban local bodies, the bureaucracy governed urban spaces under the guidance of Minister S.P. Velumani. He is being probed now by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption. It is no wonder that the city's civic infrastructure is in tatters.

The present DMK government must also take some of the blame. It has failed to desilt water bodies and drains ahead of the monsoon and also to foresee the extent of flooding, including in core areas like T. Nagar.

Chennai has recorded more than 1,000 mm of rain in a month four times in the last century. Three of these times have occurred in the last 16 years. This is clearly a wake-up call to the administration to rethink urban planning and development.

aravind.b@thehindu.co.in



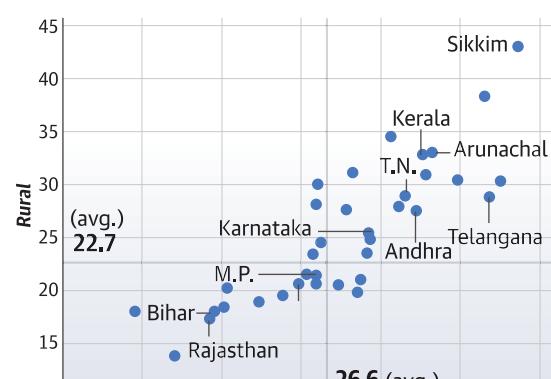
#### DATA POINT

### South India suffers more from lifestyle diseases

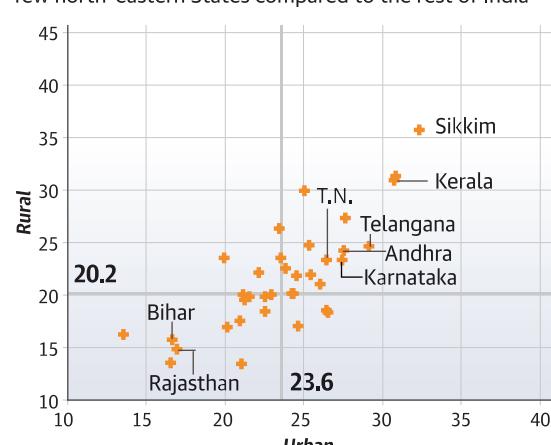
A higher share of the population in the southern States suffers from lifestyle diseases such as hypertension and diabetes compared to the rest of India, according to NFHS-5 (2019-20). These States have a higher share of persons with elevated blood pressure compared to other States. North-eastern States such as Sikkim, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh too have a relatively higher prevalence of hypertension. There were also relatively more men and women with high blood sugar levels in T.N. and Andhra Pradesh besides Goa and West Bengal. In contrast, a comparatively smaller share of the population in Rajasthan, U.P., M.P. and J&K UT suffers from such conditions. By Suman Sen, Jasmin Nihalani and Vignesh Radhakrishnan



**Hypertension among men** | The chart plots the share of men who have elevated blood pressure (Systolic  $\geq 140$  mm of Hg and/or Diastolic  $\geq 90$  mm of Hg) or take medicine to control it in urban and rural areas across all the States. The prevalence of high blood pressure or hypertension is relatively high in all the southern States and in some north-eastern States

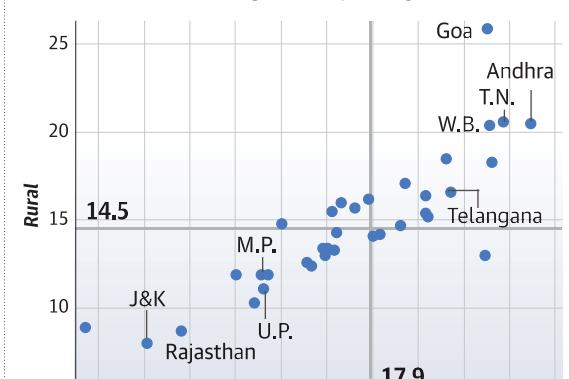


**Hypertension among women** | The chart plots the share of women who have elevated blood pressure or take medicine to control it in urban and rural areas. In India, fewer women suffer from hypertension than men. A higher proportion of women suffer from hypertension in the southern States and in a few north-eastern States compared to the rest of India



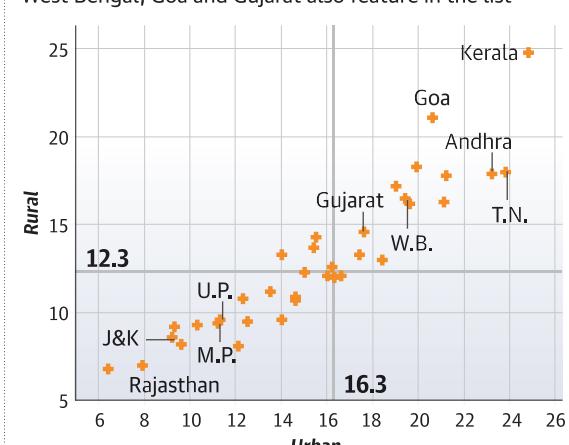
### Diabetes among men

The chart plots the share of men who have high blood sugar levels ( $>140$  mg/dL) in urban and rural areas across States. The share of men with raised blood sugar levels or diabetes is high in southern States such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana compared to the rest of India. Goa and West Bengal too report high levels



### Diabetes among women

The chart plots the share of women who have high blood sugar levels in urban and rural areas across States. In India, fewer women have diabetes than men. Southern States such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have a relatively higher share of women with diabetes. West Bengal, Goa and Gujarat also feature in the list



#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 30, 1971

Border clashes in East

New Delhi, Nov 29: A total of 18 Pakistani tanks have so far been destroyed by the Indian forces in the border clashes in the eastern region in the last eight days, it was officially stated here to-day. It has been confirmed after a full tally of the enemy losses in the tank battle at Boyra on November 21 that actually 14 Pakistani tanks - and not 13 as announced earlier - had been either destroyed or captured intact, and that three of them which had been abandoned by the fleeing Pakistanis had been recovered in good condition. In the fighting now going on in the last three days in the Balurhat-Hilli area, Pakistan has lost four more - three on Saturday and one on Sunday - bringing the total Pakistani losses so far to 18, roughly one-fifth of the tanks they have deployed in these two sectors. The Indian forces have not lost any in these two battles, although one of the tanks got bogged down in the Boyra area held by the Multi Bahini and it has since been brought back and put into operational condition.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 30,

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Parliament clears Farm Laws Repeal Bill

"I will allow the discussion only when the House is in order," he repeatedly said and asked Mr. Tomar to proceed first with introducing and then taking up the Bill for consideration and passing.

Leader of the Congress Legislature Party in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Choudhary intervened stating that in the past, six Acts had been repealed since 2014, and discussion had been allowed for the same and that this Bill too should come up for debate.

"The word here is consideration and passing, and we ask that the bill be taken up for consideration by the House before passing," he said.

Speaker Om Birla, however, said no discussion could take place with parliamentarians crowding the Well of the House.

"This is not the way one can debate bills," he said. The Bill was then passed by voice vote and the House adjourned till 2 p.m.

In Rajya Sabha, after two adjournments in the first half of the day, the House met at 2 p.m. to repeal the laws. The opposition parties again protested as the Government moved the bill, without offering a debate on the issue.

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge was given a brief opportunity to speak on the issue. Mr. Kharge said everyone in the house welcomed the repeal of the bills and congratulated the Government for the belated wisdom on withdrawing the bills. But the minute he started talking

about the deaths 750 farmers in the year long agitation, Deputy Chairman Harivansh who was in chair, told him that his time was up.

**Lakhimpur Kheri case**  
"The farmers still continue to sit in protest. Many of their demands still remain unmet. We also need to debate the events of Lakhimpur Kheri," Mr. Kharge said.

As the Bill was passed without debate, opposition MPs rose in protest. TMC MPs Nadimul Haque and Dola Sen walked into the well of the house. As soon as Ms. Sen approached the chair, Parliament security officials trooped in.

Speaking outside Parliament, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "The manner in which the Government passed the Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021 proves that the Government was wrong and was scared of a discussion."

Senior Congress leaders pointed out that at least 17 acts repealed by the current Government from 2014 onwards had been repealed after due discussion, and this exception of no debate therefore indicated the Government's pusillanimity in discussing issues related to farmers in the Houses of Parliament.

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi, however, said that since Prime Minister Modi had already stated that the Bills were being repealed acknowledging the wishes of a certain section of farmers and the opposition, there was little need for debate.

## Omicron poses very high global risk, says WHO

"Omicron demonstrates just why the world needs a new accord on pandemics: our current system disincentivises countries from alerting others to threats that will inevitably land on their shores."

The accord, expected by May 2024, would cover issues such as sharing of data and genome sequences of emerging viruses, and of any potential vaccines derived from research. Omicron was first reported on November 24 from South Africa.

It has since spread to

more than a dozen countries, many of which have imposed travel restrictions to try to seal themselves off. Japan on Monday joined Israel in saying it would close its borders to foreigners.

"The impact on vulnerable populations would be substantial, particularly in countries with low vaccination coverage," the WHO stated.

In vaccinated persons, meanwhile, "COVID-19 cases and infections are expected ... albeit in a small and predictable proportion".

## We don't track crypto trading, says Govt.

Last month, the RBI, which is eyeing a pilot project for a central bank digital currency (CBDC), urged the Government to amend the RBI Act of 1934, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in response to a query. The law will need to be changed to enhance the scope of the definition of a 'bank note' so as to include digital currency.

"RBI has been examining use cases and working out a phased implementation strategy for introduction of CBDC with little or no disruption," the Minister said, adding that an official digital currency can potentially provide significant benefits, such as reduced dependency on cash, higher security due to lower transaction costs and reduced settlement risk.

"Introduction of CBDC would also possibly lead to a more robust, efficient, trusted, regulated and legal tender-based payments option. There are also associated risks which need to be carefully evaluated against the potential benefits," he noted.

As per the available purport of The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021, the Government may ban all private cryptocurrencies in

India, while allowing for 'certain exceptions to promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses'.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently held a meeting with top officials from the central bank and the Ministries of Home Affairs and Finance on cryptocurrencies and expressed concerns about attempts to mislead the youth through over-promising and non-transparent advertising.

**Bitcoin scam**  
On the Bitcoin hacking scam in Karnataka, the Finance Ministry said a case has been registered by the Bangalore zonal unit of the Enforcement Directorate. It added that any further disclosure of information in the matter is 'not in larger public interest' and put the onus on the State for investigating the criminal aspects of the case.

"Information in public domain suggests that a case of cybercrime involving Bitcoin has been under examination by the Karnataka police. 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India," Mr. Chaudhary said in reply to an unstalled question on the case.

As per the available purport of The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021, the Government may ban all private cryptocurrencies in

## SC to hear case on release of Rajiv convicts on Dec. 7

Perarivalan, convict in the assassination case, filed it in 2016

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

**C**The proposal received by the Central Government will be processed in accordance with law

## HOME MINISTRY

A case relating to the premature release of seven convicts undergoing life imprisonment for the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is expected to be listed before the Supreme Court on December 7, the Tamil Nadu Government informed the Madras High Court on Monday.

Appearing before the first Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Munishwar Nath Bhandari and Justice P.D. Audikesavalu, Advocate-General R. Shunmugasundaram said the case was filed by A.G. Perarivalan, one of the convicts, in 2016.

At the hearing of the case last year, the Supreme Court wanted to know the status of a recommendation made by the State Cabinet to the Governor on September 9, 2018, to release all the convicts by exercising power under Article 161 of the Constitution.

In reply, the State Government on November 3, 2020, informed the Supreme Court that the Governor was waiting for the final

report of the Multi Disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA), which had been constituted to probe the wider conspiracy behind the assassination, before taking a decision. At the subsequent hearing on January 21 this year, the Solicitor-General informed the Supreme Court that the Governor would take a decision on a remittance petition filed by Perarivalan, under Article 161 of the Constitution, within a week and apprise the court of the development.

On February 4, the Union Home Ministry filed an affidavit that the Governor considered all facts on records and after perusal of the relevant documents, he had on January 25 decided that the President would be the appropriate authority to deal with the request. "The pro-

posal received by the Central Government will be processed in accordance with law," the Home Minister told the court.

Since that case was expected to be heard by the Supreme Court shortly, the Division Bench adjourned by three weeks the hearing of similar petitions filed by other convicts S. Nalini and P. Ravichandran before the High Court.

Noting that the State Government had filed a counter-affidavit only in respect of the case filed by Nalini and urged the court to dismiss the plea to release her without waiting any more for the Governor's assent, the Bench directed the Government to file a counter to Ravichandran's petition, too, before the next hearing.

Mr. Shunmugasundaram said there was no change in the Government's stand that all the convicts should be released prematurely. He explained that the Government had urged the court to dismiss Nalini's case, because, as per law, she could not be released without the Governor's assent.

## Trinamool to tweak its party constitution

Other State members to be inducted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Monday announced its decision to change its constitution so that it can induct more members in its committee from other States.

The decision was taken at a meeting attended by party chairperson Mamata Banerjee and leaders like Yashwant Sinha, Pawan Verma and Mukul Sangma.

The working committee empowered Ms. Banerjee to make the necessary changes to the party's structure.

"In the present political situation, only the Trinamool Congress can take on the Bharatiya Janata Party. Under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee, we are ready for the battle. After the meeting today, Trinamool Congress will emerge in a new pan-India avatar," said Pawan Verma who joined the party recently.

Trinamool MP and national spokesperson Derek O'Brien said these changes did not mean that there would be a change in the DNA of the party. "To defeat the BJP, Mamatadi is the strongest, most credible and the most experienced leader. This is because she is not



Mamata Banerjee

only a three-time Chief Minister, but also a seven-term MP," he said.

**Sangma felicitated**

Earlier in the day, Ms. Banerjee felicitated former Meghalaya Chief Minister Mukul Sangma and other Congress leaders who joined the Trinamool recently.

The GRD is an honorary position where village youth are recruited to assist the police. It's a contractual job with an honorarium of ₹230 per day for six days a week.

The recruitment is on the basis of physical fitness while the minimum education level is third grade pass.

"The situation is similar in each district. In Banaskantha, more than 10,000 persons, most of them graduates, appeared to take the physical fitness test," said Gujarat Congress spokesman Manish Doshi.

## Webinar explores careers in analytics

Science and business gap highlighted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

A webinar on 'Build a Global Business Analytics Career in the U.S., Canada, and Europe', presented by Insofe, was held as a part of The Hindu Education Plus Study Abroad series on November 27 and shed light on the options available for careers in Data Science, Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and related fields.

"The problem in most industries today is that people who study business don't understand technology and the people who study technology don't understand the business," said Venkatesh Sunkad, Dean, Business Programmes at Insofe. He also spoke about the demand for people who can bridge the gap between Data Science and business.

Maud Le Bars, South Asia area manager for Rennes School of Business in France, said France is a great destination for students to pursue courses, as it has over 25 institutions that are among the top 100 in the world for business or management.

On the opportunities in Ottawa, Robin Ritchie, Associate Dean of Professional Graduate Programmes and Associate Professor of Marketing at Carleton University,

said the nexus of high technology and the demand for people with expertise in data analytics makes their MBA a collaborative and experiential one. "The students get a chance to work with other students on real-time projects and the built-in internship is part of the programme."

## Consumer behaviour

Suzi Siegel, the Provost, Executive Vice President and Professor of Management, Walsh College, U.S., stressed the importance of Data Science specifically in the American context. Calling it the backbone of business, she pointed out that not only could it help assess consumer behaviour but also help companies assess return on their marketing investment.

The session was moderated by Yashasvini Rajeshwar,

and can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3lhGtvmt>.

The session was moderated by Yashasvini Rajeshwar, and can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/3lhGtvmt>.

He promises to cooperate with probe



Mehul Choksi

of May-June 2021, when he was allegedly kidnapped by a group of non-resident Indians from Antigua to Dominica. "I am fighting the cases both in Antigua and Dominica, but I am very clear that I will come out victorious in the end," said Mr. Choksi who maintained that he was an Antiguan citizen and that he did not try to immigrate to Dominica illegally in the summer.

In 23 of the 36 States and UTs for which data were available, condom use was less than 10%. The State with the highest condom use was Uttarakhand (25.6%) and the

## On the draw



## Onus of contraception still on women, NFHS-5 figures show

Less than one in 10 men uses condoms in India: survey

JAGRITI CHANDRA  
SUMANT SEN

NEW DELHI

Less than one in 10 men use condoms in India, while nearly four in 10 women undergo sterilisation to avoid pregnancy, according to the latest National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21), which also shows that female sterilisation continues to be on the rise.

Only 9.5% of men used condoms but 37.9% of women underwent sterilisation, according to the NFHS.

Though condom use in urban India is better than rural parts, the overall trend is vastly similar – 7.6% men in rural India and 13.6% men in urban India use condoms, while 38.7% women in rural India and 36.3% in urban India underwent sterilisation.

Female sterilisation has gone up for the entire country from 36% in NFHS-4 (2015-16) to 37.9% in NFHS-5.

In 19 of the 36 States and

Union Territories, female sterilisation increased in

NFHS-5 from that of NFHS-4.

The rise was more than 5

percentage points in 11

States and UTs.

The States with the highest increase in female sterilisation were Bihar (14.1% points to 34.8%), Goa (13.6% points to 29.9%) and Madhya Pradesh (9.7% points to 51.9%).

In 23 of the 36 States and

UTs for which data were

available, condom use was

less than 10%. The State with

the highest condom use was

Uttarakhand (25.6%) and the

## Contraception choice

While the share of men using condoms increased in NFHS-5 (2019-20) from NFHS-4 (2015-16), the percentage of women undergoing sterilisation also rose in the same period



all figures in %

Method	Urban	Rural	Total (NFHS-5)	NFHS-4
Female sterilisation	36.3	38.7	37.9	36
Condom	13.6	7.6	9.5	5.6
Pill	4.4	5.4	5.1	4.1
IUD/PPIUD	2.7	1.8	2.1	1.5
Male sterilisation	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3

Union Territory Chandigarh (31.9%).

The silver lining, however, is that use of condoms has gone up between the two surveys – from 5.6% to 9.5%.

The refusal to use condoms is not due to lack of awareness – NFHS-5 data shows that 82% men were aware that consistent use of condoms can

# Government ready to discuss all issues: PM

He says all parties should maintain dignity of Parliament

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In his customary remarks before the start of the winter session of Parliament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday that his Government was willing to answer any questions and allow any debates in both Houses, but all parties should maintain the dignity of Parliament and the Chair.

"Government is willing to discuss every issue with an open mind and is ready to answer any question. We want that there be questions on the Government, but that order is maintained as well. Voices can be raised against the Government and its policies, but the dignity of the House, the Speaker's Chair must be maintained," he said. This was in reference to the disruptions that marked the last session, especially in the Rajya Sabha, over the



**House time:** Narendra Modi arrives in Parliament on the opening day of the winter session on Monday. •PTI

three farm laws.

He urged lawmakers to keep the common man at the centre of deliberations in the House. Referring to the recent observance of Constitution Day on November 26, Mr. Modi said it had been observed in the spirit of the Constitution and a renewed resolution. "Against this background and that of the 75th anniversary celebrations of India's freedom, eve-

ryone wants that India's Parliament keeps the spirit of freedom fighters alive by debating issues of national interest and further the country's progress," he said.

He also sounded a note of caution on the Omicron variant of COVID-19 making its way around the world. "The new variant enjoins that we observe extreme caution and I urge you all to do the same," he said.

Omar rues Azad's silence on Article 370

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

As senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad limits his demand to the restoration of statehood and not special status for J&K, National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah on Monday said it was unfortunate to see silence of the parties that were expected to raise their voices for the restoration of Article 370.

"We were expecting support from other political parties (on restoration of J&K's pre-August 5 position and special status) but they are silent. Unfortunately to see Mr. Azad saying it's useless to talk about Article 370.

If the special status of J&K was so hollow, why was it snatched," the former Chief Minister said at a public speech in the Chenab Valley's Kishtwar district.

He termed the restoration of Article 370 as an issue linked to the future generations of Kashmir.

Referring to the Congress' silence over J&K's special status, he said the NC will fight for the special status along with the indigenous population of J&K.

**BJP fields candidates for Kolkata polls**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

The Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday announced the list of candidates for the 144 wards of the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) and nominated nine Muslim candidates, including five women, the highest-ever by it in any local body polls in West Bengal.

It fielded nine candidates in Malda, Murihiddabad and Uttar Dinajpur with a significant minority population in the Assembly polls earlier this year. However, none of them could win. The Trinamool fielded 23 minority candidates in the KMC poll to be held on December 19.

BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya refused to entertain any question on the number of minority candidates. "The BJP does not indulge in the politics which differentiates minorities," he said. Political observers feel that the BJP's move is an acceptance that the party cannot contest in West Bengal without taking into consideration the 27% minority electorate.

The BJP nominated 50 women and, unlike the Assembly polls, has been conservative by nominating booth-level workers.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA GROUND WATER DEPARTMENT**

NATIONAL HYDROLOGY PROJECT E-TENDER NOTICE : TS/SGW/HPP/2021-22/PZ/6564

Following online tender is invited by the Ground Water Department, Govt. of Telangana from eligible bidders under National Competitive Bidding (NCB).

**Details** Lot-AB - Construction of 168 Nos Piped Networks (Bore wells/well protection works in parts of 30 Districts of Southern Telangana Region viz. Godavari Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar, Waranapet, Narkarni, Nalgonda, and Sangareddy districts, Pre-Bid Meeting : 08/12/2021 (11.30 hrs). Last Date of Submission : 30/12/2021 (15.00 hrs)

The details of IFB will be available on <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocureapp> (Tender Id No. 2021\_GWTS\_65693). <https://gwtd.telangana.gov.in> and <http://hmpc.mowr.vishvishwas.in>.

R.O. No. : 2366-PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/2021-22

**भारत सरकार/ GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

प्रधानमंत्री ई-विभाग/ DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY

नायिकाय ई-विभाग/ NUCLEAR FUEL COMPLEX

ई-विभाग ई-पोस्ट डाक, हैदराबाद-500 062

ECIL POST, HYDERABAD-500 062

**CORRIGENDUM FOR TENDER NO. NFC/NFC-K/2020/IT/WoP/1**

Corrigendum for Online item no e-tender is issued on behalf of the President of India by Project Director, NFC(K) Project for the work "Establishing Software based VoIP Telephony Solution for NFC-Kola Project, Rawatbhata, Rajasthan - 323 303 and its Integration with NFC-Hyderabad and Zirconium Complex, Pazhayakayal". Due date for Purchase of Tender is extended to 07/12/2021 16:00 Hrs. Detailed Corrigendum is available on websites [www.tenderwizard.com/DAE](http://www.tenderwizard.com/DAE) & [www.nfc.gov.in](http://www.nfc.gov.in).

**D.R.Y.S.R. HORTICULTURAL UNIVERSITY**

Admn. Office: Venkataramannagudem, Tadepalligudem-534 101, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh.

**Notification for Admission into M.Sc.(Hort.) and Ph.D.(Hort.) Programmes - 2021-22**

Advt. No. 1(PGS) (Acad.2021)

Dated: 30-11-2021

Applications are invited for admission into disciplines of M.Sc.(Horticulture) from

candidates of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (as per applicability) and Other States (outside state quota) and Ph.D.(Horticulture) programme for the candidates of

Andhra Pradesh and Telangana (as per applicability) who qualified and secured rank in subject group of ICAR-AIEEA (PG)-2021 & ICAR-AICE-JRF/SRF/DP-2021. For

application forms and more details, please visit website: <https://dryshu.ap.gov.in>

Sd/- REGISTRAR

# Centre 'terrified' of debate: Rahul

Congress says Farm Laws Repeal Bill was pushed through Parliament

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The manner in which the Narendra Modi Government repealed the three contentious farm laws proves that it has done something "wrong" and is "terrified" of having a discussion, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi said on Monday.

Soon after both Houses of Parliament repealed the farm laws without a debate, Mr. Gandhi addressed a press conference in which he reiterated that the Congress had predicted how the Government would have to withdraw the farm laws, and said "the might of three or four large crony capitalists couldn't withstand the might of the Indian farmers and labourers".

"We wanted to discuss MSP [minimum support price]. We wanted to discuss Lakhimpur Kheri incident.

We wanted to discuss the 700 farmers who died in this agitation and unfortunately that discussion has not been



**Scathing attack:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi speaking to presspersons outside the Parliament on Monday. •PTI

allowed...What is truly unfortunate is how the Bills have been repealed, without any discussion, without any conversation. We wanted to have a discussion about forces behind these Bills because these Bills do not just reflect the view of the Prime Minister, these Bills reflect the forces behind the Prime Minister," Mr. Gandhi said.

"This is a reflection of the fact that the Government is terrified of having this discussion. The Government wants to hide. The Govern-

ment does not have the guts to stand up for its action and this is what is quite unfortunate," he said.

When it was pointed out that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had apologised in his televised address to the nation on November 19, Mr. Gandhi said, "What's the point of having Parliament there to make laws? Just shut it down."

Elaborating further, the former Congress chief said that if Mr. Modi had "accepted his mistake", then the Go-

vernment would have to pay the compensation to over 700 farmers who died during the year-long protests.

Countering the narrative that the farm laws proved the Modi Government's sincerity towards the farmers, Mr. Gandhi said, "What were they doing for the last one year? Why did it take 700 dead farmers for them to repeal these laws? Why is the Prime Minister apologising? If they have done nothing against the farmers, why is he apologising?"

Earlier in the day, before proceedings of Parliament started, Congress president Sonia Gandhi addressed party MPs and led a protest against the farm laws.

Addressing the joint Opposition press conference later, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge told presspersons, "In the past, there have been 17 Bills that were debated on the floor of Parliament before repeal."

Fewer terror attacks in Kashmir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The number of terror attacks in Jammu and Kashmir has shown a reduction in the last three years, according to data shared by the Government in the Ra-ja Sabha on Monday.

The number of terror attacks has gone down from 594 in 2019 to 244 in 2020 and to 195 till mid-November this year.

The number of fatal battle casualties among security forces, including Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), was 80 in 2019, 62 in 2020 and 35 till November 23, 2021, says a written reply given by Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt.

Since the understanding by the Armies of India and Pakistan in February this year to adhere to the 2003 ceasefire agreement, Cease-Fire Violations (CFV) have almost stopped, barring a few incidents that has happened recently.

## Trinamool, BJP MPs spar at meet

Sparks fly at House panel discussions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Kalyan Banerjee

wards Parliament for a solution and if the Government wanted to repeal without a debate, they should be allowed to do so.

A structured debate on agrarian issues can take place later, Mr. Misra is learnt to have said.

Mr. Pal, the BJP MP from Uttar Pradesh, then spoke and lauded the Prime Minister for his decision to roll back the farm laws.

At this point, when the Trinamool MP passed a remark against Mr. Pal, the atmosphere got very tense as the BJP took strong objection.

The sharp exchange between the two prompted other MPs to intervene and pacify the agitated members.

Expressing his displeasure over such behaviour, Mr. Birla ended the meeting.

After the Lok Sabha passed the Bill without a discussion, Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, along with Mr. Birla and Mr. Suresh, again met the Speaker and registered their protest for not allowing the Opposition to speak as the Bill was passed.

## MPs' suspension against RS rules: Opposition

However, the parties are divided over boycotting the winter session over the disciplinary action

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI



**Collective anguish:** Mallikarjun Kharge briefing presspersons after the Parliament session on Monday. •PTI

the entire duration of the winter session."

As Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge held a hurried meeting to frame

the opposition reaction, some parties felt if the Government refuses to open a dialogue for revoking the suspension of 12 MPs, the

Opposition should consider boycotting the entire session. Others however, had some reservations on it.

He has also called a meeting of floor leaders of the opposition parties on Tuesday to decide their response. The Trinamool did not participate in the Congress-led deliberations; nor did it sign the Opposition statement.

Party MP Dola Sen said it was not informed of the Opposition meeting.

The 12 suspended MPs include – Phulo Devi Netam, Ripun Bora, Rajamani Patel, Syed Nasir Hussain and Akhilash Pratap Singh from Con-

gress; Dola Sen and Shanta Chhetri from Trinamool Congress; two from Shiv Sena – Anil Desai and Priyanka Chaturvedi; CPI(M)'s Elamraam Kareem and CPI's Binoy Viswanath.

There is no clarity on why these 12 MPs were suspended when the charge sheet had named more than 20. On August 11, AAP MP Sanjay Singh had climbed on the reporters' table, and Congress MP Pratap Singh Bajwa had thrown the rule book at the empty chair. But neither has been suspended.

(With inputs from Vijaita Singh)

## SKM alleges false claims in reasons for law repeal

Government, Opposition unanimous on repeal, says Agriculture Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

(MSP) for crops and Government procurement.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, however, said that there was no need for a discussion on the repeal, given that both the ruling and Opposition parties were unanimous in their support for the repeal.

He also blamed Opposition parties for preventing a discussion in the Lok Sabha by disrupting proceedings, noting that the Speaker Om Birla repeatedly told Opposi-

tion MPs that a discussion could be held if they returned to their seats.

The repeal was evidence that the Prime Minister kept his word to farmers, Mr. Tomar said.

### Freedom already exists

"The Statement of Objects and Reasons accompanying the repeal Bill cannot be farther from the truth," said the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a platform of farm unions, noting that most State APMC Acts already give farmers the freedom to sell their produce to any buyer at any place of their choice.

He also blamed Opposition parties for preventing a discussion in the Lok Sabha by disrupting proceedings, noting that the Speaker Om Birla repeatedly told Opposi-

tion MPs that a discussion could be held if they returned to their seats.

The million dollar question is, this engagement is for the sake of which stakeholders," asked AIKS general secretary Hannan Mollah.

SKM leaders also slammed the Centre for not admitting that the laws were enacted in an unconstitutional manner, without proper consultations.

"In a democracy, opportunistic consultations with industry-sponsored farm unions is not the way forward, and deliberative democratic processes need to be adopted," the SKM statement said.

Such a freedom was not given for the first time by the Modi Government as is being claimed. Further, any so-called freedom without protection from exploitation is meaningless."

With regard to claims that the farm laws created a facilitative framework for electronic trading to improve transparency and price discovery, and created an ecosystem for traders and processors to engage with stakeholders, the All India Kisan Sabha alleged that the laws did not include safeguards to prevent profiteering by corpora-

tions and private entities in the country.

"The million dollar question is, this engagement is for the sake of which stakeholders," asked AIKS general secretary Hannan Mollah.

SKM leaders also slammed the Centre for not admitting that the laws were enacted in an unconstitutional manner, without proper consultations.

"In a democracy,

# Omicron risks spark call for booster dose

Experts divided on extra protection for some groups over ensuring universal immunisation

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI

With the emergence of Omicron and its virulence yet uncertain, concerns have emerged about whether a third dose of COVID-19 vaccines should be administered in India.

The United States and the United Kingdom have approved booster doses for all adults, six months after the completion of their second dose. In the UK, however, it is restricted to those 40 and above, or those with clinical conditions that suppress their natural immunity.

These recommendations build from research suggesting that two weeks after a booster, the chances of being protected from symptomatic COVID increase.

A study in Israel also suggests that immunity against infection dips noticeably in the six months after two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine.

Compared with people who got only two doses five months prior, those who got three doses of the vaccine

had a 93% lower risk of COVID-19-related hospitalisation, 92% lower risk of severe COVID-19 disease, and 81% lower risk of COVID-19-related death. Vaccine effectiveness appeared consistent across sexes and age groups (ages 40-69 and 70-plus) and number of comorbidities.

"With Omicron, the Government of India must, without any delay, make it possible for all senior citizens and those with comorbidities irrespective of age, to get a third or 'booster' dose of the relevant vaccine. In fact, the Government should enable, encourage and assist them in getting that on a war-footing. Not doing that would be a policy folly of the first magnitude," Gopalkrishna Gandhi, 76, former Governor of West Bengal, told *The Hindu*.

Harsh Mahajan, president, NATHEALTH, a healthcare body which raises issues on access and quality of healthcare, said it was presumed that there was unused stock of between five million and 10 million doses in the



**Saving lives:** Vaccination has reduced the need for hospitalisation due to COVID-19. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

private sector in India which would likely start expiring from January to February 2022.

#### Risk assessment

Dr. Mahajan added that in case the expert committee of the Government decided that a booster dose was necessary, then this stock could be used for boosters for healthcare and frontline workers and those who were at higher risk despite having received two doses. "The objective should be to minimise wastage of this pre-

cious resource," he told *The Hindu* previously.

However, not everyone is convinced that booster doses are necessary for India. Public health expert and epidemiologist Chandrakant Lahariya said the real risk of approving booster doses in India now would mean that it would divert attention away from the more important goal of ensuring as many Indians were inoculated by the year end.

He said all the studies on booster doses so far were specific to mRNA vaccines.

Since none of these are being administered in India, it would be prudent to conduct those studies, arrive at a reasonable lower bound of vaccine efficacy beyond which a third dose would be necessary, if at all, and then proceed, Dr. Lahariya said.

"At this stage when only 30% of Indians are fully inoculated and half of those above 45 still weren't vaccinated, it's unreasonable to demand a third dose for otherwise healthy senior citizens," he told *The Hindu*.

"All evidence shows the vaccines are extremely effective against severe disease and hospitalisation. Transmission can only be addressed by COVID-appropriate behaviour," he said.

He said that it would not be imprudent of the Government, if it had surplus stock, to divert vaccines to Africa which had vaccinated less than a quarter of its population. "The pandemic can end only when most of the world is fully vaccinated and not a small set of people getting multiple doses," he said.

# Per capita out-of-pocket health expenditure sees decline: report

National Health Accounts estimates for 2017-18 released

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Out-of-pocket expenditure (OOPE) as a share of total health expenditure and foreign aid for health has both come down as per the findings of the National Health Accounts (NHA) estimates for India for 2017-18 released on Monday by Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan.

As a share of total health expenditure, the OOPE has come down to 48.8% in 2017-18 from 64.2% in 2013-14. Even in the case of per capita OOPE, there has been a decline from ₹2,336 to ₹2,097 between 2013-14 and 2017-18.

"One of the factors attributing to this decline is the increase in utilisation and reduction in cost of services in Government health facilities. If we compare NHA 2014-15 and 2017-18, there has been a decline in OOPE for Government hospitals to the tune of 50%," said Mr. Bhushan.



Rajesh Bhushan

This is the fifth consecutive NHA report produced by National Health Systems Resource Centre, designated as National Health Accounts Technical Secretariat in 2014 by the Health Ministry. The NHA estimates are prepared by using an accounting framework based on internationally accepted System of Health Accounts 2011, provided by the World Health Organization.

#### Govt. support

Mr. Bhushan, releasing the report, said that the NHA estimates for 2017-18 clearly showed that there had been

an increase in the share of Government health expenditure in the total GDP of the country.

"It has increased from 1.15% in 2013-14 to 1.35% in 2017-18. Additionally, the share of Government Health Expenditure in total health expenditure has also increased over time. In 2017-18, the share of Government expenditure was 40.8%, which is much higher than 28.6% in 2013-14," he said.

The report further indicates that in per capita terms, the Government health expenditure has increased from ₹1,042 to ₹1,753 between 2013-14 to 2017-18.

Also the share of social security expenditure on health, which includes the social health insurance programme, Government-financed health insurance schemes, and medical reimbursements made to Government employees, has increased.

## States gear up to implement new protocols in airports

All passengers from 'at risk' countries require RT-PCR tests

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

States across the country have scurried to implement the testing, tracing and quarantine for international passengers from a few countries where the Omicron variant of the coronavirus has been recorded, on advice from the Union Ministry of Health.

Some States have already implemented these procedures, while others will start implementing these restrictions from December 1.

While Standard Operating Procedures already mandate that an international passenger uploads a negative RT-PCR report along with a self-declaration form (SDF) in the Air Suvidha portal, in the light of a new variant emerging, further steps have been put in place. The list of at-risk countries is available in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare website; passengers coming from these 'at risk' countries, have to undergo an RT-PCR test on arrival. If they test negative, they must quarantine themselves at home for seven days, and a repeat test will have to be done on the eighth day.

However, the samples of those passengers testing positive will be sent for genomic testing at INSACOG laboratories and they would be admitted in an isolation facility as notified by the



Safety norms are to be tightened at all airports.

State government. This compulsory testing of passengers is only for those countries which have been notified as 'at risk', whereas for travellers coming from countries which are not designated 'at risk', a random sample for RT-PCR of 5% of travellers is to be carried out on arrival.

#### Mumbai watch

Sources said, since November 10, nearly 1,000 passengers from South Africa have arrived at the Mumbai International Airport. Guidelines state that passengers arriving at the Mumbai airport will have to get their passport scrutinised at the immigration counter for travel history of the last two weeks.

A senior official of the Chennai Airport said the

idea is to work out a system that will not inconvenience international passengers too much. The airport had ceased testing of international passengers two months ago, but will restart from December 15.

Andhra Pradesh Health, Medical and Family Welfare Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas said all international passengers arriving at airports in the State have to undergo RT-PCR tests starting from Tuesday, in tune with the Union government's guidelines.

COVID-19 tests on passengers coming from 'countries at-risk' and who land at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), Shamshabad, Telangana, has begun. However, there are no direct flights from the countries at-risk to the airport yet, officials said.

Kerala Health Minister Veena George said that more health staff have been deployed in airports as part of enhancing testing and surveillance. Separate hospital wards would be readied for those international travellers who test positive for COVID-19.

The health department of Karnataka has announced that people who arrived from Botswana, South Africa and Hong Kong, in the last 15 days will be tracked.

(With inputs from State Bureaus)

## Adverse events less than 0.01%: Govt.

Centre tells Supreme Court it is transparent on vaccination data and AEFI cases

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Government has told the Supreme Court that COVID-19 vaccination is voluntary and serious or severe effects of inoculation, including death, account for less than 0.01%.

The percentage of such effect having serious/severe [including deaths] in case of both Covaxin and Covishield is less than 0.01%. This again is in the caveat that any such severe/serious effect including death cannot be attributed to vaccination."

The Health Ministry said 2,116 serious and severe AEFIs have been reported from 1,19,38,44,741 doses administered till November 24.

Vaccination is encouraged for one's own good and in public health, it said.

An individual's ill health has a direct effect on society,

it submitted in a 58-page affidavit before a Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao on Monday.

The very proof that the vaccination is not mandatory is evident from the fact that no benefits or services are attached to it.

The Government said it is transparent about vaccination data.

#### Public domain

"Post-vaccination adverse data is already in the public domain," the Ministry said.

"A report of rapid review and analysis completed for 495 [463 Covishield and 32 Covaxin] cases has been submitted. Another report of 1,356 cases [1,236 Covishield, 118 Covaxin and two Sputnik] serious and severe AEFI cases [including 495 cases already analysed] has been presented to the Na-

tional Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (EGVC). The rapid review and analysis of balance cases is under way and will be completed soon," the Centre told the court.

The Centre said any death or hospitalisation following vaccination cannot be automatically assumed to be due to vaccination.

"Here, causality assessments help to understand whether the 'Adverse Event Following Immunisation' was caused directly due to

vaccination.

The Centre with answers to a series of eight questions raised by the court. They include the number of deaths recorded in each State, the number of claims received by them individually, the compensation paid so far, and whether grievance redressal committee in each district had been constituted.

The court also asked State governments if online portals for disbursal of compensation have been created.

The top court approved the revised and simplified model of disbursement of compensation adopted by the Gujarat government and said the same model could be applied across the country.

## Search on for Botswana woman in M.P.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JABALPUR

In the wake of concerns over the Omicron variant of coronavirus detected in some countries, Madhya Pradesh health authorities have launched a search for a woman from Botswana who, as per Government records, visited Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh on November 18, an official said on Monday.

Khuno Oremeet Selyn came to Jabalpur from Delhi, as per the record shared by the Central Government, said Jabalpur Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr. Ratnesh Kurariya said.

"The CCTV footage of the Jabalpur airport is being examined to find the woman," he said.

Information was also being gathered from hotels in the area, he said.

## India offers support to Africa to fight variant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

As Africa grapples with new coronavirus variant Omicron, India on Monday said it stands ready to support the affected countries in the continent including by supplying vaccines, life-saving drugs and test kits.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said supplies of vaccines can be undertaken through COVAX or bilaterally.

It said that the government has cleared all orders placed so far by COVAX for supplies of Covishield vaccines including to African countries like Malawi, Ethiopia, Zambia, Mozambique, Guinea and Lesotho.

The MEA said any new requirement raised will be considered expeditiously.

## SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13414

W	S	B	H	P	R	K
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C	E	N	D			



## MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	57,261	-0.27
US Dollar	75.07	-0.24
Gold	47,242	0.18
Brent oil	75.2	-
<b>NIFTY 50</b>		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	702.60	-14.55
Asian Paints	3144.30	+1.20
Axist Bank	651.10	-10.65
Bajaj Auto	3298.20	-36.40
Bajaj Finance	16890.40	207.85
Bajaj Finance	6905.75	98.70
Bharti Airtel	739.35	0.60
BPCL	367.45	-9.40
Britannia Ind	3528.60	-26.70
Cipla	965.00	-1.70
Coal India	154.25	-1.65
Divis Lab	4921.35	-16.45
Dr Reddys Lab	4697.60	-53.30
Eicher Motors	2413.40	-20.50
Grasim Ind	1683.95	-6.15
HCL Tech	1133.15	23.10
HDPC	2713.80	-27.90
HDPC Bank	1501.25	11.35
HDPC Life	683.65	13.00
Hero MotoCorp	2490.80	-38.60
Hindalco	420.15	3.15
Hind Unilever	2329.40	-5.70
ICICI Bank	718.40	-3.80
IndusInd Bank	895.45	-6.35
Infosys	1696.35	4.70
Indian Oil Corp	118.80	-2.15
ITC	221.50	-2.50
JSW Steel	625.60	-3.05
Kotak Bank	2019.60	55.30
L&T	1767.25	-10.90
M&M	850.80	-2.95
Maruti Suzuki	7149.50	-21.00
Nestle India Ltd.	19000.40	-221.85
NTPC	126.50	-2.35
ONGC	144.10	-3.00
PowerGrid Corp	200.25	-1.75
Reliance Ind	2441.50	28.90
SBI Life	1136.25	5.90
State Bank	465.10	-5.40
Shree Cement	25566.10	-379.70
Sun Pharma	751.05	-6.50
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	766.00	-0.70
Tata Motors	461.45	1.25
Tata Steel	1114.75	2.45
TCS	3502.00	55.15
Tech Mahindra	1536.65	9.25
Titan	2324.20	31.90
UltraTech Cement	7388.25	-6.50
UPL	689.35	-14.45
Wipro	630.60	9.15

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.9	75.22
Euro	84.57	84.93
British Pound	100.03	100.47
Japanese Yen (100)	65.98	66.26
Chinese Yuan	11.73	11.79
Swiss Franc	80.95	81.32
Singapore Dollar	54.74	54.98
Canadian Dollar	58.81	59.07
Malaysian Ringgit	17.67	17.75
Australian Dollar	53.58	53.81

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



**Amazon infuses ₹650 cr. in India wholesale arm**  
NEW DELHI  
Amazon has infused fresh capital of ₹650 crore into Amazon Wholesale (India), according to regulatory documents. Amazon Corporate Holdings and Amazon.com.incs Ltd. have made the investment in the wholesale, business-to-business arm, filings with the Corporate Affairs Ministry and shared by market intelligence firm Toftel showed. PTI

## Xcelerate acquires Aparajitha Corporate

CHENNAI  
Singapore-headquartered Xcelerate Pte Ltd. said it had acquired a controlling stake in Madurai-based Aparajitha Corporate Services Pvt. Ltd. for an undisclosed sum. Xcelerate said it had made the investment through its wholly owned Indian subsidiary XLSure India Pvt. Ltd. Aparajitha serves more than 1,500 clients, while Xcelerate is creating a global governance, risk and compliance (GRC) platform.

## Four CPSEs pay ₹5,155 cr. dividend to Centre

NEW DELHI  
The Centre has received ₹5,155 crore as dividend tranches from four CPSEs, DIPAM Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said on Monday. "Government has respectively received about ₹4,180 crore and ₹575 crore from ONGC and BPCL as dividend tranches," Mr. Pandey tweeted. The Centre has respectively received about ₹240 crore and ₹160 crore from SPMCIL and ECGC as dividend tranches, he said in another tweet. PTI

## RIL shares rise after Jio announces tariff increase

NEW DELHI  
Shares of Reliance Industries Ltd. on Monday gained more than 1% after its telecom arm Jio announced up to a 21% hike in prepaid tariffs from next month. The stock jumped 1.26% to close at ₹2,442.50 on BSE. During the day, it gained 3.64% to ₹2,500. On NSE, it jumped 1.19% to close at ₹2,441.50. After Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea, Jio on Sunday announced up to a 21% raise in prepaid tariffs. PTI

# RBI ousts Reliance Capital board on governance concerns

NBFC defaulted on payments, auditors flagged lack of clarity in accounting

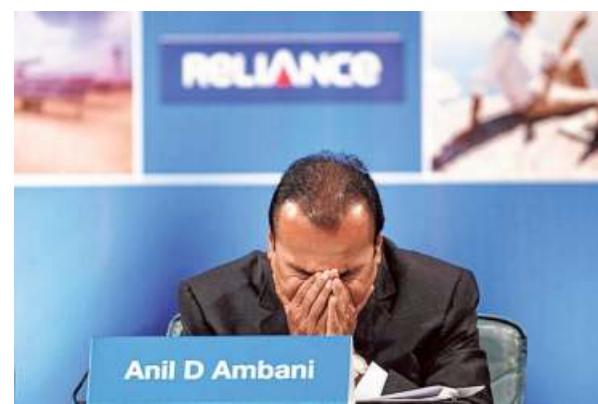
## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI  
The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has superseded the board of directors of Reliance Capital Ltd. (RCL), promoted by Anil Ambani's Reliance Group.

The regulatory action is "in view of the defaults by RCL in meeting the various payment obligations to its creditors and serious governance concerns which the board has not been able to address effectively", the RBI said in a circular.

## Administrator appointed

Former Bank of Maharashtra executive director Nageswar Rao Y has been appointed as the Administrator of the



**Matter of opacity:** In June 2019, auditors raised several red flags around Reliance Capital's Q4 results. ■ REUTERS

## company.

The central bank said it would shortly initiate the process of resolution of the company under the Insol-

## vency and Bankruptcy Rules, 2019.

"Reserve Bank will also apply to the NCLT, Mumbai for appointing the Adminis-

trator as the Insolvency Resolution Professional," the regulatory added in the circular.

In June 2019, auditors raised several red flags around Reliance Capital's fourth-quarter results, including a lack of clarity in accounting methodology.

The company has since then failed to make several debt obligation payments.

The RBI's move against Reliance Capital follows a similar step taken against Srei Infrastructure Finance Ltd. and Srei Equipment Finance Ltd. earlier this year.

Reliance Capital did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

(With Reuters inputs)

## Economic activity hits fresh post-COVID high: Nomura

Labour participation rate improved to 40.5%, index shows

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
Economic activity in India was almost 15% above pre-pandemic levels last week, Nomura said, based on its India Business Resumption Index which tracks post-pandemic momentum in the economy.

The index hit a fresh high of 114.5 in the week ending November 28, with mobility returning to almost pre-pandemic levels, Nomura research analysts Sonal Varma and Aurodeep Nandi said in a note on the latest print of the metric that considers February 23, 2020 as the base date for measuring post-COVID-19 activity. In the previous week, the Index stood



at 113.4. "Google workplace and retail & recreation mobility rose by 3.6 percentage points and 1.6 percentage points [pp], respectively, while the Apple driving index eased marginally by 0.5pp. The labour participation rate improved to 40.5% from 39.8% in the prior week, while power demand

recovered by 1.2% week-on-week from 0.2%," they said.

Despite the uncertainty due to the Omicron variant, Nomura said high-frequency data suggests the economy remains on a recovery path and inflationary pressures are building up. It, however, expressed concern about the extent of the fully-vaccinated population in India and its impact on contact-intensive sectors' recovery.

"Tourism is a relatively small share of the economy but continued normalisation of domestic contact-intensive services is contingent on infection cases remaining low, as only around 32% of the population are fully vaccinated," it said.

## Ather commissions second plant in T.N.

Unit to help meet e-scooter demand

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
Electric two-wheeler maker Ather Energy on Monday said it had commissioned its second manufacturing facility in India in Hosur, Tamil Nadu, to cater to the increased demand for its 450X and 450 Plus scooters.

While the company did not share the exact timeline for the new plant to begin operations, it said the unit would be "ready for 2022". The plant will take the firm's manufacturing capacity to 4 lakh units per annum from 1.2 lakh units now.

Ather Energy had set up its first manufacturing facility at Hosur earlier this year.

The company said it would be investing ₹650 crore over the next five years to enhance operations-



at efficiency and production capacity to meet the exponential surge in demand.

"Apart from the EV manufacturing, the facility will also focus on lithium-ion battery manufacturing, which is a key focus area.

Ather Energy is the only EV OEM in India to make its bat-

tery packs and has filed 13 patents on the design and manufacturing of the li-ion batteries," the firm said.

## Realty markets in South outdo northern, western counterparts'

Limiting new ventures, focus on delayed projects helped'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI  
Realty markets in the South have done relatively well as compared with rest of India's key markets on account of limiting new projects, focus on completion of delayed ones, and designing projects that met consumer demand, analysts said.

This approach has been in contrast to most markets, where developers are confronted with massive inventory pile-ups, as opposed to the situation in the southern markets, they added.

"The three main Southern cities collectively have less unsold stock than their western and northern counterparts," said Santhosh Kumar, vice chairman, Ana-



stock of 1.67 lakh units (which is 25% of the overall share) while the western region including MMR and Pune have more than 2.9 lakh unsold units as of Q3 2021-end, which is 44% of the total unsold stock.

"This clearly indicates that the southern markets are more in line with consumer demand," Mr. Kumar said.

"The property markets in Delhi NCR, Mumbai and Pune failed to match the performance of Southern real estate markets as most projects there got stalled due to extensive lockdowns during the second COVID wave," said Debyan Bhattacharya, Head - Primary Sales (South Zone), Square Yards.

In contrast, in the north, Delhi-NCR has more unsold

## Net direct tax revenue rose 68% till November 23: MoS

Gross GST collection showing rising trend, says Chaudhary

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The net direct tax collection grew almost 68% during the April 1-November 23 period to more than ₹6.92 lakh crore, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Monday.

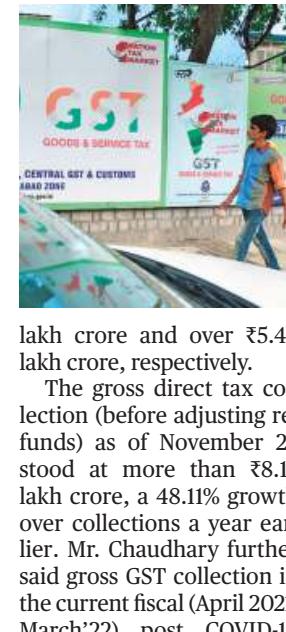
"The Net Direct Tax Collection figures for the FY-2021-22 as on 23.11.2021 are at ₹6,92,833.6 crores showing a growth of 67.93% and 27.29% over the net collection figures for the corresponding period FY2020-21 and FY 2019-20," he said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

The company has since then failed to make several debt obligation payments.

The RBI's move against Reliance Capital follows a similar step taken against Srei Infrastructure Finance Ltd. and Srei Equipment Finance Ltd. earlier this year.

"Reliance Capital did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

(With Reuters inputs)



lakh crore and over ₹5.44 lakh crore, respectively.

The gross direct tax collection (before adjusting refunds) as of November 23 stood at more than ₹8.15 lakh crore, a 48.11% growth over collections a year earlier. Mr. Chaudhary further said gross GST collection in the current fiscal (April 2021-March'22) post COVID-19

outbreak is showing an increasing trend.

Gross GST collection for the year ended March 2021 was more than ₹11.36 lakh crore, while the same in the current fiscal till October stood at ₹8.10 lakh crore.

In reply to a question on whether incidents of tax evasion are increasing in Delhi and other parts of the country, he said there was no evidence to suggest the trend. "In terms of cases detected under Goods & Service Tax (GST) and Customs, there is no increasing trend in such evasion noticed in Delhi; although, there is overall increase in detection of GST and Customs evasion cases in the country," Mr. Chaudhary added.

# Ravindra, Ajaz play out of their skin to deny India

The last-wicket pair thwarts India's spin trio for 52 balls; Ashwin displaces Harbhajan as the hosts' third top wicket-taker

## NZ IN INDIA

RAKESH RAO  
KANPUR

A wicketless pre-lunch session, a flurry of wickets on either side of the tea interval and the incredible defiance from New Zealand's last-wicket pair, India saw it all unfold with mixed emotions at the Green Park Stadium here.

Eventually, two players of Indian origin – debutant Rachin Ravindra and Ajaz Patel – kept New Zealand's pride intact. They walked away after denying the dreaded spin trio of R. Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel for 52 deliveries on a deteriorating pitch to pull off a thrilling draw on Monday.

### Memorable knock

Ravindra and Ajaz, the two left-arm spinners were required to bring out their batting skills to save New Zealand from going one-down in the two-match series. What made Ravindra's debut so memorable was the way he batted for 91 deliveries. His batting sessions in spin-friendly conditions in Bengaluru during his India visits could not have paid off at a better time.

Last-man Ajaz, who was not very impressive with the ball, played his part to perfection by consuming 23 balls and contributed significantly to the eventual result. Though light was in question,



**Remarkable effort:** Debutant Ravindra consumed 91 deliveries to earn New Zealand an exciting draw. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

India bowled its quota of 94 overs but could not find the final wicket.

For forcing a draw, New Zealand gained four points in the World Test Championship race. India, too, gained four but, more significantly, lost eight for drawing as host.

Somerville's departure to the first ball after lunch brought in Kane Williamson and the third-wicket stand produced 39 runs but more importantly, consumed 19.1 overs.

However, India went on to collect eight wickets in the space of 76 runs. This did not come as a surprise since India scalped nine wickets for 99 runs in the first innings. But,

despite flattering bowling fi-

gures, the spin trio fell just short of finding the match-winning wicket.

### Vital blows

Showing the kind of intensity associated with him, Ashwin threw everything at the Kiwi batters and struck vital blows. With Latham's wicket, Ashwin (418 wickets) displaced Harbhajan Singh (417) as the third highest Indian wicket-taker in Tests behind Anil Kumble (619) and Kapil Dev (434).

Jadeja bowled more effectively than Axar on this day. Jadeja troubled the batters with his faster deliveries that

### India's highest wicket-takers

- Kumble (619 in 132 Tests)
- Kapil (434 in 131)
- Ashwin (419 in 80)
- Harbhajan (417 in 103)
- Ishant (311 in 105)
- Zaheer (311 in 92)

skidded through. Axar, unlike in the first innings, could not find the desired angle when bowling from the edge of the crease.

A disappointed India and a

## SCOREBOARD

### INDIA – 1ST INNINGS

345 in 111.1 overs

### NEW ZEALAND – 1ST INNINGS

296 in 142.3 overs

### INDIA – 2ND INNINGS

234/7 decl. in 81 overs

### NEW ZEALAND – 2ND INNINGS

Tom Latham b Ashwin 52 (146b, 3x4), Will Young lbw b Ashwin 2 (6b), William Somerville c Gill b Umesh 36 (110b, 5x4), Kane Williamson lbw b Jadeja 24 (112b, 3x4), Ross Taylor lbw b Jadeja 2 (24b), Henry Nicholls lbw b Axar 1 (4b), Tom Blundell b Ashwin 2 (38b), Rachin Ravindra (not out) 18 (91b, 2x4), Kyle Jamieson lbw b Jadeja 5 (30b), Tim Southee lbw b Jadeja 4 (8b, 1x4), Ajaz Patel (not out) 2 (23b); Extras (b-12, lb-1, nb-4); 17; Total (for nine wkts. in 98 overs): 165.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-3 (Young, 2.6 overs), 2-79 (Somerville, 35.1), 3-118 (Latham, 54.2), 4-125 (Taylor, 63.1), 5-126 (Nicholls, 64.1), 6-128 (Williamson, 69.1), 7-138 (Blundell, 78.2), 8-147 (Jamieson, 85.6), 9-155 (Southee, 89.2).

### INDIA BOWLING

Ashwin 30-12-35-3, Axar 21-12-23-1, Umesh 12-2-34-1, Ishant 7-18, Jadeja 28-10-40-4.

**Result:** Match drawn.

**Man-of-the-Match:** Shreyas.

**Second Test:** December 3 to 7, Mumbai.

delighted New Zealand now travel to Mumbai. Virat Kohli will return as skipper, but it remains to be seen how India deals with the poor form of its top-order batters.

## Terrific game: Williamson

They played really well, says Rahane

RAKESH RAO  
KANPUR

Having denied India the victory it sniffed in the final session, Kane Williamson and his gallant men have reasons to be pleased with their show.

On the other hand, Ajinkya Rahane could point to the way India battled from 51 for five in the second innings and struck late to come so close to victory.

Overall, the first Test here was a good advertisement for Test cricket, with 94 overs bowled on the final day before the last-wicket pair walked away unconquered.

"Terrific game overall," was how Williamson saw it.

"It was also some fantastic experience for Rachin (Ravindra), Ajaz (Patel) and William (Somerville)," said the skipper about the spin trio that was chosen after considering their ability to bat well in these conditions.

"We know this Indian side is a very strong one. There are things to touch on. We have to prepare for a different kind of pitch in Mumbai," said Williamson.



Jadeja took four, but one more proved elusive.

■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

bat in that situation. The umpires made the call and I thought they were right."

Ashwin said, "We knew if we had the time to go on and put some pressure on them, we could get the job done.

"We know this Indian side is a very strong one. There are things to touch on. We have to prepare for a different kind of pitch in Mumbai," said Williamson.

Rahane said, "Very good game of cricket. They played really well. We came back really well after the first session."

Asked about the chat with the umpires at the end, he said, "It was about light. As a fielding team, you want to bowl more overs. As a batting unit, you don't want to

+ Rahul Dravid has paid ₹35,000 to our groundsmen," the Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association (UPCA) announced after the game.

## QUICK SINGLES

### Warne 'bit battered and bruised' after bike accident

MELBOURNE

Shane Warne has been left "battered and bruised" after suffering an accident on Sunday while riding his motorbike with son Jackson. According to reports, Warne "fell off and slid for more than 15 metres" but he didn't sustain any major injury. AFP

### Pakistan in sight of victory in first Test

CHITTAGONG

Openers Abid Ali and Abdullah Shafiq each hit an unbeaten fifty to put Pakistan in a commanding position in the first Test against Bangladesh here on Monday. **The scores:** Bangladesh 330 & 157 in 56.2 overs (Yasir Ali 36 retd. hurt, Liton Das 59; Shaheen Shah Afridi 5/32, Sajid Khan 3/33) vs Pakistan 286 & 109/0 in 33 overs (Abid Ali 56 batting, Abdullah Shafiq 53 batting). AFP

### Sri Lanka makes a good start against West Indies

GALLE

Opening batsman Pathum Nissanka scored an unbeaten 61 to get Sri Lanka off to a good start on Monday, the first day of the second Test against the West Indies, as the hosts reached 113 for one at stumps. **The scores:** Sri Lanka 113/1 (Pathum Nissanka 61 batting, Dimuth Karunaratne 48) vs West Indies. **Toss:** Sri Lanka. AP

## Franchises face the retention conundrum

The eight teams have to submit their list on Tuesday

### IPL 2022

SHAYAN ACHARYA  
MUMBAI

The eight existing Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises will submit their player-retention list on Tuesday for the next edition.

They are allowed to retain a maximum of four, while the two new franchises – Lucknow and Ahmedabad – can acquire three from the rest of the player pool before the January auction.

Sportstar spoke to several franchises about what the probable retention list could look like.

**Delhi Capitals:** Capitals look certain to retain current skipper Rishabh Pant, Prithvi Shaw, and Axar Patel. Among overseas players, the franchise is expected to opt for Anrich Nortje over Kagiso Rabada.

**Mumbai Indians:** The five-time champion side is expected to retain captain Rohit Sharma and pace ace Jasprit Bumrah.

Among the overseas recruits, Kieron Pollard is likely to be preferred, while there could be a toss-up between Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan. The Pandya brothers – Hardik and Krunal – will head to the auction pool, unless the Ahmedabad franchise picks one or both

of them.

**Chennai Super Kings:** M.S. Dhoni remains the captain of the team, while Ravindra Jadeja and Ruturaj Gaikwad should be retained too. Moeen Ali could be the preferred overseas all-rounder.

**Punjab Kings:** The team could retain Mayank Agarwal and Ravi Bishnoi. There could be a toss-up between the seasoned Mohammed Shami and the young gun Arshdeep Singh. With K.L. Rahul set to move to one of the new franchises – possibly Lucknow – the franchise remains undecided on its foreign retention.

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** All eyes will be on Eoin Morgan. While there is a buzz that Knightriders might eventually not retain him, his success in IPL 2021 could force the side to change its mind. Among the Indians, the franchise could opt for Venkatesh Iyer, Shubman Gill, or Varun Chakravarthy. Among the overseas players, Sunil Narine is set to continue.

**Rajasthan Royals:** Sanju Samson will remain the captain, while the franchise could opt for Yashasvi Jaiswal or Chetan Sakariya. Jos Buttler is likely to be retained as one of the overseas picks. And the franchise might keep either Ben Stokes or Jofra Archer ahead of an Indian player.

**Royal Challengers Bangalore:**

If two players are retained, the total will be ₹24 crore – ₹14 crore for the first player and ₹10



## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BLOEMFONTEIN

Coopted up in a bio-bubble while a new COVID-19 variant causes panic all around, the India-A cricket team will take on South Africa-A in the second 'Test' from Tuesday.

The first four-day game ended in a draw due to inclement weather on Friday last week even as the Omicron variant forced many countries to impose restrictions on travel to South Africa.

If the situation deteriorates, it can jeopardise the tour which involves three Tests, three ODIs and four

## Battle resumes



**Big challenge:** Carlsen, who turns 31 on Tuesday, will be keen to get it right with white when he takes on Nepomniachtchi in Game 4 of the World Championship. The match is tied 1.5-1.5.

## Vinicius stunner seals it for Real

Napoli cruises past Lazio, pays a perfect tribute to Maradona



**Decisive strike:** Vinicius slots home the winner for Real against Sevilla. ■ GETTY IMAGES

## EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MADRID

Vinicius Junior scored a stunning goal in the 87th minute as Real Madrid rallied to beat Sevilla 2-1 and moved four points clear at the top of La Liga on Sunday.

His superb strike, after a surging run on the left, ensured Sevilla took nothing from a game it had dominated for most of the first half.

Rafa Mir headed Sevilla into the lead early on but

depicted their idol in full flight atop the number 10, was carried around the pitch. Mertens led Napoli's charge with a brilliant brace.

**The results:**

**LaLiga:** Cadiz 1 (Oblik 86-0g) lost to Atletico Madrid 4 (Lemar 56, Griezmann 70, Correa 76, Cunha 87); Real Madrid 2 (Benzema 32, Vinicius Junior 87) bt Sevilla 1 (Mir 12).

**Serie A:** Napoli 4 (Zielinski 7, Mertens 10 & 29, Fabian Ruiz 85) bt Lazio 0; Roma 1 (Abraham 32) bt Torino 0.

## Chhangte, Thapa star for CFC

Power the side to a 2-1 win over a spirited NEUFC

### ISL 2021

SPORTS BUREAU

A goal each from Lallianzuala Chhangte and Anirudh Thapa on either side of the break helped Chennaiyin FC beat NorthEast United FC 2-1 in an Indian Super League match at Fatorda on Monday.

In a hard-fought match, two moments of individual brilliance gave CFC its second win in as many matches



**Leading the way:** Skipper Thapa's goal gave Chennaiyin its second victory in as many matches. ■ FOCUS SPORTS/ISL

es. NEUFC, as indicated by assistant coach Alison Khar-syntew at a media interaction on Sunday, started positively and dominated possession in the opening 30 minutes.

### Damjanovic's tackle

NEUFC had a golden chance in the 20th minute when Federico Gallego set up Mathias Courteau, who had just the keeper to beat. However, CFC defender Slavko Damjanovic

made a sliding tackle to save his side. In the 41st minute, Chhangte latched on to a deflection off a NorthEast player and slammed home

## TV PICKS

**Cricket:** Sri Lanka vs West Indies; 2nd Test, day 2, Sony Six (SD & HD), 10 a.m.  
**ISL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 1 a.m. (Wednesday)

## IN BRIEF



**Curry propels Warriors to win over Clippers**

**LOS ANGELES**  
Stephen Curry came alive late as Golden State Warriors shook off a sloppy start to beat Los Angeles Clippers 105-90 and post its seventh straight NBA victory.  
**The results:** Clippers 90 lost to Warriors 105; Pacers 100 lost to Bucks 118; Grizzlies 128 bt Kings 101; Raptors 97 lost to Celtics 109; Lakers 110 bt Pistons 106. AFP

**Asian Masters Marathon in India next year**

**NEW DELHI**  
The Masters Athletic Federation of India (MAFI) will organise the inaugural edition of the Asian Masters Marathon next year. Athletes above the age of 35 from more than 40 Asian countries are expected to compete in the full marathon (42.195 km), half marathon (21.097 km) and 10km race. It will be held in the last quarter of 2022. PTI

**Jyothi Surekha ranked World No. 4**

**HYDERABAD**  
Ace compound archer V. Jyothi Surekha achieved a career high World No. 4 spot in the latest World rankings on Monday. The Vijayawada-based Surekha has become the first Indian woman archer to achieve this feat. She is also Asia No. 1.

**Club World Cup to be held in UAE in February**

**LAUSANNE**  
The FIBA Club World Cup, initially set to be held in Japan in December, will now be held in the United Arab Emirates between February 3 to 12. Japan pulled out as host because of the pandemic. AFP

**India loses to Chile**

**MANAUS (BRAZIL)**  
The Indian women's team went down 0-3 to Chile in its second game of the four-nation tournament at the Amazon Arena on Sunday. India, which had lost to Brazil in the opener, will play its final game against Venezuela on Thursday.  
**The results:** Chile 3 (Maria Urrutia 14, Isidora Hernandez 84, Karen Araya 85) bt India 0. PTI

**Indian men get top billing**

**SQUASH**  
**KUALA LUMPUR**  
Indian men, the top seeds, are grouped in Pool A with Pakistan, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia and Iraq in the Asian team squash championships to be held here from November 30 to December 4.

**Women seeded three**  
The women, seeded three, are in Pool B with host Malaysia, Iran and the Philippines.

Hong Kong, defending champions in men and women's sections (the event was last held 2018 in Cheongju, South Korea), is seeded three in men and one in women.

The top two from each pool will reach the semifinals. There are placings for 5-8 and 9-12 in men and 5-8 for women. The Indian men will kick off their campaign against Iraq while the women will face the Philippines.

**Men: Pool A:** India, Pakistan, Japan, the Philippines, Iraq and Indonesia. **Pool B:** Malaysia, Hong Kong, Iran, Korea, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

**Women: Pool A:** Hong Kong, Japan, Korea and Sri Lanka. **Pool B:** Malaysia, India, Iran and Philippines.

## Satwik-Chirag qualify for BWF Finals

The Indian pair leapfrogs the Japanese in the Road to Bali

### BADMINTON

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
BALI

The World No. 11 doubles pair of Satwicksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has become the first Indian men's doubles pair to qualify for the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals starting here on Wednesday.

Satwik and Chirag had lost in the semifinals of the Indonesia Open last week but made the cut after the Japanese pair of Akira Koga and Taichi Saito also lost in the last four at the Super 1000 tournament.

The Indians thus leapfrogged the Japanese in the Road to Bali to book the berth at the year-ending event.

"Fell short in the end against Kevin/Marcus today. But nevertheless happy with the way we played this week. On the positive side we have qualified for the World Tour



**In tandem:** Chirag and Satwicksairaj became the first Indian men's pair to make the year-end.

REUTERS

Finals!" Chirag wrote on his Instagram page.

Earlier, Lakshya Sen had become the youngest Indian to qualify for the \$1.5 million tournament, which will also see K. Srikanth, P.V. Sindhu and the women's doubles

pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy in action.

Srikanth, Sameer Verma, Sindhu and London bronze-medallist Saina Nehwal have competed in the year-ending tournament in the past.

While Sindhu is the only

Indian to win the BWF World Tour Finals in 2018, Saina

had reached the summit clash of the BWF Superseries Finals in 2011.

Srikanth and Sameer have made it to the knockout stag-

## India will be at its best against Belgium: Arajeet

Charged up for the quarterfinals, says drag-flick specialist

### JUNIOR WC

**Y.B. SARANGI**  
BHUBANESWAR

Seventeen-year-old striker-cum-drag-flicker Arajeet Singh Hundal says the Indian players understand the importance of maintaining their energy level in the quarterfinal against Belgium in the Junior World Cup here on Wednesday.

Hundal said his team would give its best in the last-eight match.

#### Learning from errors

"If we took our first match (against France) too lightly, but have learnt from our mistakes. We are fully charged up for the quarterfinals against Belgium.

"I was just 12 when the 2016 JWC was held in Lucknow. I don't know much about that tournament. But I am aware of how that tournament changed many players'



**Rising star:** Arajeet has scored five goals, including a hat-trick, in the tournament so far. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

totally focused on playing our A game," said Arajeet.

Arajeet, who has scored five goals including a hat-trick, underscored the importance of the JWC.

"I was just 12 when the 2016 JWC was held in Lucknow. I don't know much about that tournament. But I am aware of how that tournament changed many players'

lives," he said.

The Amritsar boy, whose father Kuljeet Singh is a former Railways player, was quick on his feet as a forward but his drag-flicking skills improved following his consultations with senior India players when the National camp resumed in September 2020.

"My interactions with Ru-

pinderpal and Harmanpreet were very helpful. They said my technique was good, but I needed to pay more attention to my footwork and ball release. I worked a lot on my timing, power and shoulder movement after coming to the camp.

#### Useful advice

"Varun Kumar told me to keep my head up and look more confident while taking the drag-flick. Another crucial advice the seniors gave me was to study the opponent goalkeeper's weaknesses. During the lockdown, our coach (B.J. Kariappa) would also share videos of the senior team drag-flickers on our WhatsApp group so that we could study their movement and implement necessary changes to our game. I feel all these factors have helped a lot," he added.

## Rangnick is United interim coach

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

**MANCHESTER**

German coach Ralf Rangnick was hired Monday as Manchester United manager until the end of the season.

The 63-year-old Rangnick has left his role as head of sports and development at Russian club Lokomotiv Moscow to take charge of the English club,

which has been led by former player Michael Carrick since the firing of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer on Nov. 21.

## Upbeat Odisha FC meets struggling SC East Bengal

Former had stunned BFC while the latter had lost to ATK MB

### ISL 2021

**SPORTS BUREAU**

Odisha FC will look to build on its win against former champion Bengaluru FC when it takes on a struggling SC East Bengal in an ISL Season 8 fixture at the Tilak Maidan, Vasco, on Tuesday.

Odisha, which had failed to make an impression in the previous edition, started with a comfortable 3-1 win over Bengaluru FC. Goals

from Spanish midfielder Javi Hernandez and striker Arijadai Cabrera ensured that Odisha made the most of the opportunities despite not having a greater share of ball possession.

"The strategy is to remain competitive. In the end, we cannot live in the last game which was good for us.

"Our thought now is to compete in the best way possible in the next," said Odisha FC head coach Kiko Ramirez ahead of the match.

The Kolkata giant is yet to register a win, posing a big challenge to new head coach Manolo Diaz.

"It will be a very important match against Odisha as we would like to gain the full three points. We will try be very focused on the task ahead and not think about our loss or Odisha's win in the last match," said Diaz.

East Bengal is smarting from a 0-3 loss to traditional rival ATK Mohun Bagan in the previous round.

The Kolkatta giant is yet to register a win, posing a big challenge to new head coach Manolo Diaz.

The 63-year-old Rangnick has left his role as head of sports and development at Russian club Lokomotiv Moscow to take charge of the English club,

which has been led by former player Michael Carrick since the firing of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer on Nov. 21.

## N R I Elegance should make amends

**HYDERABAD:** The six-year-old mare N R I Elegance, who ran third in her last start, should make amends in the Raja Narasimha Rao Memorial Cup, the main event of Tuesday's (Nov. 30) races.

**OSMAN SAGAR PLATE (DIV. I)** 1 (1,200m) Maiden, 3-y-o & upward, rated up to 25 (Cat. III), 1.15 p.m.: 1. Most Loveable (7) Nukhat Singh 62, 2. Sharp Mind (10) Surya Prakash 61.5, 3. Sea Wolf (6) Ajit Singh 61, 4. Arba Wahed Arba (11) Khurshad Alam 60.5, 5. Star Cruise (4) Akshay Kumar 60.5, 6. Sye Ra (8) Ajeeth Kumar 60.5, 7. Exotic Dancer (9) Kuldev Singh 60, 8. Stark (3) Abhay Singh 60, 9. Elegance Stroke (5) C.P. Bopanna 58, 10. Acadian Angel (1) Rafique Sk. 53.5 and 11. Good Tidings (2) N.B. Kuldeep 53.5.

**STAR CRUISE, 2. EXOTIC DANCER, 3. ACADIAN ANGEL**

**GOLDEN DAGGER PLATE (DIV. II)** 1 (1,200m) Maiden, 3-y-o & upward, rated up to 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 1.50 p.m.: 1. Angel Tesoro (II) A.A. Vikrant 60, 2. N R I Sun (9) Akash Rajput 58.5, 3. Monarch (7) C.S. Jodha 58, 4. Bloom Buddy (4) Akshay Kumar 57.5, 5. Hidden Hope (2) Ajit Singh 57.5, 6. City of Blossom (12) Khuldeep Singh 56.5, 7. Lifetime (1) Khurshad Alam 55.5, 8. Top In Class (5) Surya Prakash 53.5, 9. Aluri's Pride (10) Aneel 52.5, 10. Art In Motion (8) Afroz Khan 51.5, 11. Sacred Lamp (6) B. Nikhil 51.5 and 12. Exponent (3) P. Gaddam 50.5.

**MONARCHS, 2. BLOOM BUDDY, 3. SACRED LAMP**

**GOLDEN DAGGER PLATE (DIV. III)** 1 (1,200m), 4-y-o & upward, rated up to 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 2.25 p.m.: 1. Miss Marvelloous (2) Storyteller, 3. Linewiler (1).

**RAJA NARASIMHA RAO MEMORIAL CUP (1,200m), 5-y-o & upward, rated up to 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 4.10:** 1. Strategist (I) Surya Prakash 60, 2. Her Legacy (II) Kiran Naik 59.5, 3. British Empress (12) Abhay Singh 59, 4. City of Wisdom (10) Akash Rajput 57.5, 5. N R I Elegance (2) Akshay Kumar 57, 6. Incredible (6) A.A. Vikrant 56.5, 7. Full Volume (7) S.S. Tanwar 54.5, 8. Four One Four (9) P. Sai Kumar 53, 9. Green Turf (13) Gaurav Singh 52.5, 10. Max (8) Md. Ismail 52.5, 11. Sporting Smile (14) C.P. Bopanna 52.5, 12. Sublime (5) Santosh Raj 52.13. King Maker (4) Khurshad Alam 50.5 and 14. Mind Reader (3) R.S. Jodha.

**1. N R I ELEGANCE, 2. GREEN TURF, 3. HER LEGACY**

**OSMAN SAGAR PLATE (DIV. II)** 1 (1,200m) Maiden, 3-y-o & upward, rated up to 25, 4.45: 1. Reining Queen (8) Ajeeth Kumar 62, 2. Silk (6) Santosh Raj 61.5, 3. Joy O Joy (4) Surya Prakash 61, 4. Magic Mark (7) P. Sai Kumar 61, 5. Tales Of Legend (9) A. Vikrant 61, 6. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 60.5, 7. New Role (1) P. Gaddam 59.5, 8. Challenger (2) Nukhat Singh 58.5, 9. Air Salute (3) N.B. Kuldeep 58, 10. Jo Malone (11) Afroz Khan 55.5 and 11. Turf Monarch (5) B. Nikhil 50.

**1. REINING QUEEN, 2. CHALLENGER, 3. SILK.**

**DAY'S BEST: AERIAL COMBAT JACKPOT:** 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7. Mini Jackpot: (i) 1, 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 4, 5, 6 & 7.

**Treble:** (i) 2, 3 & 4. (ii) 5, 6 & 7.

**Tanala:** All races.

**FLYING TREASURE PLATE (1,600m), 5-y-o & upward, rated up to 20 to 35:** 1. Marvellous (9) A. Vikrant 64.5, 2. B. Nikhil 64, 3. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 4. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 5. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 6. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 7. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 8. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 9. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 10. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 11. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 12. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 13. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 14. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 15. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 16. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 17. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 18. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 19. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 20. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 21. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 22. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 23. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 24. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 25. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 26. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 27. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 28. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 29. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 30. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5, 31. Choice Of Diamond (10) Aneel 64.5,

# Text & Context

## NEWS IN NUMBERS



### Pending compensation

**52,000**

In ₹ crore, the pending dues to States as Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation from the Union Government. This includes ₹13,153 cr pending to Maharashtra, ₹5,441 cr to U.P., ₹4,943 cr to Tamil Nadu, ₹4,647 cr to Delhi and ₹3,528 cr to Karnataka. On GST compensation released and pending as on November 24, 2021, the MoS for Finance said that ₹1,10,208 cr and ₹1.59 lakh cr was released as back to back loans in the 2020-21 and 2021-22 fiscals. PTI

### Ground water declines

**33**

In percent, the share of wells in India which registered a decline in water levels in November 2020 compared to the decadal average (2010-2019). In some pockets of Delhi, Chennai, Indore, Coimbatore, Madurai, Vijayawada, Dehradun, Jaipur, Allahabad, Ghaziabad, Kanpur and Lucknow, a decline of more than 4 metres has also been observed. Additionally, of the 19.22 crore rural households in the country, only 8.55 crore have tap water supply. The numbers were presented in Rajya Sabha on Monday. PTI

### Shuttered firms

**5,00,506**

The number of companies that have been shut down between April 2016 till date. A high of 2,36,262 companies were shut down in 2017-18, after demonetisation and GST implementation. In this financial year since April 1, 2021, a total of 22,557 companies were deregistered while 1,09,098 new companies were set up. The count was 1,43,233 companies in 2018-19 and a much lower 12,808 in 2016-17. 70,972 companies in 2019-20 and 14,647 in 2020-21 had deregistered. PTI

### In solidarity

**7,50,000**

The estimated number of Rohingya people who were driven away to Bangladesh after ethnic violence against the community occurred in Myanmar. Argentina's judiciary is opening up a case of genocide to try the atrocities committed by the Myanmar armed forces, based on "universal jurisdiction" - the idea that such cases can be heard anywhere. The Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) estimated conservatively that 6,700 people died due to the violence between 25 August and 24 September 2017. THE ECONOMIST

### Fast and furious

**2**

The number of players who completed the double of 250 runs and 50 wickets in their first 9 matches. Kyle Jamieson of New Zealand reached this milestone after the first Test against India that ended on 29 November and R Ashwin had achieved this in November 2012. England's Maurice Tate and Ian Botham achieved the same milestone in their 10th Test. Kyle Jamieson is also the fastest bowler from New Zealand to take 50 Test wickets in 18 innings (9 Tests) breaking Shane Bond's record of 20 innnings in 12 Tests to reach that milestone.

## EXPLAINER

# The logistics behind a caste census

What is the SECC-2011? Why does the Union Government not make the data acquired under the SECC public?

## THE GIST

G. SAMPATH

**The story so far:** The Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has promised to carry out a caste census if his party is voted to power in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections next year. This is the demand of several other political parties including the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Bihar ally, the Janata Dal (United) led by Nitish Kumar. But in an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court on September 23 this year, the Union Government categorically ruled out conducting a Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC), stating that a caste census (except that for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes done traditionally) was unfeasible, "administratively difficult and cumbersome." The Government's affidavit was in response to a writ petition by the Maharashtra Government seeking directions of the Central Government to collect data on Backward Class of Citizens (BCC) of rural India during the enumeration of the 2021 census. The petition also wanted the Centre to disclose the raw caste data on other



### The Government has cited numerous administrative, operational and logistical reasons to argue that collecting caste data during the 2021 Census is unfeasible

backward classes (OBCs) collected during SECC-2011.

### What is the substance of the Centre's affidavit?

The Government's affidavit covers three different aspects of the caste census issue, as reflected in the writ petition. It first explains why it cannot make public the caste data collected under the SECC-2011 census. Then it argues that the judiciary cannot direct the Government to conduct a caste census because it is a "policy decision" not to do so, and the judiciary cannot interfere with Government policy. And finally, it elaborates on why it is neither practical nor administratively feasible to attempt a caste census.

### What is the status of the data collected under the SECC-2011?

In its affidavit, the Government acknowledges that the SECC-2011's caste data of 130 crore Indians have been with the

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for five years. Due to flaws in the data, it was decided to form an Expert Committee headed by the then Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog, Arvind Panagariya. But since other members of the Committee were not named, the Committee never met, and as a result, no action was taken on the raw data to collate it into publishable findings.

The flaws in the data stem primarily from the fact that no registry of castes was prepared before conducting the 2011 caste census. This resulted in mistakes by enumerators, who spelt the same caste in dozens of different ways. With no consistent way to aggregate or segregate same or similar castes with variant spellings, the number of caste categories ballooned. In Maharashtra, for instance, the existing SC, ST and OBC categories as per Government records are only 494. But the 2011 caste census yielded 4,28,677 castes. While the State's population was 10.3 crore, about 1.17 crore were found to be of 'no caste'. Also, 99% of the castes enumerated had a population of less than 100 persons. At the national level, whereas the total number of castes as per the last caste census of 1931 was 4,147, the SECC-2011 showed the presence of 46 lakh different castes. Since the total number cannot be "exponentially high to

this extent", the Government has said that this entire data set is flawed and the census unreliable, rendering it unusable for the purposes of reservations and policy.

### Why will castes not be counted along with the regular 2021 census?

The Government has cited numerous administrative, operational and logistical reasons to argue that collecting caste data during the 2021 Census is unfeasible and attempting it could endanger the census exercise itself. It begins by pointing to the difference in caste categories according to different lists. While the Central list contained 2,479 OBC castes, there were 3,150 OBC castes as per the lists of all the States and Union Territories taken together. If a caste-related question is included, it would "return thousands of castes as the people use their clan/gotra, sub-caste and caste names interchangeably." Since enumerators are part-timers with 6-7 days training and "not an investigator or verifier", the affidavit states, "it would be difficult to meaningfully tabulate and classify caste returns."

Secondly, the preparatory work for a census starts three to four years earlier. As for the census, now delayed to 2022 instead of 2021 due to the pandemic, the

questionnaires have already been finalised and field tested. It is, therefore, not possible to add additional questions about caste now. Third, unlike in the case of SCs/STs, there is no constitutional mandate for the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India to provide the census figures of OBCs/BCCs.

And lastly, it has cited the 2014 Supreme Court judgment setting aside two orders of the Madras High Court directing the Centre to conduct a caste census. As per this SC judgment, what information to collect in a census is a policy decision of the Government, and while the court may find a certain policy untenable, it was "legally impermissible" for the court to dictate to the Government what policy it ought to follow.

### What is the status of a proposed caste survey in Tamil Nadu?

In December 2020, the erstwhile AIADMK regime in Tamil Nadu appointed a commission to collect particulars on castes in the State, mainly to gather quantifiable data to back its 69% total reservation. It was also said the data would help the Government target its welfare schemes better. However, the panel was not given an extension by the present DMK regime.

(With inputs from K. Venkataraman)

**Out into the field:** Enumerators and supervisors selected for socio economic caste census attend a training class at Tummalapalli Kshetrayya Kalakshetram in Vijayawada in 2011.

THE HINDU

## EXPLAINER

# WhatsApp to increase its share in the digital payments platform

Why did the NPCI give WhatsApp more leg room? How many users will its services be able to cater to in the digital payments ecosystem?

JOHN XAVIER

**The story so far:** The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has allowed WhatsApp to roll out its payment services to 40 million Indian users, double of its current cap of 20 million users.

### What has been WhatsApp's experience?

WhatsApp has for long been trying to get a larger piece of India's digital payments pie.

The messaging platform first launched its payment feature as a beta in 2018. But it could not do a full roll out due to data localisation issues.

In November 2020, the NPCI, which operates the digital payment infrastructure in the country, allowed WhatsApp to expand its user base in a "graded manner starting with a maximum user base of 20 million".

On the same day, NPCI also capped the total volume of transactions on the Unified Payment Interface (UPI) for all Third-Party App Providers (TPAPs) to address the "risks and protect" in the digital payments ecosystem.



### What is the importance of UPI?

The UPI is a platform on which several banks, financial institutions and individuals transact money. Since its launch in 2016, UPI has seen large-scale adoption. It crossed 1 billion transactions for the first time in October 2019.

The pandemic has accelerated its use as the next 1 billion transactions came in under a year. In October 2020, UPI processed over 2 billion transactions for the first time. And the next billion came in 10 months, indicating the popularity of the platform for retail digital payments

among consumers.

UPI logged 4.2 billion transactions worth ₹ 7.71 lakh crore in October, an all-time high, both in terms of volume and value. Over 250 banks across the country are part of its ecosystem.

### Are there many third party app providers?

The fast-growing digital payment ecosystem is dominated by a few TPAPs. Walmart-owned PhonePe and Google Pay account for nearly 80% of all the transactions on UPI.

In an effort to curb duopoly, de-risk the ecosystem and bring in more payment apps, the NPCI capped the total volume of UPI-based transactions processed by all TPAPs to 30% of the total volume of transactions processed by UPI in the preceding three months, on a rolling basis.

The regulator has allowed existing TPAPs that exceed the cap two years from January 2021 to comply with the order in a phased manner. This means Google Pay and PhonePe have until 2023 to gradually reduce their market share in processing payments.

But that doesn't seem to be happening. In October, PhonePe logged 1.93 billion

transactions worth ₹ 3.65 lakh crore, and Google's payment service was used in 1.45 billion transactions worth ₹ 2.87 lakh crore. Together they processed 85% of UPI-based transactions in the month.

### Where does WhatsApp stand?

Despite being allowed 20 million users, WhatsApp Pay has only slightly gained market share in the last one year. The platform recorded 2.6 million transactions worth ₹ 104 crore in October.

The combination of messaging plus payment could make it easier for WhatsApp to make its users send and receive payments on its platform.

But giving the app a total free play could potentially open the door for it to onboard its 400 million users in India, 10x its current approved limit.

While the NPCI tweaks the number of people WhatsApp can onboard, Google Pay and PhonePe could cut back on promotions, cashbacks and stop onboarding new customers.

## THE GIST

**In November 2020, the NPCI allowed WhatsApp to expand its user base in a "graded manner starting with a maximum user base of 20 million".**

**The NPCI has done so in an effort to curb duopoly, de-risk the ecosystem and bring in more payment apps.**

**While the NPCI tweaks the number of people WhatsApp can onboard, Google Pay and PhonePe could cut back on promotions, cashbacks and stop onboarding new customers.**



## FROM THE ARCHIVES

*On 27th November, the Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana urged the Government to seriously consider Attorney General K.K. Venugopal's suggestion to restructure the judiciary to include four National Courts of Appeals. He remarked that the judicial structure has remained stagnant since Independence and with four appellate courts, pendency will be remarkably reduced. Here we have two opposing views to such a restructuring, written back in 2016, when the suggestion was first put forward. Sriram Panchu, a senior advocate at the Madras High Court writes in favour while Suhrith Parthasarathy, also an advocate of the Madras High Court writes against such a re-vamping. Edited excerpts:*

## A National Court of Appeal? Aye

SRIRAM PANCHU

The two authors argue for and against the installation of an appellate court(s) which would ease the burden of the Supreme Court and reduce pendency.

**Point:** An appellate body would be able to reduce the number of appeals the Supreme Court deals with. It would also be accessible to citizens from remote locations. It would give the Court more time and resources to constitute Constitution benches.

**Counterpoint:** The installation of an appellate court would be too impractical. The solution lies in strengthening existing lower judicial bodies and not completely restructuring the system.

Judges on other days to hear and decide these appeals. Many of these do involve questions of law, and in several matters the Supreme Court does find that the High Courts or Tribunals have erred. But it is one thing to be a superior appellate court tasked with checking if the lower court has erred and doing this by revisiting the facts and application of law to the case on hand. It is a different matter to focus on examining a question of law of general public importance and to restate, clarify, change existing precedent, or create a new one. The latter is the seminal interpretive lawmaking that the apex court needs to do, which it seems not to be doing.

**How the apex court works**  
Every week, the court spends three days in final hearings of cases. Two other days are meant for admission of fresh cases called Special Leave Petitions; in an inverse picture, total bedlam takes over the court. Each Bench of two judges has before it 60 to 70 cases. The hearing of each case lasts for a couple of minutes or less before the judges decide whether to admit or dismiss it. Owing to time and volume constraints, the judges read these papers before the hearing date. A substantial portion of four days of India's senior-most judges thus goes in just deciding which cases should join the appeals docket of the Supreme Court. Being tasked with the filtering process is a waste of the time, experience and wisdom of a Supreme Court judge.

Even while rejecting the mass,

the admission of some appeals mean that they need to be disposed of. So, the court usually

sits in Benches of two or three

percentage of appeals to the Supreme Court come from Delhi and its neighbouring States; for those beyond, the court seems out of reach.

The problem, looked at from different perspectives, is that the run-of-the-mill appeals clog the Supreme Court. We cannot deny an appellate remedy for the general mass of civil and criminal cases. High Courts can and do make serious mistakes and these require rectification. It is this hard fact that forces the Supreme Court to take on such appeals. The answer is to create intermediate courts of appeal where senior judges can deal with these cases, giving them the time and consideration they deserve. These need to be located at different parts of the country. They can be manned by senior judges retiring from the High Courts at 62 years. These courts of appeal will signal the full stop to civil and criminal litigation at large.

We can thus restore the Supreme Court to what the Constitution envisaged – to decide the weighty issues under the Constitution and other laws, with appropriate judge strength, and give the judges the time and opportunity to do their best in the cases which matter most to all of us. It is somewhat surprising that the Centre's first response to the plea seeking setting up of a National Court of Appeal was that this is a "fruitless endeavour". Perhaps the Law Ministry and its legal team may like to consult the Bar Associations of all the States; it may find that the predominant voices do not share this barrenness of view.

## Not a court of everyday appeals

SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

Much as Justice Felix Frankfurter once said of the U.S. Supreme Court, India's Supreme Court too is a "is a very special kind of court" because it acts as a final court of appeal; its decisions are determinative; its pronouncements constitute the law of the land; and it acts as the ultimate arbiter on disputes concerning any interpretation of the Constitution. However, in recent times, the Court's ability to remain special has been thwarted by the enormity of its burden. It often tasks itself with ruling on run-of-the-mill civil and criminal appeals. As a result, the Court's focus has wavered from settling questions of constitutional significance.

An oft-repeated suggestion aimed at correcting this perceived imbalance in the apex court's role is the establishment of a National Court of Appeal (NCA) that would act as an intermediate forum between the Supreme Court and the various High Courts of India. Recently, on a PIL initiated by a Chennai-based lawyer, demanding the establishment of such an NCA, the Court not only ordered notice to the Union of India but also proposed to refer questions of law concerning the establishment of such a court to a Constitution bench of five judges. According to its proponents, the NCA, which would be headquartered in New Delhi, and which would have different regional benches, would relieve the Supreme Court of the weight of hearing regular civil and criminal appeals. Additionally, it has been argued that the NCA's regional benches would allow

greater access to litigants. But quite contrary to what has been suggested, the focus ought to be not on altering the core structure of the judiciary, but in aiming to make more pragmatic changes.

**Constitution benches**

The Supreme Court's role as the Constitution's sheet anchor has been weakened in recent times. This dilution, at least partly, owes to the Court's inability to devote itself substantially to the determination of important public questions.

As Nick Robinson's studies show, the number of cases decided by constitution benches has steadily declined right from the Supreme Court's inception. This has meant that in spite of the specific precepts of Article 145(3) of the Constitution – which mandates that a minimum of five judges sit for the purpose of deciding any case involving a substantial question of constitutional law – we have division benches of two judges. This manner of functioning is far from what the Constitution's framers envisaged of the Supreme Court.

Broadly, the Constitution prescribes to the Supreme Court two types of jurisdiction: an original jurisdiction and an appellate jurisdiction. The Court was therefore always seen not merely as an arbiter of constitutional disputes, but also as a plenary body that would settle the law of the land. However, the Constituent Assembly believed the court would exercise great discretion in choosing its own scope of work. That the Court has today used the pliability of its power to grant special leave to often interfere in mundane disputes is therefore

not a product of any structural problem, but rather of a deliberate decision by the court's judges. Viewed thus, it is difficult to understand how the creation of an NCA would somehow ease the burden on the Supreme Court, allowing it to eschew its authority to grant special leave; this power was, after all, always meant to be used only in exceptional cases.

**Bottom-up approach needed**  
What the NCA is meant to do, therefore, can quite easily be achieved by strengthening the lower judiciary, which generally constitutes the courts of first instance. Correspondingly, the High Courts can be viewed as the regular appellate courts. To achieve this, there must be greater rigour in choosing our judges. This would reduce the Supreme Court's burden of acting as a corrector of simple errors.

Were we to tailor our solutions thus, the purported difficulty of access to the Supreme Court also begins to present itself as a red herring. That the real issues of accessing justice relate not to the Supreme Court but the lower judiciary becomes even more apparent in data that show that there is only one judge for every 73,000 people in India. What's clear is that our judiciary isn't broken because of any deficiencies in structure, but because of feeble infrastructure. If we work towards establishing a more robust subordinate judiciary, it would not only negate any requirement on the part of most litigants to approach the Supreme Court, but also allow it to possibly regain its constitutionally ordained sense of majesty.

## THE DAILY QUIZ

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the auteur and India's most internationally well known film director Satyajit Ray's birth. How well do you know his films?

1 Satyajit Ray's screenplays elevated scripts. A good example is Jana Aranya (The Middleman) where the protagonist Somnath takes to "order-supply" business after failing to land a job in the early 1970s West Bengal. His exasperation at job interviews is marked by a question from an interviewer to which he replies, "What has this got to do with the job?" and is unable to answer. What was that question?

3 The actor in question 2 also played a scientist in Ray's film, Mahapurush, a satirical take on a godman playing on the beliefs of the devout. The stammering scientist, Professor Nani, is in the film working on a science experiment that could solve the issue of hunger in India. What experiment was that?

4 Based on a play by Henrik Ibsen, this foreshadowing film by Ray points to how demagoguery and misusing religion can seriously affect a public health issue. Name the film and the play

5 One of the more popular scenes in Ray's cinema features the "memory game" in the film, "Aranyer Din Ratri" (Days and Nights in the Forest), in which each character has to name a personality and then remember all those named by other characters. Who is the only sportsman named by the characters in the game?



◀ This is a shot from a Ray short film featuring just two characters. Ray, a humanist, deceptively shot this as a silent film featuring two children but the film is a clear allegory on the Vietnam War and was released during that period. Name the film. ▶

Please send your answers to the dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

**Previous day's answers:** 1 Max Gamper-Haessig (Joan Camper), 2. La Liga, Copa del Rey, and the UEFA Champions League, 3. Lionel Messi, Andres Iniesta and Xavi, 4. Johan Cruyff, 5. La Masia, 6. RCD Espanyol, 7. The nicknames for the club (because of its blue and garnet colours) and the common supporters respectively.

**Early Birds:** Mohd. Kiron Karim| Sriraam Kalingarayar| Upendra Bapat| Suraj Sarangil Ashwini Singh

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