



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2021

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

BYJU'S IAS
Comprehensive Preparation Program for USPC CSE

BYJU'S National Scholarship Test

28th November, 2021 | 11 AM - 1 PM

- Up to 90% Scholarship
- All India Rank & Assessment Reports
- Free Academic Counselling Session

Our IAS 2020 Achievers



18 Ranks in Top 50 | 36 Ranks in Top 100 | 281 Total Selections



Scan to Register

IN BRIEF



Make STF report on drug menace public: Sidhu

CHANDIGARH
Punjab Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu on Thursday threatened to go on an indefinite fast if his party's Government in the State does not make public the STF report on the drug menace.

STATES ▶ PAGE 4

Submit detailed affidavit on status of riots cases'

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the city police to submit a detailed affidavit highlighting the latest status of criminal cases pertaining to the north-east Delhi riots of 2020.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Delhi HC rejects petition against Khurshid's book

NEW DELHI
The Delhi HC on Thursday rejected a petition to stop the publication and sale of Congress leader Salman Khurshid's book –Sunrise over Ayodhya: Nationhood In Our Times – in which he has allegedly compared 'Hindutva' to terrorist groups.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Govt. to revisit income criterion for EWS quota

It will be reviewed, Centre tells SC; NEET counselling put off

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Union Government on Thursday informed the Supreme Court that it had taken a "considered decision" to revisit the "criteria" for determining Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) to provide them reservation.

The Government, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, said it would take four weeks for the exercise.

The submission follows rounds of grilling from the court during past hearings to reveal the logic and study before zeroing in on the "exact figure" of ₹8 lakh as the annual income limit to identify the EWS.

"The Union Government has taken a considered decision to revisit the criteria for determining the economically weaker sections in terms of the provisions of the Explanation to Article 15 of the Constitution inserted by the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act 2019," Justice D.Y. Chandrachud said.

The Union Government has taken a considered decision to revisit the criteria for determining the economically weaker sections in terms of the provisions of the Explanation to Article 15 of the Constitution inserted by the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act 2019

JUSTICE D.Y. CHANDRACHUD, SC

The court was hearing a case filed by NEET aspirants challenging a July 29 notification announcing 27% quota to OBCs and 10% reservation to the EWS in the All India Quota (AIQ) category.

4-week delay

The Government assured the court that the NEET counselling would be deferred for four weeks till a decision was taken on the EWS quota.

The Solicitor General stated that a period of four weeks would be required for this exercise [revisiting EWS criteria] and pending its conclusion, the date for counselling shall stand post-

poned..." the court order said. The Bench scheduled the case next on January 6.

Panel to be set up

Mr. Mehta, appearing for the Government along with Additional Solicitor-General K.M. Natraj, said they have been instructed to submit that a committee would be set up to review the "criteria" to identify the EWS category.

The EWS quota was meant for persons who earned less than ₹8 lakh annually and did not benefit from any other existing reservation.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10



'Bring in three-rate GST structure'

NIPFP study says Government can rationalise the rates without losing revenues

VIKAS DHOTI

NEW DELHI

The Government can rationalise the GST rate structure without losing revenues by re-jigging the four major rates of 5%, 12%, 18% and 28% with a three-rate framework of 8%, 15% and 30%, as per a National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP) study.

The findings of the NIPFP, an autonomous think tank backed by the Finance Ministry, assume significance as the GST Council has tasked a Group of Ministers, headed by Karnataka CM Basavaraj S. Bommai, to propose a rationalisation of tax rates and a possible merger of diffe-

Rejigging rates | The current GST regime with four key tax slabs can be smoothly replaced by a three-rate structure without the exchequer losing revenues, says study

CURRENT GST RATE STRUCTURE	POSSIBLE REVENUE-NEUTRAL RATES
5%	8%
12%	>> 15% (merging the 12% and 18% slabs)
18%	
28% (for demerit goods)	30%
Total rates - 8	Total rates - 7 (assumes no changes in special rates)

rent tax slabs by December to shore up revenues.

Multiple rate changes since the introduction of the GST regime in July 2017 have brought the effective GST rate to 11.6% from the origi-

nal revenue neutral rate of 15.5%, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman pointed out at the last Council meeting in September.

"Merging the 12% and 18% GST rates into any tax rate

lower than 18% may result in revenue loss. Our study proposes that the GST Council may consider a three-rate structure by adopting 8%, 15% and 30% for revenue neutrality," NIPFP associate professor Sacchidananda Mukherjee told *The Hindu*.

The nature of rate changes has also meant that over 40% of taxable turnover value now falls in the 18% tax slab, thus any move to dovetail that slab with a lower rate will trigger losses to the tax kitty that need to be offset by marginal hikes in other remaining major rates – 5% and 28%.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

Uttar Pradesh will be best linked State, says PM

JAGRITI CHANDRA

JEWAR

After 70 years of Independence, Uttar Pradesh is finally getting what it deserves as the "double-engine government" has ensured that the State transforms into the best connected region in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday. He was speaking at the foundation laying ceremony of the Noida



PM, U.P. CM in Jewar on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

International Airport at Jewar in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh.

"For so many years since Independence, U.P. was sneered at for poverty, caste-based politics, corruption, poor roads, absence of industries, arrested development

and nexus between criminals and politicians. The people of U.P. would wonder whether U.P. could ever have a positive image," Mr. Modi said addressing the gathering.

Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath were present at the event.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 6

+ ₹10,000 cr. more allotted for MGNREGS

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has allocated additional funds of ₹10,000 crore as an interim measure for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) after it ran out of

funds allocated in the budget, according to the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). More funds may be forthcoming based on the "assessment of demand," added the Ministry.

A Ministry spokesperson told *The Hindu* the extra mo-

ney was allocated on November 5. However, the scheme's financial statement on November 25 still reflects a negative net balance of ₹9,888 crore. Despite the additional allocations, the funds available for the scheme stand at ₹76,340 crore, well below

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 10

the ₹86,229 crore which have been incurred as expenditure, including payments due for wages and materials.

The scheme's balance sheets remain in the red in 24 States and Union Territories.

You want to crack IAS, We want to help. **ForumIAS**

CURRENT AFFAIRS CLASSES PRE + MAINS 2022
Prepare Current Affairs Like No Other.

Issue-based classes with crisp notes, differentiated content and a sense of completion for Civil Services Examination.

In the past 3-4 years, among the highest scorers in General Studies have been Current Affairs students of ForumIAS Academy - **Divya Mishra** (Rank 28, IAS 2020 copper with 455 marks in GS), **Aditya** (Rank 92, 442 marks in GS), **Pratham Kaushik** (501 marks in GS), **Varun Reddy** (Rank 7), **Sanjeeta Mohapatra** (Rank 10) and many more.

MAINS GUIDANCE PROGRAM (MGP) 2022
Join India's most trusted and proven Mains Test Series. MGP is a Mentor Supported, Test Series Based Self Study Program for Civil Services Examination.

COHORT 6: STARTS - 11 Dec. 2021 **COHORT 7: STARTS - 19 Dec. 2021**

OPTIONAL COURSES

SOCIOLOGY FOUNDATION 2022
Improve competence through meticulously designed classes covering concepts and its applications, crisp handouts with coverage of dynamic portion and PYQ Discussions.
ADMISSIONS OPEN

GEOGRAPHY FOUNDATION 2022
Comprehensive coverage of all the topics with examples/case studies based on current affairs; Use of diagrams, maps, and flowcharts to visualize and memorize geographical data.
ADMISSIONS OPEN

ANTHROPOLOGY FOUNDATION 2022
Intensive discussion-based classes with relevant examples and case studies from everyday life and newspapers aided by test series and all-round mentorship to maximize your score.
ADMISSIONS OPEN

OPTIONAL ATS TEST SERIES

SOCIOLOGY ATS 2022
Master the art of answer writing with quality questions and meticulous synopsis.
8 Tests (6 Sectional + 2 FLT)

ANTHROPOLOGY ATS 2022
Master the art of answer writing with quality questions and meticulous synopsis, timely evaluation, mentor support and feedback.
8 Tests (6 Sectional + 2 FLT)

STARTS - 25 November **STARTS - 24 November**

57+ students from paid programs of ForumIAS (43+ excluding Interview Guidance Students) have secured ranks under 100 in CSE 2020, including Rank 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17 and 18 in Top 20.

Forum Learning Centers • NEW DELHI • PATNA • HYDERABAD

- NEW DELHI: 2nd Floor, IAPL House, 19, Pusa Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 95-96, Karol Bagh - 110005
- HYDERABAD: 1st & 2nd Floor, SM Plaza, Indira Park Road, Jawahar Nagar, Telangana - 500020
- PATNA: 2nd Floor, AG Palace, East Boring Canal Road Patna - 800001 | 9311740911, 9311740914

9821711605, 9311740900 | admissions@forumias.academy | https://academy.forumias.com



The banker to every Indian

**Choose your ride.
Own it easily.**

Presenting, **SBI Easy Ride**

WISH. CLICK. RIDE.

Avail pre-approved loan through YONO SBI App

EMI as low as ₹ 256/- per 10,000/-



yono SBI
Lifestyle & banking, dono.



T&C apply.
Download & Register Now
sbiyono.sbi

Easy EMIs | Easy Processing | Easy Delivery

SMS <PA2W> <space> <last 4 digits of SBI a/c no.> to 567676 from your registered mobile no. to check eligibility.

Haryana Govt's claims on forest land refuted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Environmentalist Lt. Col. (retd.) S.S. Oberoi has argued that the Haryana Government made a "deliberate mistake" in the calculation of forest area to "create a picture of alarm" and justify the amendments to the Punjab Land Preservation Act, 1900.

He has countered the claims of the Government before the Supreme Court recently that its orders in Kant Enclave and Khorhi Village case would necessitate demolition in around 40% of the State.

Mr. Oberoi, in his affidavit filed earlier this month, said that 40% of the State was notified under Section 3 of the PLPA for enabling protection from erosion and for conservation of subsoil water and did not mean that it was a 'forest area'.

Accusing the State of major and deliberate misrepresentation, he said that there is no regulation, restriction or prohibition placed by mere identification of areas under Section 3. He also clarified that a general Section 4 notification in no way converted areas as forests and the department had never identified these areas as forests in their records.

Submit detailed affidavit on latest status of riots cases: HC

Chargesheets in 361 of 758 cases registered had been filed till Oct. 4: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the city police to submit a detailed affidavit highlighting the latest status of criminal cases pertaining to the north-east Delhi riots of 2020.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh, hearing a batch of petitions concerning last year's violence, gave the direction after it was informed that as on October 4, chargesheets in 361 of 758 riots cases registered had been filed.

"We direct the respondent [Delhi Police] to file a further detailed affidavit giving details of cases pending before the trial courts," the High Court ordered and posted the hearing for January 28.

In the affidavit filed in October, Delhi Police said that of the 758 cases registered, 695 cases were being investigated by the North-East District Police. "At least 62 cases that pertained to major incidents like murders, etc., were transferred to the Crime Branch, which had undertaken investigations in the said

Case history

Status of riots cases as on October 4

District/ Unit	Bifurcation of cases	Present status of cases in which chargesheet filed	Total
North-East	695	Chargesheet filed	315
		Charges framed	56
		Charges yet to be framed	252
		Quashed by Delhi High Court	4
		Accused discharged	2
Crime Branch	62	Case decided by court as acquitted	1
		Chargesheet filed	42
		Charges framed	11
Special Cell	01	Charges yet to be framed	34
		Chargesheet filed	1
		Charges yet to be framed	1
		361	758

SOURCE: DELHI POLICE AFFIDAVIT

cases by employing three dedicated Special Investigating Teams (SITs), and is being continuously monitored by superior officers," the police said.

"One case of larger conspiracy behind the engineering of the communal riots in Delhi is being investigated by the Special Cell," the police said, adding that in all the cases, the legal process was at an advanced stage.

Of the 695 cases being investigated by the North-East District Police, chargesheet

has been filed in 315 cases and charges framed in 56 cases. Four of these cases have since been quashed by the Delhi High Court, and in two cases, the accused has been discharged.

No proof against leaders
Earlier, Delhi Police had informed the High Court that during the investigation conducted so far, in cases related to the riots, "no actionable evidence has surfaced yet" against political leaders "in instigating and/or participating in peaceful march."

pating in the riots".

"As such, as and when substantial and cogent evidence of involvement of the aforesaid persons in the commissioning of any offence surfaces, Delhi Police will take suitable steps in the already registered FIRs. However, no fresh FIR is warranted at this stage," the police said in an earlier affidavit.

The police had made the submission in response to a bunch of pleas alleging hate speeches given by BJP leaders Kapil Mishra, Anurag Thakur, Parvesh Verma and Abhay Verma before the riots.

One of the petitions had also sought action against Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, AAP leaders Manish Sisodia and Amanullah Khan, and AIMIM MLA Waris Pathan for allegedly giving hate speeches.

During investigation, the police said it was revealed that as a part of conspiracy, protests at 21 sites were organised and large-scale mobilisation was carried out in the garb of peaceful march.

E-tenders are invited on behalf of the Director, GBPNIHE, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora-263 643, Uttarakhand

TENDER NOTICE No.-GBPNIHE/NMHS-Cold Laboratory/2021-22/11

E-tenders are invited on behalf of the Director, GBPNIHE, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora from eligible reputed and registered firms/suppliers/manufacturers for supply & Installation Augmentation of Flux Tower under NMHS-Cold Laboratory project. The last date of submission of online tender is **15.12.2021** at **03:00 P.M.**. The documents shall be submitted online at website <https://moefcc.euniwizade.com>.

The full details of equipments and documents are available in the Institute Website <http://gbphied.gov.in>.

Office Superintendent Email: store@gbphied.nic.in

NOTICE FOR EMANELMENT OF

VETERINARY MEDICINE, INSTRUMENTS & APPLIANCES

MANUFACTURING COMPANIES.

Dated Nirjuli the 24th November, 2021

The Department of Animal Husbandry, Veterinary & Dairy Development, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, intends to empanel the manufacturer/companies who are in the business of manufacturing Veterinary Medicines/Instruments/Equipment & Appliances.

Terms & conditions.

1. The manufacturer/company should be represented by authorized company representatives only with all relevant documents, mentioning: i) Name of company ii) Registered Office address with contact no./fax/email. iii) Date of Establishment. iv) Branch Office in Arunachal Pradesh or North East. v) Name of Chief Executive/Proprietors/Partners and their address/ Contact number/fax/email vi) Name of Person or representative with contact number/Fax and email. (With whom Department can contact directly).

2. Website if any : -

3. Factory license : -

4. Trade license/Partnership Deed/Memorandum of article/certificate of registration(whichever is applicable).

5. CST/GST/VAT/TIN NO,(Whichever is applicable).

6. Income Tax Permanent Account Number(PAN CARD).

7. Annual turnover certificate for the last 3 (three) years.

8. Relevant ISO certificate.

9. List of Products along with institutional price list.

10. A certificate stating that the items enlisted in the product list are available.

11. A power point presentation of the Products along with sample of Products and certificate of efficacy by any Govt.institutions/ Universities(if any).

12. Participation in the meeting does not guarantee empanelment and supply order.

13. Submission of forged/false documents will lead to de-listed/black listing of the company.

14. The date of presentation and meeting with the Board is fixed on 15th December,2021 (15/12/2021) at Directorate of AH,V & DD Office,Nirjuli at 10.00 AM.

15. The decision of the Board shall be final and binding.

Director (AHV&DD), Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, Nirjuli/Itanagar

DIPR/ARN /2199-2201/21

Resources, reforms needed for effective policing: report

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

As of 2020, investigation of 58% cases of crimes against women and 56% cases of crimes against children were incomplete, said NGO Praja Foundation in its report titled 'State of Policing and Law and Order in Delhi'.

"There is a dire need to increase human resources in the police force for effective policing and investigation. Reforms such as adopting a multi-stakeholder approach for creating awareness and sensitising people to prevent sexual abuse of children, etc. can help in increasing the safety of Delhites," said Praja Foundation trustee Nitai Mehta.

Chinmay Biswal, Delhi Police spokesperson said, "A majority of the 56% pending cases last year has been charged and moved to court."

कार्यालय कार्यपालक अभियंता लघु सिंचाई प्रमण्डल सरायकेला

पत्रांक :- सरायकेला / दिनांक :-

शुक्रिं पत्र :-

ई० निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या - WRD/MID/SRK/F2-06/2021-22 आमंत्रित की गई है, जिसका PR No.- 256147 है। निविदा में Online के माध्यम से डाली गई हार्ड कॉपी दिनांक-23.11.2021 से 30.11.2021 तक कार्यालय अवधि में लिया जाना है, जिसमें आंशिक संशोधन करते हुए केवल दिनांक-30.11.2021 को अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक ही लिया जायेगा। उक्त निविदा में बाकि की शर्त पूर्पृथक् बनी रहेगी।

कार्यपालक अभियंता PR 257815 (Water Resource)21-22 D लघु सिंचाई प्रमण्डल सरायकेला

No new taxes proposed in North Corporation budget

An increase in property tax by 2% to be considered

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The North Delhi Municipal Corporation on Thursday presented its budget estimates for the financial year 2022-2023 with the estimated income standing at ₹ 5,811.72 crore.

However, no fresh FIR is warranted at this stage," the police said in an earlier affidavit.

The police had made the submission in response to a bunch of pleas alleging hate speeches given by BJP leaders Kapil Mishra, Anurag Thakur, Parvesh Verma and Abhay Verma before the riots.

The liabilities of the North Corporation increased to ₹ 8,803.25 crore from last year's total of ₹ 7,523.97.

No new taxes were proposed in the budget, however, North body Commissioner Sanjay Goel requested the civic body leaders to consider an increase in property taxes by 2% and decrease of rebate from 15% to 10% for commercial and residential areas.

Reduced grants

According to the North civic body, the Delhi Government reduced the basic tax assessment (BTA) and other grants by 20% "in the middle" of the current financial year.

The civic body said that

Money matters

BUDGET ESTIMATE (2022-23)
PROPOSED BY COMMISSIONER:

Estimated total income ₹ 5,811.72 crore

Estimated total expenditure ₹ 5,808.24 crore

REVISED BUDGET
ESTIMATE (2021-22)
PROPOSED:

Estimated total income ₹ 7,330.81 crore

Estimated total expenditure ₹ 7,321.37 crore

BUDGET ESTIMATE (2021-22) PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE CORPORATION:

Estimated total income ₹ 7,728.29 crore

Estimated total expenditure ₹ 7,727.04 crore

ACTUALS OF 2020-21 BUDGET:

Total income ₹ 4,123.15 crore

Total expenditure ₹ 4,123.05 crore

SOURCE: NORTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

the "height of garbage" at the Bhalswa landfill site was reduced by "11 metres" through biomining and processing of legacy waste.

"At least 24 trommel machines have already been set up and 30 machines are under pre-installation testing process. So far, 19.45 lakh tonnes of garbage have been segregated," the statement read.

Responding to the non-payment of salaries and dearness allowance (DA) of health workers at hospitals, Standing Committee chairman Jogi Ram Jain said that "DA will be given along with their salaries for the month of January".

'If you don't agree with the author, don't read the book'

HC rejects plea to stop publication, sale of Khurshid's book

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday rejected a petition to stop the circulation, sale, purchase and publication of Congress leader Salman Khurshid's new book *Sunrise over Ayodhya: Nationhood In Our Times* in which he has allegedly compared 'Hindutva' to radical terrorist groups such as ISIS and Boko Haram.

Justice Yashwant Verma said, "What can we do if people are feeling this. If they didn't like the passage, they can skip the chapter. They could have shut their eyes if they are feeling hurt".

Stirring emotions

The High Court was hearing a petition by advocate Vineet Jindal who claimed that the statement published in the book is "not only instigating and provoking statement but also stirring enraged emotions among the Hindu religion



Salman Khurshid

followers".

If you don't agree with the author, don't read it. Ask people not to buy the book or read it. Please tell people the book is badly authored, read something better," Justice Verma said, while refusing to entertain the public interest petition.

In the petition, Mr. Jindal reproduced the 'controversial' paragraph in the book which reads: "Sanatan dharma and classical Hinduism known to sages and saints was being pushed aside by a robust version of Hindutva, by all standards a

political version similar to jihadism of groups like ISIS and Boko Haram of recent years".

This statement shows his [Mr. Khurshid] intent of enmity between different groups on the grounds of religion which

Timings <small>DELHI</small>	
FRIDAY, NOV. 26	
RISE 06:53 SET 17:25	
RISE 23:17 SET 12:20	
SATURDAY, NOV. 27	
RISE 06:53 SET 17:25	
RISE 00:00 SET 12:56	
SUNDAY, NOV. 28	
RISE 06:54 SET 17:25	
RISE 00:15 SET 13:31	

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	28	10
Safdarjung	28	10
Palam	27	12

Delhi Palam Today
28°C Pollution level will be severe. The weather will be dry. Morning will be slight cold with moderate fog. Day will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
27°C The weather will be comfortable with severe pollution level. A very cool morning with shallow fog and mist turns comfortable day.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

IN BRIEF

Delhi reports 30 new cases, no deaths

The city reported no new COVID-19 deaths in 24 hours for the 10th consecutive day and the total number of fatalities stood at 25,095, according to a bulletin by the Delhi Government. Thirty new cases were reported, taking the total to 14,40,784.

Police did not register FIR till court intervened: AAP

Politics of BJP functions on the tenets of fake news, says Atishi

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party leader Atishi on Thursday said the Bharatiya Janata Party's politics is based on "fake news". She was referring to a Delhi court order asking the police to register an FIR against BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra for allegedly spreading fake news about AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal.

Ms. Atishi claimed that Delhi Police had not filed the FIR before the court order, despite multiple attempts by the AAP.

Earlier this week, a Delhi court had directed the pol-

Govt. bans construction as air quality drops to 'very poor' zone

Chief Minister announces financial assistance of ₹5,000 each to all workers in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Following the Supreme Court directions, the Delhi Government on Thursday reimposed the ban on construction and demolition activities in the city.

The court had also directed the Government to provide financial assistance to workers affected by the ban. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that he has issued directions to give ₹5,000 each to all construction workers.

"I issued directions today (Thursday) to give ₹5,000 each to all construction workers in Delhi. Also, as per the minimum wage, the loss to construction workers will be compensated. We will also put up camps at construction sites to register workers," Mr. Kejriwal said.

Meanwhile, the city's air quality deteriorated to the higher end of the "very poor" category on Thursday and is likely to worsen and remain



Unmindful of risk: A ragpicker collecting useful items from a heap of burning garbage at Outer Ring Road in Delhi on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

in the same category for the next three days, according to the authorities.

"The Supreme Court is-

sued an order last night in this regard (ban on construction). Considering that, all construction and demolition work in Delhi is being banned again. Plumbing, interior decoration, electric work, and carpentry work will be allowed," Environment Minister Gopal Rai said.

"We are mentally prepared for everything. If the

Delhi Government had banned construction activities on November 13 and lifted the ban on Monday.

Talking about why the Government had lifted the ban, the Environment Minister said development work is also important and there was an improvement in the pollution levels in Delhi after the initial ban.

"We are mentally prepared for everything. If the

situation improves, we will consider the prospect of reopening. If the situation worsens, we will take the necessary actions. Keeping the court's instructions in mind, construction and demolition work inside Delhi has been banned once again," he said.

Slow winds

The speed of local surface winds is likely to be relatively low for the next three days and that will lead to deterioration of air quality within the "upper end of very poor" category, Government-run monitoring agency SAFAR said in a statement.

"On November 29, local surface winds are likely to increase resulting in improvement of air quality but remain within the 'very poor' category," SAFAR said.

On Thursday, the contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring States to PM2.5 in Delhi was negligible, according to SAFAR.

Cleaning Yamuna 'top priority': CM

Govt. constitutes cell to overcome network of multiple agencies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday approved the formation of the Yamuna Cleaning Cell, terming the cleaning of the river a "top priority". The cell will expedite the Delhi Government projects on cleaning the river and overcome any administrative hurdles, he said.

Mr. Kejriwal had recently announced that the Government would clean the Yamuna by February 2025.



■ R.V. MOORTHY

presentatives of all concerned departments. This will expedite the Yamuna cleaning process" Mr. Kejriwal tweeted.

Mr. Kejriwal instructed officials to leave no scope for loopholes in the action plan.

A major hurdle being faced by the Government so far, he said, is a complex system of multiple agencies.

"To overcome that, we are setting up the cell that will

oversee the working of all the agencies. It will help us identify and delegate responsibility and streamline our projects," he said.

The cell will consist of six

senior officials of the DJB, Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board, Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation, Delhi Pollution Control Committee, and Department of Irrigation and Flood Control looking after the sewerage systems of JJ clusters and industrial clusters, CETPs, industries violating pollution norms, Yamuna cleaning projects, and in-situ treatment.

These officers will report to the DJB CEO and also be responsible for the execution of the decisions taken by the cell.

WEDDING & FESTIVAL OFFER

raymond

Extra fine Pure Wool, Silk, Linen & Cotton blended Fabrics

For Formals, Casual & Party Wears

By Economy Sales: 9212758425

Latest Range of Designs & Colors

GIFT PACKS AVAILABLE



BLAZER • SUIT
SHIRT • TROUSER • JACKET



ColorPlus

7 DAYS OPEN

- PUNCHKUIAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

CM felicitates medal winners

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday felicitated Olympians and Paralympians who have represented and brought laurels to the country at various international sporting events.

Mr. Kejriwal honoured Ravi Dahiya, Sharad Kumar, Simran, Sarthak Bhamori, Amod Jacob and Kashish Lakra. They were presented with monetary incentives.

40-year-old man killed in garment factory fire

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old man died after a fire broke out in a garment factory in Shahdara's Gandhi Nagar in the early hours of Thursday, the police said. The deceased has been identified as Sanju, a resident of Uttar Pradesh's Bulandshahar district.

A fire department official said they received a call around 3 a.m. about a blaze in a factory after which six fire tenders were pressed into service. The police said that the fire tenders could not reach the exact location as the factory is in a narrow street. They said their all-night patrolling staff rushed there and extinguished the fire, which broke out on the first floor, with the help of locals.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Shahdara) R. Sathyasundaram said a man, identified as Sanju, was found lying unconscious on the factory's first floor. He was shifted to a nearby hospital where he was declared brought dead.

The police said that there was no visible burn injury on the victim's body leading them to suspect that he may have died due to suffocation but post-mortem will ascertain the exact cause of death.

The premises were used for manufacturing and storage of shirts by one Deepak Jain of Ashok Nagar, and he was visited by a team as part of inspection, the officer said.

Mainstorming 2021 HIT SERIES

5 HIGH INTENSITY TESTS FOR CSE 2021

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE THESE 5 TESTS ?

- ✓ HOW TO STRATEGISE PAPER COMPLETION ?
- ✓ HOW TO ADD 0.5 TO 1 MARK IN EACH ANSWER ?
- ✓ ADAPT PAPER & THEME SPECIFIC BEST PRACTICES
- ✓ HOW TO INCREASE SCORE IN EACH GS PAPER ?
- ✓ IS YOUR VALUE ADDITION SUFFICIENT AND VISIBLE ?
- ✓ ARE ANSWERS MEETING DEMAND OF THE QUESTION ?

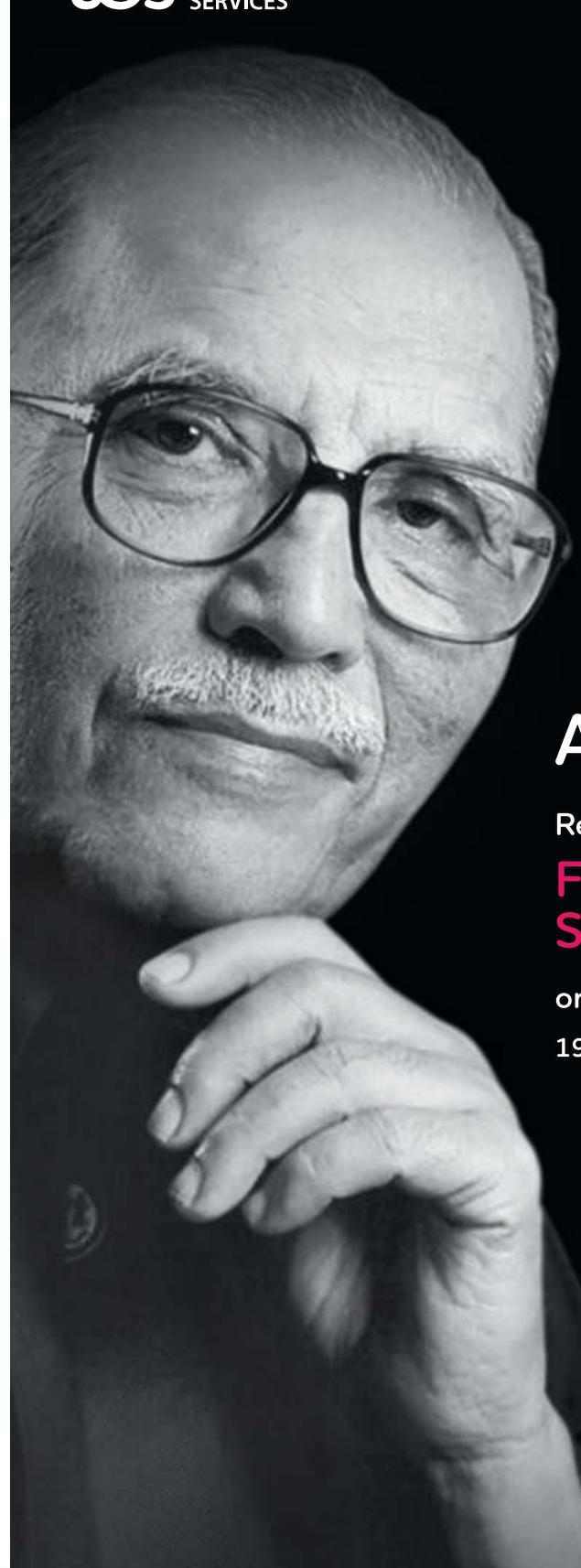
How can Shankar IAS Help ?

- OUR EVALUATION will help you identify above aspects and facilitate marks improvement.
- OUR MENTORS will guide you on appropriate approaches through our experience and comparative perspectives.

*Special concession for in-service candidates and CSE 2020/2019 interview candidates

UPPER GROUND FLOOR, 25, PUSA ROAD, DELHI - 110060, Contact: 88991 80180
TAMIL NADU | BENGALURU | DELHI | TRIVANDRUM

tcs TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES



TATA

A belief lives on

Remembering the
**Father of Indian IT
Shri Faqir Chand Kohli**

on his first death anniversary today.
19th March 1924 – 26th November 2020

He believed in technology and the future of India powered by it.
TCS builds on his belief.

Building on belief

CORRIDGUM-1
Tender Notice No. CON/2021/NOV/01
Dated: 02.11.2021
The similar nature of work change
against Tender No. CE/CON/A-G/
MB/2021/10. For detail, please visit
[www.irps.gov.in](#).
Chief Engineer/Con-3, Malgaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
(Construction Organisation)
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THIS PUBLISHING PVT LTD, its Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, its advertising agency and any other person associated with it are not responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

शारखण्ड सरकार
ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग
मुख्य अभियंता का कार्यालय
102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी रोड, रोंदी
ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

इ-निविदा संख्या:- 83/2021-22/RWD/RAMGARH दिनांक :- 24.11.2021
मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, शारखण्ड, रोंदी द्वारा निम्न विवरण
के अनुसार e-procurement पद्धति से निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

क्र. सं	आईडी-नंती फिकेशन संख्या	कार्य का नाम	प्राकलित राशि (रुपये में)		कार्य समाप्ति की तिथि
			अंक में	अक्षर में	
1.	RWD/RAMGARH/01/2021-22	कलानीधार चौक से कारबाय मोड तक पथ का सुदूरोत्तरी कार्य (लं. 3,900 किमी)	1,52,25,500.00	एक करोड़ बावन लाख पचास	12 माह
2.	RWD/RAMGARH/02/2021-22	एन००१०२-२३ नक्टिगढ़ा से ब्रह्मपुर लालू तक पथ का सुदूरोत्तरी कार्य (लं. 3,800 किमी)	1,41,42,900.00	एक करोड़ एकतालीन लालू ब्रह्मपुर लालू सी ८० मात्र	09 माह

- वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि:- 09.12.2021
- ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय-- 17.12.2021 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे।
- (क) मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी, रोंदी अथवा (ख) जिला नियंत्रण कक्ष, रोंदी अथवा (ग) जिला नियंत्रण कक्ष, रामगढ़ से किसी भी कार्यालय से निविदा शुल्क, अंग्रेजी की राशि, शपथ पत्र के मूल प्रति एवं अपलोड किये गये तकनीकी योग्यता दरसावेज की एक प्रति जामा करने की तिथि:- 22.12.2021 पूर्वाह्न 10.00 बजे से अपराह्न 3.30 बजे तक।
- निविदा द्वारा ज्ञात एवं समय- 23.12.2021 पूर्वाह्न 11.30 बजे।
- निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पात्र- मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, 102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी रोड, रोंदी शारखण्ड, इन- 834001
- ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया संख्या- 0651-2207818
- निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं समय- 0651-2207818
- निविदा शुल्क शारखण्ड राज्य में अवृश्वत मार्ग रेट बैंक / अन्य राष्ट्रीयकूल बैंक द्वारा निविदाकार के नाम / अकाउंट से ही निविदा शुल्क द्वारा के रूप में कार्यालय अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमाणल, रामगढ़ के पक्ष में एवं रामगढ़ में भुगताये होंगे जो लोटाया नहीं जायगा।

विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट jharkhandtenders.gov.in में देखा जा सकता है। नोडल पदाधिकारी इ-प्रोक्युरमेंट सेल PR 257721 (Rural Work Department) 21-22 (D)

2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि:- 09.12.2021

3. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय-- 16.12.2021 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे।

4. (क) मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी, रोंदी अथवा (ख) जिला नियंत्रण कक्ष, रोंदी अथवा (ग) जिला नियंत्रण कक्ष, रामगढ़ से किसी भी कार्यालय से निविदा शुल्क, अंग्रेजी की राशि, शपथ पत्र के मूल प्रति एवं अपलोड किये गये तकनीकी योग्यता दरसावेज की एक प्रति जामा करने की तिथि:- 22.12.2021 पूर्वाह्न 10.00 बजे से अपराह्न 3.30 बजे तक।

5. निविदा द्वारा ज्ञात की तिथि एवं समय- 23.12.2021 पूर्वाह्न 11.30 बजे।

6. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पात्र- मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, 102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी रोड, रोंदी शारखण्ड, इन- 834001

7. ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया संख्या- 0651-2207818

8. निविदा शुल्क शारखण्ड राज्य में अवृश्वत मार्ग रेट बैंक / अन्य राष्ट्रीयकूल बैंक द्वारा निविदाकार के नाम / अकाउंट से ही निविदा शुल्क द्वारा के रूप में कार्यालय अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमाणल, रामगढ़ के पक्ष में एवं रामगढ़ में भुगताये होंगे जो लोटाया नहीं जायगा।

विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट jharkhandtenders.gov.in में देखा जा सकता है। नोडल पदाधिकारी इ-प्रोक्युरमेंट सेल PR 257706 Rural Work Department(21-22)#D

2. वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि:- 08.12.2021

3. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय-- 16.12.2021 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे।

4. (क) मुख्य अभियंता कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी, रोंदी अथवा (ख) जिला नियंत्रण कक्ष, रोंदी अथवा (ग) जिला नियंत्रण कक्ष, रामगढ़ से किसी भी कार्यालय से निविदा शुल्क, अंग्रेजी की राशि, शपथ पत्र के मूल प्रति एवं अपलोड किये गये तकनीकी योग्यता दरसावेज की एक प्रति जामा करने की तिथि:- 22.12.2021 पूर्वाह्न 10.00 बजे से अपराह्न 3.30 बजे तक।

5. निविदा द्वारा ज्ञात की तिथि एवं समय- 23.12.2021 पूर्वाह्न 11.30 बजे।

6. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पात्र- मुख्य अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, 102, द्वितीय तल्ला, अभियंत्रण भवन, कचहरी रोड, रोंदी शारखण्ड, इन- 834001

7. ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया संख्या- 0651-2207818

8. निविदा शुल्क शारखण्ड राज्य में अवृश्वत मार्ग रेट बैंक / अन्य राष्ट्रीयकूल बैंक द्वारा निविदाकार के नाम / अकाउंट से ही निविदा शुल्क द्वारा के रूप में कार्यालय अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमाणल, रामगढ़ के पक्ष में एवं रामगढ़ में भुगताये होंगे जो लोटाया नहीं जायगा।

विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट jharkhandtenders.gov.in में देखा जा सकता है। नोडल पदाधिकारी इ-प्रोक्युरमेंट सेल PR 257706 Rural Work Department(21-22)#D

CLASSIFIEDS MART

TO ADVERTISE:

www.thehinduads.com

011-43579738 • 43579797

EDUCATIONAL

IAS (Mains) 2022 & 23 COMMERCE

By CA R.S. Agrawal & Team

Batch Commencing:
29th November

Available Both:

Off-line & On-line

for more details, visit: www.rankersclasses.in

First Come First Serve Basis.

Ranker's Classes

8A/37, Hotel Crown Deluxe Building, Channa Market,

Karol Bagh, Delhi - 110005. Call: 9818464467

PHILOSOPHY

FRESH BATCH 29 NOV,
5 PM

Begins with Foundation Classes

Rank 03 ANKITA JAIN

Mitra's IAS 39, PUSA ROAD (SAMYAK TOWER), OPP. METRO PILLAR NO. 120,

8826469839 / 9560928172 / 45505509

Online Classes: Exclusively on UNACADEMY

Use Referral Code "NICEIAS" to avail 10% discount on subscription charges.

To access NICEIAS sociology classes, attend the classes of two Educators: Praveen Kishore & Chhavi Vasishtha

Basement, House No. 59, Block No. 23, Old Rajendra Nagar, Delhi-60.

Offline - Online - Hybrid Classes

Divakar Academy for Civil Services

SOCIOLOGY DAILY ANSWER WRITING

by Ex-faculty, Vajiram & Ravi

www.divakaracademy.com

9435800907, 9990788811

Institute for Interview Training

OR, Delhi 9990409999, 9811999111

www.careerquest.co.in

CM YK

Corrigendum/ Addition/ Clarification/ Notification in respect of NIT of the above said work, if any, will be uploaded on the CPP Portal.

Civil Engineer

M ND-NDE

EDUCATIONAL

SITUATION VACANT

GENERAL

GUIDANCE IAS

WE ARE HIRING

Content Developers

UPSC (CSE) with Geography as Optional

1. TELE-CALLER Basic Salary Plus Target Based Incentive

Experience in a UPSC Coaching

66 students of medical college in Dharwad test COVID positive

Two hostels on campus sealed; all students told to self-quarantine for a week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HUBBALLI/BENGALURU

Karnataka's Dharwad district, which has been recording zero positivity of late, suffered a jolt with 66 medical students testing positive for COVID-19, forcing the district administration to seal two hostels of the SDM College of Medical Sciences and Hospital in Dharwad city on Thursday.

Those who contracted the virus had received double doses of vaccination. While some have mild symptoms, many are asymptomatic. All will be quarantined for the next fortnight. The Karnataka Health Department will now get all the samples genome sequenced to find out the variant. State Health Commissioner D. Ranveer said there were chances of



Deputy Commissioner Nitesh Patil and others inspecting the SDM College in Dharwad on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

widespread infection if it had been caused by the Delta variant or any of its sub-lineages.

A majority of those who tested positive are first year students. Most of them attended a students' pro-

gramme at D. Veerendra Heggade Kalakshetra on the college premises on November 17 and all the primary contacts are being tested.

Dharwad Deputy Commissioner Nitesh Patil, after visiting the medical college

and assessing the situation, said all the students and faculty members had been asked to undergo RT-PCR test. "Of the 400 students, 300 students have been tested so far and the results of 66 have returned positive. The test results of the remaining 100 students will come on Friday," he said.

Mr. Patil clarified that all those who tested positive were hostellers and chances of the infection spreading outside was low. "As a precaution, the administration has sealed two students' hostels and all students have been asked to self-quarantine for a week. The campus has been cordoned off by the police," he added. He asked people to avoid public gatherings and compulsorily follow COVID-19 protocol.

Rajasthan Governor seeks clarification

6 MLAs appointed advisers to CM

MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR

The appointment of six MLAs as advisers to the Chief Minister, shortly after the Cabinet expansion carried out in Rajasthan earlier this week, has caught the attention of the Raj Bhavan. Governor Kalraj Mishra has sought a clarification on the issue from Chief Secretary Niranjan Arya.

Jitendra Singh, Rajkumar Sharma and Danish Arbab (Congress) and Babul Nagar, Sanyam Lodha and Ramkesh Meena (Independents) were appointed advisers.

The Congress, which has

108 MLAs, enjoys the support of 12 of the 13 Independents who had extended support to the State Government after the rebellion staged by then Deputy CM Sachin Pilot and 18 MLAs in July 2020.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition submitted a memorandum to the Governor alleging that the posts were unconstitutional as they were "offices of profit".

The sources in the Raj Bhawan said on Thursday the Governor had forwarded Mr. Rathore's memorandum to the Chief Secretary seeking a clarification on the constitutional status.

'Telangana CM not snubbed, he never sought meeting with PM'

Central Govt. sources clarify after his four-day visit to Delhi

NISTULA HEBBAR

NEW DELHI

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's return to Hyderabad on Wednesday evening after a four-day stay in Delhi without meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not a snub, according to sources in the Union Government.

They said it was entirely because no appointment had been sought by Mr. Rao from the Prime Minister's Office.

Mr. Rao arrived in Delhi over the weekend determined, sources said, to discuss issues including procurement of State paddy by



K. Chandrasekhar Rao

the Centre and the sharing of Krishna water with Andhra Pradesh. But he returned without meeting either Mr. Modi or Home Minister Amit Shah. "The last time the Chief Minister of Telangana requested an appointment with the Prime Minister was on September 1 which was

granted on September 3," said the sources.

The clarification came amid reports that it was a snub, whereas the Government had no such intention.

BJP sources told *The Hindu* that Mr. Rao raised all sorts of issues over paddy procurement to appear antagonistic to the BJP which was posing a political challenge to the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, especially after the Huzurabad bypoll. "The fact that he didn't even put in a request for an appointment shows it's just political posturing," said a senior BJP leader from Telangana.

T.N. posits higher figure for sex ratio at birth

In the last five years, it has been in the range of 900s, not 867 as listed in NFHS-5

RAMYA KANNAN

CHENNAI

While acknowledging that the National Family Health Survey-5 has presented a realistic assessment of women and child health in Tamil Nadu this year, the State has offered real-time statistics to show that the sex ratio at birth is not as bad as recorded in the NFHS data.

Using data from the Civil Registration System (available in the public domain), health officials have shown that the sex ratio at birth over the last five years has been in the 900s range, and not 867 as listed in NFHS-5. In fact, the trend has been upward, with the ratio of women to men improving incrementally over the years, and dropping marginally to 939 in 2020.

"This is data, as real as it gets, since it comes from the Civil Registration System. Pa-

Better performer

The State has provided real-time statistics to show that the sex ratio at birth over the last five years has been in the 900s, and not 867, as listed in the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5



Year	Sex ratio at birth (CRS)	Male	Female	Total
2015	918	5,10,932	4,69,027	9,79,959
2016	932	4,76,210	4,44,022	9,20,232
2017	932	4,65,491	4,33,681	8,99,172
2018	933	4,66,917	4,35,544	9,02,461
2019	942	4,79,057	4,51,156	9,30,213
2020	939	4,78,599	4,49,508	9,28,107
2021 (Oct.)	935	3,94,856	3,69,377	7,64,233

rents record whether they have male or female children in the birth certificate. It is based on records and therefore are indisputable. We also have individual data on the

birth certificates. They present a more realistic picture of sex ratio at birth. Sex Ratio at birth has consistently been over 930 since 2016," explains Darez Ahmed, Mission

HC issues notices to Centre, RBI on banking amendments

Changes take away powers of urban co-op banks: petitioner

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Thursday issued notices to the Centre and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on a writ petition challenging the amendments to the Banking Regulation Act which have brought the urban cooperative banks under the direct supervision of the RBI and made applicable to them the governance norms of commercial banks.

The petition was filed by Thiruvalla East Cooperative Bank and Guruvayur Cooperative Urban Bank. The petitioners said the urban cooperative banks were now forced to constitute a board of management (BoM) and appoint a chief executive officer/managing director

which would function as a parallel power centre along with the board of directors elected by the general body of the cooperative societies.

Mandates RBI sanction

The petitioners said the RBI had issued a circular containing the procedure of appointment/termination of service of the MD/CEO, BoM and their qualifications. As per the amendments, the cooperative societies could not now amend their bylaws without the RBI approval.

The amendments brought in 2020 had nullified the provisions of the Kerala Cooperative Societies (KCS) Act and Rules and the power granted to the general body of the societies as per the KCS Act. The amendments

were brought on the strength of the 97th Constitutional Amendment, 2011, whereby 2nd Proviso to Article 243ZL made all the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, applicable to all cooperative societies doing the business of banking.

As a result of the amendments, the power to fix the maximum number of directors of cooperative societies and the duration of the term of office of elected members of the board of cooperative societies were now put in the hands of the Centre.

The petitioners contend

Telangana Assembly Speaker tests positive

KCR, Jagan attended his family event

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Telangana Legislative Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy has tested positive for COVID-19 and has got himself admitted to a private hospital here on Wednesday night, on the advice of doctors.

According to the Speaker's office, he had no health issues and got tested on Wednesday night as part of his regular check-up.

The Speaker suggested that all those who came into contact with him during the last four to five days get tested.

Mr. Reddy was busy with his granddaughter's wedding that took place on Sunday. The function was attended by a large number of dignitaries, including Chief Ministers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh K. Chan-



Pocharam Srinivas Reddy

drasekhar Rao and Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy respectively, and Speakers of other State Assemblies.

A large number of Cabinet members of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, legislators, MPs, senior politicians, and officials from the two Telugu States attended the function.

Mr. Srinivas Reddy's granddaughter is married to the son of Officer on Special Duty to the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister.



Folk artists at the foundation-stone laying ceremony of the airport at Jewar on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Jewar to be logistics gateway for north: PM

Airport will act as a "catalyst" for western U.P., say industry bodies

JAGRITI CHANDRA

JEWAR

The proposed Noida International Airport at Jewar will serve as the logistics gateway for northern India,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday at the foundation-laying ceremony.

The airport will help small farmers export perishable commodities like vegetables and fruits, and allow SMEs easy access to international markets through Jewar.

There is a plan to develop a multi-modal hub for Jewar airport with rapid rail link from Delhi, Metro line from Noida as well as connectivity with Yamuna Expressway, Western Peripheral Expressway, Eastern Peripheral Expressway, which will link it to other parts of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, apart from Delhi-Mumbai Expressway.

This hub will provide important infrastructure to artisans of Khurja, sports industry in Meerut, furniture industry of Saharanpur, brass industry of Moradabad, and footwear industry of Agra, said Mr. Modi.

Industry bodies, and experts on logistics and real estate sector say that the airport will act as a "catalyst"

(With inputs from Lalendu Mishra)

Second phase of our fight will be much longer, says Tikait

Farmer leader joins protest in Telangana capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait said it was the responsibility of every government in the country to come to the rescue of families of farmers who lost their lives during the ongoing protest.

Subsequently, cluster surveys conducted by researchers at the Department of Epidemiology, ICMR-National Institute of Epidemiology, Chennai, led by Manoj Murhekar, showed that fully vaccinated children as per mother's recall was 79.9%, and the validated coverage of vaccines with cards was 79.9%.

In a paper published in the *Indian Journal of Medical Research* in 2017, researchers averred that vaccine coverage in the State was about 80%. Some of the 750-odd farmer families whose members participated in the movement were very bad and they needed a helping hand. They were the farmers of the country and should not be identified with any region or



Rakesh Tikait arriving to participate in a protest in Hyderabad on Thursday. ■ P. V. RAMA RAO

State as they had been fighting for a common cause.

Stating that there was no leader for the movement, Mr. Tikait said every farmer and farm worker in the country was its leader, although 40 among them had ta-

ken the lead in making and managing arrangements for the long-drawn battle.

'Fight will continue' He said the fight of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), an umbrella organisation of farmers' unions leading the protests, was not over yet and even the first phase of it would be concluded only when the three farm laws were withdrawn formally in Parliament.

However, the next phase would be much longer as they wanted the Union Government to recognise the SKM as a group to hold discussions from time to time on all issues related to the farming community and the farm sector, he said.

Wandering cattle to cost their owners dear

A panchayat in Ernakulam slaps fine on owners who let animals roam streets

M.P. PRAVEEN

KOCHI

Wandering cattle in public places is probably the defining image of India in the West.

But cattle owners who let them happen at Choorikkara, a quaint hamlet near Alva in Ernakulam district of Kerala, will now have to pay a price, literally.

With wandering cattle causing frequent accidents, especially involving two-wheelers, the Choorikkara panchayat committee has started slapping their owners with a fine. Five cattle were confiscated and were released only on payment of a fine of ₹2,500 each.

The fine, however, is not restricted to cattle owners alone but to owners of any



On the moo: Unrestrained movement of cattle poses risk to motorists. A scene from Kochi city. ■ H. VIBHU

domestic animal found wandering around posing problems to the public.

"The decision to impose fine was taken by the panchayat unanimously, since the menace continued despite issuing notices to dairy farmers and cattle owners not once but thrice. Wandering cattle

wandering animals. The panchayat still has one cow in its custody, since its owner has not yet paid the fine. So, the matter was referred to the Alva East police who held a meeting of all stakeholders and gave the owner time till this Saturday to pay the fine and get his animal released.



Raiding party

TMC is encroaching on the Opposition space at the national level as Mamata eyes a larger role

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's national ambitions are intriguing and daring. Soon after she led the Trinamool Congress (TMC) to a stellar victory in the Assembly election earlier this year – third time in a row – she set out on an extension scheme, though no coherent strategy is apparent. There is indeed a personal factor – she was savagely targeted by the BJP during the election. She triumphed over the BJP, still struggling to evolve a suitable politics for its Bengal foray, but it appears that the score was not settled. Ms. Banerjee had sensed the emerging confrontation between her politics and the BJP's early on. In January 2019, she assembled leaders of 23 Opposition parties at a public meeting at Brigade Parade Grounds in Kolkata, where they pledged to defeat the BJP. Her victory over the BJP was conclusive, but the BJP is waiting in the wings to unseat her, having grown to about 70 seats in the Assembly from three in 2016. The Trinamool leader claims she is trying to take the fight to the enemy, her focus right now being Tripura and Goa, where the BJP is in power. There is a large Bengali population in Tripura, and the BJP is unnerved. In both States and beyond, the TMC is recruiting disgruntled leaders from other parties and free-floaters.

The party is driven by Ms. Banerjee's charisma rather than an ideology. The TMC has swung both ways – alternating between the BJP and the Congress in the past. The Bengal government run by the party does not shy away from celebrating the anniversary of Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, the founder of Jana Sangha, as a proud son of Bengal. Though the edge of her politics is anti-BJP at the moment for strategic considerations, it is the Opposition parties, particularly the Congress that is paying for her expansion spree. Between 2011 and 2021, the entire rank and file of the Congress shifted to the TMC in West Bengal, and the story is being repeated now in other States. On Wednesday, 12 of the 17 Congress MLAs in Meghalaya joined the TMC. Sushmita Dev and Luizinho Faleiro, defectors from the Congress, are central to the TMC plans in Tripura and Goa, respectively. The induction of Ashok Tanwar, a former Congress MP from Haryana, and a Dalit, may signify a broader plan for the Hindi States. Dalit politics is at a crossroads in the heartland as the BSP is facing extinction, and there is vacuum to be filled. Ms. Banerjee has been outspoken on questions regarding federalism, and the Centre's unilateralism that undermines it. Whether all this is sufficient to catapult the TMC as the axis of anti-BJP politics nationally is an open question. At the moment, the TMC challenge is less to the BJP and more to the Congress.

Measuring progress

The lessons of NFHS-5 must be used to improve social development indices

A periodic assessment of health and social development indicators is crucial for any country that is still clawing its way towards achieving ideal standards in the Human Development Index. While the results of the NFHS are usually mixed, and improvements in certain sectors ride along with stagnation and deterioration in other sectors, this year, there have been radical improvements in maternal and child health, sex ratio and population control. A greater proportion of births than ever before is now happening in institutions, more children in the 12-23 months age group have received their vaccinations, and, most interestingly, India has achieved a total fertility rate of 2.0, dropping further from the figure of 2.2 during NFHS-4, indicating that India has contained the population explosion. Policies, some even coercive, as in the case of the family planning sector, seem to have borne fruit, years after they were implemented. While gender ratio has, for the first time, recorded more women per 1,000 men, gender ratio at birth in the last five years still underlines the persistence of a deep-rooted son preference, one that has to be countered, through policy and law. There are other areas too, specially in the case of childhood nutrition where marginal gains in say, wasting and severe wasting, are deemed insufficient, and require renewed corrective efforts. The impact of the pandemic may also be noted, the disruption it caused to services such as balanced nutrition for children must be acknowledged, while this set of circumstances underscores the need for building resilient and fortified systems capable of delivering in the most trying circumstances. Having measured blood sugar and hypertension in the population for the first time, NFHS-5 highlighted the looming threat from lifestyle diseases.

This massive exercise that covered, this year, over six lakh households across the country, aims at providing data that will help shape the policies in a manner that will correct deficiencies, and ensure equitable access to services, particularly those with impact on social determinants that improve the quality of life. State-level indices are also released, to provide comparisons, but also to allow States to launch course correction, or to be inspired by success stories in other regions. Inputs on marriage and fertility, family planning, access to education and health services are provided by the NFHS, arguably second only to the exhaustive data that the decennial population census throws up. States need to treat it as such, and while they might dispute some assessments, the greater idea is to recognise it as a matrix to work on, to improve the development indicators further. Meanwhile, the Centre too must not treat it as a mere stocktaking exercise, but harness the opportunities the NFHS provides for launching reform or re-assessing certain policies without using it as a political tool in a federal set up.

Having an ear to the ground in Punjab

Amid burning social issues, the farm laws repeal may not aid the BJP, while the Congress and AAP are in a tight contest



PARAKALA PRABHAKAR

Punjab is restless. It is in pain. It feels let down by the State's politics, its leaders and political parties. A sense of its political alienation from Delhi is palpable. It desperately wants to trust somebody. It is looking for that somebody. Perhaps it also knows, at the back of its mind, that there is hardly anybody it can depend on. And that finally, when the time comes, it has to choose a political platform that is less undependable, and unwillingly settle for it for the next five years. Price rise, drug menace, joblessness, farm laws, fall in incomes, increase in thefts, lawlessness, insult to sacred text cause anguish to its people. What is more painful to them is the perception that its political leaders and successive governments are indifferent to these issues. There is hopelessness in the young of the State. Even in tiny villages, the walls have the screaming advertisements of agencies that offer visa and immigration help to Canada and Australia. So too for institutes that coach students for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests.

Meeting a cross-section

A few short months before the elections to the State Assembly, this is the mood of the State that I gathered after a 10-day intensive tour. I clocked about 2,000 kilometres, traversing the three main regions of the State – Malwa, Doaba and Majha. I met over 500 people representing almost all sections of society: men and women,

in villages and towns, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, farmers, labourers, the unemployed, students, employees. Some individually and some in small groups. They were all surprisingly forthcoming in expressing their views and generous with their time. I also had long conversations with academics in universities and research institutes. I deliberately avoided meeting political party leaders.

Impact of farm laws rollback
On the morning of the last day of my travel came the unexpected announcement by the Prime Minister declaring his intention to repeal the three farm laws. The immediate reaction of the man on the street was one of jubilation. However, I could not find signs of an abatement of anger against the Prime Minister, his party, and the Union government.

In Punjab, the repeat announcement is unlikely to fetch the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) political dividends. The anger is intense; the wound, raw. In many conversations the Prime Minister was referred to less than respectfully. The recent reopening of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor has not generated the kind of goodwill the State BJP leadership has expected. As things stand today, the BJP has little or no chance of being in the reckoning in the coming elections.

The Shiromani Akali Dal is viewed with suspicion because of its association with the BJP. The Akali Dal's quitting the National Democratic Alliance over farm laws has not helped the party recover its lost political ground. Its panthic support base too is unhappy on account of the party's inaction in the case of tearing off pages from the holy book, the incident known as Bargari Kand. The Akali Dal government did not bring the culprits to book. Instead it is seen



as the government that fired on those who protested against the desecration. A large number of devout Sikhs are yet to forgive the party for the deaths of two people in the firing. Many who voted for the Akali Dal in the last Assembly elections intend to move away from it this time. There is a strong indication of a further erosion of its support base. Those who intend to remain with it lack vision and continue to extend support without enthusiasm.

Gauging the Congress

There is a widespread feeling that the Congress government under Captain Amarinder Singh did not deliver on its promises. Two things are held against the former Chief Minister. First, that he did not fulfil the promise he made to curb the menace of drugs. The fact that soon after he took office, he swore on the Gutka Sahib, the Sikh holy book, to assure the people that he would eliminate the drug menace and yet failed to take resolute action has earned him the wrath of the public. Second, he is seen as an inaccessible leader. Punjab is in no mood to indulge the Maharaja this time. Association with him adds no political value to the BJP even after the repeal of the three farm laws. Punjab refuses to see the Union government's climb-down on the farm laws as anything but a victory for the agitation. And surely not as the Prime Minister's

generosity or an outcome of Captain Amarinder Singh's pressure on the Union government. In the event, the yet-to-be-registered political party of the former Chief Minister is likely to be stillborn.

AAP's prospects

The recent significant political development in Punjab is the replacement of Captain Amarinder Singh with Charan Singh Channi as the Chief Minister. The move, undoubtedly, has implications for the electoral fortunes of the Congress. By extension, it also is likely to impact the prospects of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). Until the change of guard, AAP has seen a huge surge in support. The State was disillusioned with the Congress government under Captain Amarinder Singh. In fact, the opinion that the Captain, the top leadership of the Akalis and the BJP's central leadership are working in league has gained ground. Therefore, the Congress under Amarinder Singh was seen to be as unelectable as the Akali Dal and the BJP are. The sections who preferred the Congress to the Akali-BJP combine in the last polls began their shift to AAP. They wanted to give the untested party a try. That accounts for the massive surge in AAP's support before the new Chief Minister, Mr. Channi, took over. With the change of guard, however, those sections are having second thoughts. It is evident that some of those sections are on their way back to the Congress.

The change of guard manoeuvre has blunted the sharp edge of anti-incumbency to some extent. There is one remarkable thing in the political conversation in Punjab. Mr. Channi has managed to become a household name in a short time. He being the first Dalit Chief Minister of the State lends a social dimension to the discourse. People are prepared to

watch him. They seem to have deserved their judgment about him and the Congress. The extent of damage the running battle between the Chief Minister and his State party chief can cause is yet unclear. But it will cause damage is certain.

Weighing in

The biggest loser as a result of the Congress party's repositioning is AAP. There is a lot of goodwill for the party at present among all sections of Punjab society. It is more pronounced among the young and first-time voters. It is able to attract erstwhile voters of both the Akali Dal and the Congress. Many women in remote villages too said they wanted to give the new party a chance. However, AAP lacks organisation, cadre, and recognisable faces in many constituencies. Some people see it as a party with roots outside the State. Its biggest handicap, however, is its procrastination over announcing the Chief Minister face.

Electorally, the Congress and AAP are in a tight contest, with a slight edge for the ruling Congress at the moment. The one who commits less errors will have more chances of winning. However, mistakes of AAP and the Congress do not have equal potential for damage. AAP's mistakes are likely to be less damaging to it. Whereas even small mistakes by the Congress can drastically swing the mood of the State in favour of AAP which is seen as an alternative that deserves a chance. When they return home from the agitation, the mood of Punjab's highly networked and well-informed farmers can be a clincher.

Parakala Prabhakar is former Communications Adviser to the Government of Andhra Pradesh and is Managing Director of RightFOLIO, a knowledge enterprise based in Hyderabad

Setting the tone at Glasgow, the job ahead in Delhi

India, while moving to renewable energy, e-vehicle use, and a digital economy, needs to focus on sustainable well-being



MUKUL SANWAL

With current per capita emissions that are less than half the global average, India's pledge to reach 'net zero' emissions by 2070 has cemented India's credentials as a global leader. The emissions of all others who have pledged "net zero" by 2050 are above the global average.

At COP26 in Glasgow (October 31-November 12, 2021), India successfully challenged the 40-year-old frame of global climate policy that pointed a finger at developing countries with the alternate frame of 'climate justice', that unsustainable lifestyles and wasteful consumption patterns are to blame. The political implication of the date 2070 is that the world should get to 'net-zero' by 2050. For that, the rich countries will need to do more and step up closer to their share of the carbon budget. India's stand also signals that it will not act under external pressure, as requiring equal treatment is the hallmark of a global power, and will have an impact on other issues.

G7 no longer a rule setter

The problem, as Gandhiji had also observed, is really western civilisation; it also accounts for the spate of criticism of India's open challenge in the plenary, and getting global agreement on a "just" transition to phase down, and not phase out, coal. The subject of oil

bible emissions are the fastest growing emissions, because it is a defining feature of western civilisation. Coal is the most abundant energy source, essential for base load in electrification, and the production of steel and cement. Its use declines after the saturation level of infrastructure is reached. The irony of the host country pushing other nations to stop using coal – an energy resource which powered its own Industrial Revolution – was not lost on the poor countries who called out "carbon colonialism". That India and China working together forced the G7 to make a retraction has signalled the coming of a world order in which the G7 no longer sets the rules.

The Prime Minister's stand in the opening plenary, pushing 'climate justice', and the Environment Minister, Bhupender Yadav's constant reminder that the negotiating text is not balanced as there is little advance on financial and other support, gave courage to the others to also successfully question the negotiating frame which focused on emissions reduction. After 40 years there is more specific language on both finance and adaptation finally recognising that costs and near-term effects of climate change will hit the poorest countries hardest.

India will be investing

The debate has now shifted to the national level, with questions on the feasibility of the goal of 'net-zero' by 2070. Here again, most of the concerns mirror those raised in the West without appreciating the significance of 'climate justice'. Seeing the challenge in terms of the scale and the speed of the



transformation of the energy system assumes that India will follow the pathway of western civilisation where the energy system and lifestyles that evolved over a century have to be transformed over the next 30 years.

India is urbanising as it is industrialising, moving directly to electrification, renewable energy and electric vehicles, and a digital economy instead of a focus on the internal combustion engine. Most of the infrastructure required has still to be built and automobiles are yet to be bought. India will not be replacing current systems and will be making investments, not incurring costs.

West must cut consumption

There is sufficient evidence in the literature that the consumption of affluent households both determines and accelerates an increase of emissions of carbon dioxide. This is followed by socio-economic factors such as mobility and dwelling size. In the West, these drivers have overridden the beneficial effects of changes in technology reflected in the material footprint and related greenhouse-gas emissions.

Climate change has to be addressed by the West by reducing consumption, not just greening it.

For India, in parallel with the in-

frastructure and clean technology thrust, the focus on a decent living standard leads to behavioural change in the end-use service, such as mobility, shelter and nutrition – for change modifying waste trends.

First, consumption patterns need to be 'shifted away from resource and carbon-intensive goods and services, e.g. mobility from cars and aircraft to buses and trains, and nutrition from animal and processed food to a seasonal plant-based diet'.

Second, along with reducing demand, resource and carbon intensity of consumption has to decrease, e.g. expanding renewable energy, electrifying cars and public transport and increasing energy and material efficiency'.

This should be the focus

Third, equally important, will be achieving a more equal distribution of wealth with a minimum level of prosperity and affordable energy use for all', e.g., housing and doing away with biomass for cooking. Indian civilisational values already lay stress on vegetarianism, frown on wastage; mobility-related consumption is not disproportionately increasing with income. National acceptance of a 'floor' as well as 'ceiling' of sustainable well-being is feasible.

The Government now needs to set up focused research groups for the conceptual frame of sustainable well-being. It should analyse the drivers of affluent overconsumption and circulate synthesis of the literature identifying reforms of the economic systems as well as studies that show how much energy we really need for a decent level of well-being.

The West has yet to come out with a clear strategy of how it will remain within the broad contours of its carbon budget. The political problems of a scaling-down of economic production and lifestyles will provide useful lessons. It is becoming difficult for the West to use international trade that is shifting manufacturing and the burden of emissions to developing countries with the rise of a digital economy. And increasing inequality and a rise of protectionism and trade barriers imposing new standards need to be anticipated. This knowledge is essential for national policy as well as the next round of climate negotiations.

Work for Parliament

After the Stockholm Declaration on the Global Environment, the Constitution was amended in 1976 to include Protection and Improvement of Environment as a fundamental duty. Under Article 253, Parliament has the power to make laws for implementing international treaties and agreements and can legislate on the preservation of the natural environment. Parliament used Article 253 to enact the Environment Protection Act to implement the decisions reached at the Stockholm Conference. The decisions at COP26 enable a new set of legislation around ecological limits, energy and land use, including the efficient distribution and use of electricity, urban design and a statistical system providing inputs for sustainable well-being.

Mukul Sanwal is a former civil servant, climate negotiator and Director in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Expiry date is near

It is disturbing that vaccine vials, in the crores, are lying unutilised in a few States and Union Territories (Inside pages, "Private vaccine stocks near expiry date", November 25). Just last year, India was virtually on the edge due to an acute shortage of vaccines. When most States and Union Territories are still far away in the matter of total coverage of inoculation of both doses, it is regrettable that precious vaccine stocks are close to becoming ineffective. The Union government and States concerned need to

undertake vaccination of eligible persons on a war-footing. If the vaccines are close to their expiry date, how feasible is the plan to export them?

V. JOHAN DHANAKUMAR,
Chennai

Farm laws, lessons
The farmers are the backbone of the country and when the vast majority of them put up a unified struggle, the Government should have reacted immediately. It is true that the government of the day enjoys a massive majority in Parliament, but on that score, it cannot bulldoze

the expectations of the people and tire them out. In the process, nearly 1,000 farmers lost their lives. The true test of a democracy is to reverse a decision at the earliest if the people are opposed to it – which the present majoritarian Government chose not to do. It is only because elections in Uttar Pradesh and Punjab are around the corner that the Government, which is keen on getting back to power, chose to withdraw the laws. It shows that the primary interest of the people is not its main concern. In the fitness of things, it is only

natural that the farmers want the Government to resolve their other legitimate demands.

However, what is equally unfortunate is that the judiciary should have immediately addressed the challenge to the farm laws because it involved the constitutionality of the laws. When governments fail to rise to the occasion and are guided more by political expediency, the

judiciary should step in.

N.G.R. PRASAD,
Chennai

Seeds needed

The rainfed areas in the southern districts (Madurai, Ramanad, Virudhunagar, Thoothukudi, Tirunelveli and Tenkasi) are ready for the sowing of cotton, millets, pulses and oilseeds. In oilseed crops, sunflower is most important for culinary reasons. Farmers

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: In the 'Between the Wickets' column – "Why the Indian cricket team has not been truly representative" ('Sport' page, Nov. 24, 2021), there was an error in the percentage of Muslim cricketers to represent India in Test cricket. It was not "only about five per cent" as given in the column. The actual figure is 11.26% – 34 out of 302 before the first Test at Kanpur between India and New Zealand beginning on Nov. 25. Of these, four have captained India in Test cricket.

The Readers' office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-2841297/2

Is the crypto asset boom sustainable?

PARLEY

The current monetary system is flawed, which is why cryptocurrencies have grown on a massive scale

One of the defining economic trends of the year has been the rise of cryptocurrencies. After the Supreme Court's decision last year overturning the Reserve Bank of India's 2018 order banning financial institutions from enabling cryptocurrency transactions, there has been a huge rush of retail investors into cryptocurrencies. Yet, the risk of the government cracking down on private currencies has remained. On Wednesday, the Centre announced that it will introduce a bill in the upcoming winter session of Parliament seeking to ban private cryptocurrencies, albeit with a few exceptions. Many commentators see the rise of cryptocurrencies as a bubble, while enthusiasts of cryptocurrencies see it as unstoppable. In a conversation moderated by Prashanth Perumal J., Parag Waknis and Akshat Shrivastava discuss the government's move. Edited excerpts:

What is the fundamental value that cryptocurrencies offer investors?

Parag Waknis: Traditionally, gold has been one of the options for investors to not only hedge against inflation, but also against the risk that is inherent in any financial system. Now, cryptocurrency is another such asset that allows people to invest outside the traditional financial system. It is not regulated and its value fluctuates, probably more than gold. But as we have seen over the pandemic, it has offered phenomenal returns, much more than gold has been able to offer. It's always debatable whether the current valuation is the appropriate valuation or not. There are going to be disagreements about what should be the value of cryptocurrency. So, many people might call it just a bubble. But then, it doesn't have to be stigmatised just because it's a bubble.

Akshat Shrivastava: First and foremost, cryptocurrencies are an entire asset class, not just one asset. The primary advantage of cryptocurrencies is the mathematically designed blockchain network with finite supply. The primary problem with the current monetary set-up is

that when the government starts printing more money, the value of your money gets wiped out due to high inflation. You can't do that with Bitcoin. So, cryptocurrencies give you a better hedge against inflation compared to gold by better ensuring limited supply. Gold has been a great asset in the past, but the supply of gold is not mathematically designed. So, Bitcoin is a sounder, fundamental currency. Second, there are systems and processes that can be developed around the blockchain network, such as decentralised finance systems. For example, when you transfer money to your friend in the U.S., there are significant charges that you incur if you go via any major bank in India. It's a friction that can be eliminated by the use of technology.

But do cryptocurrencies really have any use or exchange value to say they have fundamental value?

PW: Blockchain technology itself has great potential to reform financial record-keeping and keeping track of asset transactions. So, that is one major use of blockchain technology. Now, when it comes to currency as such, cryptocurrencies are more like hedge assets. So, cryptocurrency is equivalent to gold. We do not expect people to walk into a store and directly use cryptocurrency to buy goods and services. Cryptocurrencies still have to be converted into some actual currency that can be used. We do not quote prices in terms of Bitcoins. Governments do not accept taxes in Bitcoin or Ethereum. So, the word currency is a misnomer. But what gives cryptocurrencies as assets an advantage over cash or fiat money is the fact that they exist outside the purview of the government. In the days just after demonetisation, people looked to invest in cryptocurrency. When people see that the value of a particular asset can be wiped out overnight by a government dictat, that is enough to create some amount of distress trust in the good. Most of the investments after demonetisation have been in real assets. So, cryptocurrencies may not have immediate use in terms of going into



a store and buying something but they are basically a hedge against any system-wide action that can wipe out the value of any particular asset.

AS: Right now there are more than 20,000 businesses that are accepting Bitcoin. People can buy a bunch of digital products using Bitcoin. If you move to certain countries, you can transact in fractional values of Bitcoin. So, there is no problem in terms of transacting in Bitcoin. In fact, you can't go to Starbucks and pay in gold to buy a coffee. That is not possible.

Second, there is something fundamentally off in how the monetary system currently works. Economists would say that fiat money is a store of value and a medium of exchange. Is fiat money a medium of exchange? Yes, it's a very good medium of exchange. But is the current fiat money a store of value? Absolutely not. The reason why Bitcoin became prominent was that the value of fiat currencies was being eroded systematically. Right from 2008, due to quantitative easing, money supply was increasing and every time the government turned on the money-printing machine, the value of the money that you saved went down. So, people started looking for better alternatives where one cannot create money at their own will and potentially wipe out your savings. The fundamental value of Bitcoin is that it is a great store of wealth.

Since cryptocurrencies are competing against fiat currencies, don't they face the

C It's wrong to ban any asset unless there are compelling reasons to do so. You are basically going to create an underground market. And people will continue to invest in crypto assets. It will be hard to regulate.

PARAG WAKNIS

risk of government sanctions?

AS: It depends on how you're defining it. For example, if you're defining cryptocurrencies as an asset class, then they are competing against something like gold, not against fiat money. If you actually structurally understand this entire problem, the U.S. dollar is going to be the biggest beneficiary from this entire crypto movement. There is a reason why senators in the U.S. are accepting their salaries in Bitcoin. By the end of this year, a substantial share of the U.S. population will have some sort of cryptocurrency in their wallets. Jamie Dimon of JPMorgan Chase and Ray Dalio were both crypto critics at the beginning, but they have now come to embrace it. The adoption of cryptocurrencies, especially Bitcoin, has been the fastest adoption of any technology. It is literally changing the way you're interacting with technology. If you say that you are going to ban Bitcoin, or that you are going to ban Ethereum, then the bottom line is that you're actually saying no to a big part of technology that can prove to be revolutionary. Think about it this way. For example, if India decides to ban

Ethereum, we would have essentially said no to the entire decentralised finance system, because no other developers will come and build a blockchain network for you and power it up for you. It's like saying a government has the potential to beat Facebook in terms of building a social media network.

PW: It's wrong to ban any asset unless there are compelling reasons. And I do not really find any compelling reason in this particular case. You are basically going to create an underground market. And people will continue to invest in crypto assets. It will be hard to regulate. It would probably increase the penalty cost and more risk-averse investors would be dissuaded from investing. But overall, other than the desire for complete control over the monetary system, I don't see any other motive or economic rationale for banning crypto assets. So, the government should not do it. In fact, it should build a proper regulatory framework and allow investment because it's like any other asset. Then there are great benefits to the blockchain network itself that the government can use for financial record-keeping. It's antithetical to say that the government will ban the private crypto network and come up with its own crypto network because the whole idea of a crypto network is having a decentralised record-keeping system, and the government having monopoly over a decentralised record-keeping system does not make any sense.

What would be the benefits of having different currencies competing against each other?

PW: Private currencies could have a beneficial effect in disciplining the central bank. In Zimbabwe, for example, the government printed a lot of money and then the currency lost value. People then moved to the U.S. dollar for transaction purposes. This in turn forced the Zimbabwean government to enact some monetary reforms, curtail the supply and have some kind of a benchmark to the U.S. dollar so that the Zimbabwean dollar could regain the ground that it had lost because of increasing supply. So, one of the beneficial effects of competing currencies is the disciplining effect it has on the central bank or on fiat mo-

ney. Governments cannot just willy-nilly keep increasing the money supply since people will then always have the option to shift to other payment instruments. This was the classic dilemma that Milton Friedman actually posed, that we kind of accept that monopoly is bad in most cases in the economy but we kind of take the monopoly power of the central bank for granted without questioning it. There are examples in history where private banking notes have functioned very well and there are examples where they have failed too. There is a lot of research that goes into why they were successful and why they failed. But overall, it seems that if a private currency has certain characteristics such as scarce supply that is guaranteed, a criterion that many cryptocurrencies satisfy, then it could actually perform as a competing payment instrument that could discipline the central bank. There are plenty of historical examples for this. No single instrument can have all the advantages anyway. But every payment instrument comes up with some advantage and some disadvantage. So, we can kind of figure out which technology or which currency works better for what purposes and then think of some way of creating a financial system which harnesses all these new instruments, rather than cracking down on them.

AS: The current monetary set-up has serious flaws. That is the primary reason why cryptocurrencies have grown at such a massive scale. The adoption of cryptocurrencies has been one of the fastest for anything in technology ever in human recorded history. There are massive pitfalls in how the current monetary set-up is managed. Every time there is a problem, the solution is to print massive amounts of money, and every time the government prints money, it creates irreparable damage to people, especially at the bottom end of the society. That's point one. Second, money printing is not an economic question. It's a political question. There is always more demand among governments to spend than the supply of funds available. And in order to satiate that demand, more money is printed. If people understood this economic concept they would be demonstrating on the streets. +



Parag Waknis
is an Associate
Professor at
Ambedkar
University



Akshat
Shrivastava
is a serial
entrepreneur and an
investor in
cryptocurrencies



Scan the QR code to
listen to the full
interview online

STATE OF PLAY

In Andhra, the capital question

The government must protect the interests of the farmers who sacrificed their lands and livelihood

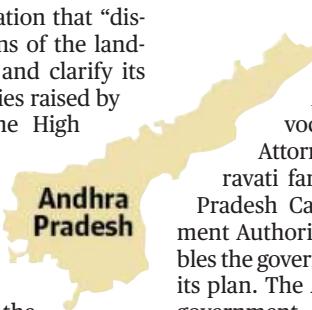
APPALI REDDAM

A few days ago, the Andhra Pradesh government passed a Bill to repeal the Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act of 2020 and the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal) Act of 2020 so that it may come up with a more comprehensive legislation that "dispels the wrong notions of the land-givers in Amaravati" and clarify its position on the legalities raised by the petitioners in the High Court. Upset that the government intends to introduce a more comprehensive legislation in place of the revoked three-capital Act, the farmers in Amaravati have vowed to launch a State-wide march demanding that Amaravati be retained as the single capital of A.P.

It is evident that the government has been firm on decentralised development. Following the bifurcation of erstwhile A.P. in 2014, the A.P. government pooled in over 33,000 acres of land from farmers in 29 villages of the Amaravati region, promising a world-class mega capital. It was planned that Amaravati would have nine other 'cities', including a 'knowledge city' a 'government city' and a 'justice city'. The exercise was initiated to develop the region and pass on the benefits to the farmers.

The present government says this is not possible. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said A.P. lost the fully developed Hyderabad to Telangana during bifurcation and remains a victim of lopsided development. He blamed the previous government for making lofty promises which will saddle the State with a massive fiscal deficit. Instead of a 'super capital', Amaravati will be the legislative capital, he said. In the context of this, the Andhra Pradesh Assembly passed the Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Repeal Bill, 2021, which revives the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority Act, 2014.

As part of the development plan,



the government may liquidate the available land left after designated plotting for development of the Amaravati region, sources say. The government has also stated that the unfinished roads of Amaravati will be developed and put to use with the available resources. However, it has ruled out investment to the tune of lakhs of crores of rupees due to a cash crunch.

The Development Agreement-Cum-Irrevocable General Power of Attorney signed by the Amaravati farmers and the Andhra

Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) in 2014 enables the government to go ahead with its plan. The Agreement favours the government, according to legal experts, as it stipulates that the farmers shall not claim any amount in addition to the amount agreed upon as compensation and accept it without any protest. The 33,000 acres of land were acquired through a Land Pooling Scheme brought in by the then Chandrababu Naidu government. The government had announced that for every acre of land given for land pooling, 1,000 sq yards of residential plots and 450 sq yards of commercial plots will be returned to the land owners. In addition, it promised an annual payment of ₹50,000 for 10 years with annual increase of ₹5,000 irrespective of the category of land. The Agreement says farmers cannot claim higher compensation in any court of law and will not be entitled to file any petitions in this matter. The Agreement also facilitates irrevocable rights to the government to develop the land. The courts in the Krishna and Guntur districts have exclusive jurisdiction to entertain any disputes arising out this Agreement.

The government is moving fast to get a "better" Decentralisation Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council where it enjoys a majority. Whatever the government does, it is paramount that it protect the interests of farmers who sacrificed their lands and livelihood.

apppai.r@thehindu.co.in

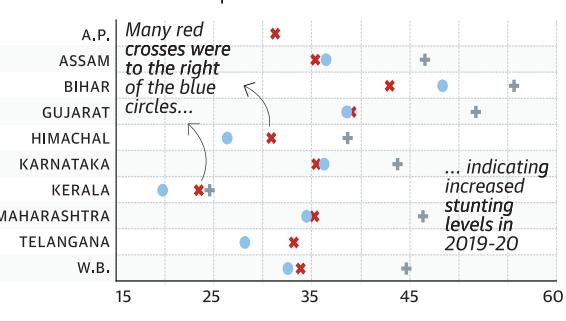
DATA POINT

Hunger absent from NFHS data

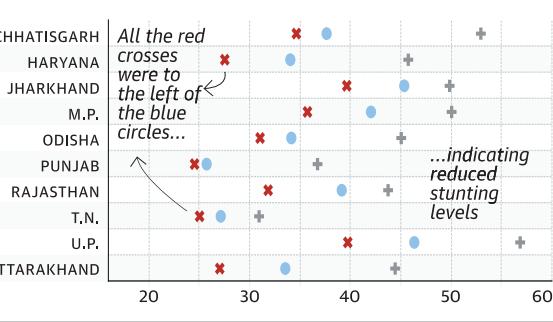
When Phase 1 of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5, conducted between June 17, 2019, and January 30, 2020, across 22 States & UTs was released, data showed that the nutritional status of children had recorded a significant fall across many major States. The data point published by The Hindu on December 15, 2020, showed that even in Kerala, which leads the nation in Niti Aayog's Zero Hunger SDG index, the levels recorded in 2019-20 were lower than the 2015-16 figures. However, the recently released Phase 2 of NFHS, conducted between January 2, 2020, and April 30, 2021, in the rest of the States shows no such decline in the nutritional status of children. Even Jharkhand, which trails the nation in the Zero Hunger SDG index, has recorded dramatic improvements in nutritional levels. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan, Sumant Sen and Jasmin Nihalani

The charts plots the % of stunted, wasted and underweight children across 20 States in: 2019-20 (red crosses), 2015-16 (blue circles) and 2005-06 (grey pluses). The higher the % of children, the worse the performance. Phase 1 States are on the left and phase 2 on the right

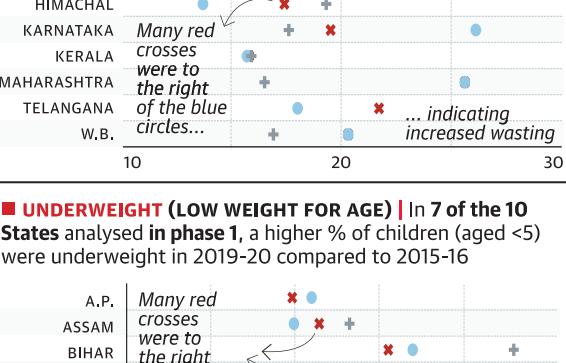
■ STUNTED (LOW HEIGHT FOR AGE) | In six of the 10 States analysed in phase 1, a higher % of children (aged <5) were stunted in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16



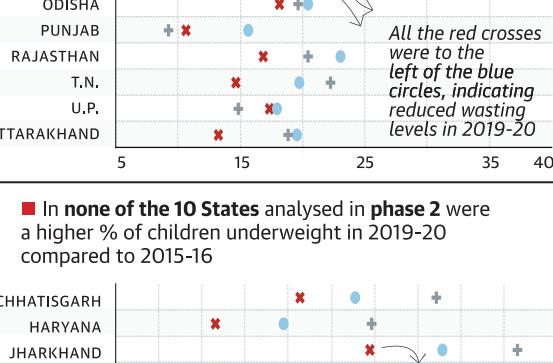
■ In none of the 10 States analysed in phase 2 were a higher share of children stunted in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16



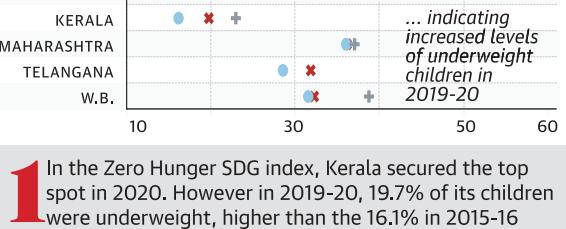
■ WASTED (LOW WEIGHT FOR HEIGHT) | In 5 of the 10 States analysed in phase 1, a higher % of children (aged <5) were wasted in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16



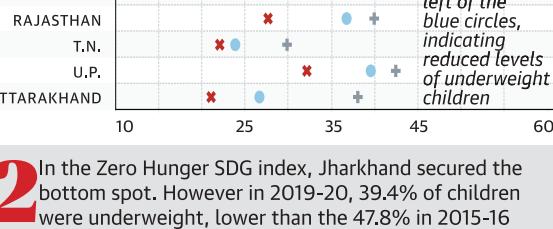
■ In none of the 10 States analysed in phase 2 were a higher % of children wasted in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16



■ UNDERWEIGHT (LOW WEIGHT FOR AGE) | In 7 of the 10 States analysed in phase 1, a higher % of children (aged <5) were underweight in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16



■ In none of the 10 States analysed in phase 2 were a higher % of children underweight in 2019-20 compared to 2015-16



1 In the Zero Hunger SDG index, Kerala secured the top spot in 2020. However in 2019-20, 19.7% of its children were underweight, higher than the 16.1% in 2015-16

2 In the Zero Hunger SDG index, Jharkhand secured the bottom spot. However in 2019-20, 39.4% of children were underweight, lower than the 47.8% in 2015-16

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 26, 1971

Restrained but alert to Pak. threat

New Delhi, Nov. 25: It was a relatively quiet day in Delhi to-day despite the increasing tempo of the fighting inside Bangla Desh and the growing seriousness of the border skirmishes between the Indian and Pakistani forces in the eastern region. The latest list of incidents on the eastern and western borders released by the Defence Ministry tonight did not reflect the true nature of the deepening crisis with the focus temporarily shifting from the military to the political sphere. Apart from the continued Pakistani shelling across the West Bengal and Tripura borders involving some civilian casualties, there has been no major engagement either in the eastern or western regions since the tank battle in the Boyra area of the Jessor sector on Sunday. But within Bangla Desh itself the Mukti Bahini has intensified its activity in almost all the districts.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 26, 1921

Democracy and sedition (From an Editorial)

Sedition as an offence against the State must necessarily depend for its criminality upon the meaning of the State-concept. When, as in the days of Louis XIV the political creed enforced by authority was 'I am the State' it was treason to go against the personal will of the monarch or incur the displeasure of his favourite advisors. But with the decline of monarchy and the fall of the few, the popular will was enthroned in political matters and the idea of the State was freed from the trammels of tradition, ignorance and prestige. The state ceased to be the stronghold of any power exercising person or class and was recognised as a self-determined and self-determining organization of individuals having equal political rights. The doctrine of democracy established the sovereignty of the people as the foundation of political philosophy and reduced the status of state-officials from that of masters to one of servants appointed by the consent of the people and removable at their will. According to this doctrine the state or the system of Government was the collective personification of the rational will and freedom of the individuals constituting it for their personal evolution and self-realisation. Thus in a properly constituted state, the conflict between the people and the Government cannot exist or recur since the former is recognised as the fountainhead of all authority, the ultimate creator and controller of the latter.

M ND-NDE

FROM PAGE ONE

Govt. to revisit income criterion for EWS quota

In a previous hearing, the apex court had expressed its annoyance at the Government for not filing an affidavit explaining how it reached the ₹8 lakh figure to identify the EWS category. "Tell us if you want to revisit the criteria or not. If you want us to discharge our duties, then we are ready to do so. We are formulating questions... you need to answer them," Justice Chandrachud had said.

"You cannot just pick ₹8 lakh out of the thin air and fix it as a criterion. There

has to be some basis, some study. Tell us whether any demographic study or data was taken into account in fixing the limit. How do you arrive at this exact figure? Can the Supreme Court strike down the criteria if no study was undertaken?" the court had asked the Government. In a hearing on October 7, the Government had assured the court that it would file an affidavit on oath explaining the reasons and statistics which led to the figure as the annual income criterion.

Bring in three-rate GST structure, suggests study

If the revenue loss from merging the 12% and 18% slabs were to be met by just hiking the rate on demerit or sin goods, the highest GST rate would have to be raised to almost 38%. The lowest standard rate will have to be raised from 5% to about 9%.

Restructuring GST rates is a timely idea to improve revenues, Mr. Mukherjee said, adding that it was important to sequence the transition to the new rate structure so as to minimise the costs associated with tax compliance, administration and economic distortions.

If the GST rate structure prevailing at its onset in July 2017 was restored last year, additional GST revenues of nearly ₹1.25 lakh crore could have accrued in 2020-21, estimates the NIPFP paper.

U.P. to be best linked State, says PM Modi

"Our double-engine government has ensured that today U.P. is transformed into the best connected region. In western U.P., there are projects worth several lakh crore. There is rapid rail corridor, expressway, metro connectivity, dedicated freight corridors. This is the new identity of a progressive U.P. This fast-paced development is a guarantee of a strong country," said Mr. Modi.

He said that Noida International Airport will become the logistics gateway for northern India and will turn the region into an export centre where even MSMEs will have easier access to overseas markets. The first phase of the airport will be ready by October 2024.

It will have a single runway and a passenger terminal building with a capacity to handle 1.2 crore passengers per annum by then. It

Deploy more Central forces in Tripura: SC

"Today is polling day... What will be the effect of such a complaint made today?" Justice Chandrachud addressed Mr. Jethmalani, for the Tripura Government, asserting the need to pass immediate directions to secure the electoral process. "The issue here is the conduct of fair elections," Justice Surya Kant, on the Bench that also comprises Justice Vikram Nath, told Mr. Jethmalani. The court said it, without enquiring in-

₹10,000 crore more allotted for MGNREGS

"Further allocation may be made upon assessment of demand during the revised estimate stage," said an MoRD statement issued on Thursday. These revised estimates will be included in supplementary budget demands made to Parliament when the winter session opens on Monday.

Meanwhile, more than ₹1,170 crore worth of wage payments for MGNREGS

workers are still pending.

Lack of funds results in suppression of demand for work and delayed payment of wages to workers. These are violations of the Act; they also constrain economic recovery," said an open letter from more than 70 economists to the Prime Minister on Wednesday, demanding that additional funds be provided immediately to strengthen and expand the scheme.

Srinagar tense over shoot-out, mobile Internet cut after clash

The bodies of militants not handed over to their families for the last rites

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Srinagar remained tense and a spontaneous shutdown was observed in the old city on Thursday, a day after three militants were killed in a shoot-out with the police in a

shout-out with the police in the city "as a precautionary measure". Clashes between local youth and security forces were reported from the Nawa Kadal area, native place of The Resistance Front (TRF) slain commander Mehran Shalla, on Wednesday night.

People alleged the security forces disallowed funeral prayers in absentia for the slain militant, which led to street protests.

"The bodies of all the



High alert: Security personnel standing guard in front of a closed market in Srinagar during a shutdown. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

three militants were buried in Handwara," a senior police officer said.

A spontaneous shutdown was observed in parts of the old city. Shops and offices remained closed in the Lal Bazaar, Hawal, Khanyar, Bohri Kadal, Jamalata and Nawa-kadal areas. Security was al-

so beefed up in these areas. However, the shutdown did not impact the movement of vehicles.

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti has also questioned the manner in which the "encounter" took place.

"After yesterday's alleged

On the draw



Assam, Mizoram to increase border fencing

Two CMs meet to resolve disputes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Assam and Mizoram on Thursday decided to increase the fencing along their inter-State border, which has seen violence that claimed the lives of five Assam police personnel and a civilian last July.

Mizoram Chief Minister Zoramthanga described his meeting with his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma as "cordial".

The two Chief Ministers met to resolve their boundary disputes apparently following intervention of the Union Home Ministry, officials said.

Assam and Mizoram

share a 164 km border.

"We had a very good meeting. We are like brothers. Tomorrow we will meet Union Home Minister [Amit Shah] together. We will try to increase our fencing all along the border," Mr. Zoramthanga told presspersons. However, Mr. Sarma said they did not discuss anything except enjoying the dinner together.

"We enjoyed the dinner together since we are good friends. We will meet the Home Minister. Nothing discussed today," Mr. Sarma said. Mr. Zoramthanga said he was looking forward to many more of such "progressive meetings".

Delhi House panel summons Kangana over 'offensive' posts

Complaints received over remarks against Sikh community

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Legislative Assembly's Committee on Peace and Harmony has summoned actor Kangana Ranaut over what it termed "outrageously offensive and derogatory" remarks on social media against the Sikh community.

The committee, led by AAP MLA Raghav Chadha, said it had received multiple complaints on "outrageously offensive and derogatory Instagram stories/posts" allegedly published by Ms. Ranaut.

According to the complai-



Kangana Ranaut

nants, the stories published by Ms. Ranaut on her Instagram account, which has a massive reach and is followed by around 80 lakh people worldwide, specifically

Param Bir Singh appears before police

He was questioned in extortion case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Former Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh, declared an absconder by a court, arrived in the city on Thursday and was questioned by Crime Branch officials in an extortion case registered against him.

Mr. Singh, who flew in

here from Chandigarh, ar-

ived at the office of the unit

11 of the Mumbai Police's

Crime Branch in Kandivali

after 11 am. He left seven

hours later, around 6.15 in

the evening. The IPS officer,

who is still Director-General

of Home Guard in Ma-

harashtra, arrived and left in

an official car.

"He cooperated with the probe and replied to all our questions. We have issued him a notice, stating that he should appear again whenever required," a senior official said.

BUILDER-hotelier Bimal Agrawal had registered a case at suburban Goregaon police station accusing Mr. Singh and some other police officials of extorting money from him after threatening to frame him in a false case.

Mr. Singh is facing a total of five extortion cases in Maharashtra. As summons issued to him went unanswered, a court here had earlier this month declared the IPS officer a "proclaimed offender".

Godhra riots: we did an impeccable job, says SIT

Counters Zakia Jafri's allegations in SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) said in the Supreme Court on Thursday it did an impeccable job in the investigation into the Godhra riots of 2002.

The senior lawyer dismissed allegations that the Army was called in late. Mr. Rohatgi said the Army was called within three hours of the riots. The Centre and the neighbouring States had provided forces to control the violence.

Mr. Rohatgi said the allegations of a "larger conspiracy" behind the riots was baseless. The role of every accused was looked into by the SIT. Accusations of "collaboration" by SIT were reckless, he submitted.

IN BRIEF



Anna Hazare undergoes angiography in Pune

PUNE

Veteran social activist Anna Hazare underwent an angiography at a private hospital here on Thursday after he complained of mild chest pain. Doctors at Ruby Hall Clinic, where he

underwent the procedure, said that the angiogram revealed a minor blockage in the coronary artery. "He is stable and is expected to be discharged in two to three days," said Dr. Parvez Grant, chief cardiologist.

I-T Dept. searches China-controlled firms

NEW DELHI

The Income-Tax Department has conducted searches on the premises of some companies and their associate concerns in Delhi, Gujarat and Maharashtra for alleged tax evasion. These firms, engaged in the business of chemicals, ball bearings, machinery parts and injection-moulding machinery, are reportedly controlled by a China-based entity. An analysis of the evidence gathered so far has revealed that they had transferred ₹20 crore to China via a network of shell entities in the last two years.

CBI books Odisha firm, others for loan fraud

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has registered a case against an Odisha-based company and six others for allegedly cheating the Punjab National Bank and the Indian Bank of about ₹140.48 crore. The agency conducted

searches on the premises of the accused persons in Cuttack and Dehradun. The bank officials involved in the sanction and disbursal of the loans are also under the scanner, according to the agency. It is alleged that the company got credit facilities in 2013. After disbursal of the loan proceeds, the borrowers and guarantors allegedly violated the terms of the sanction.



Water power: Naval officers standing on the deck of INS Vela during its commissioning ceremony at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai on Thursday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

of Indian fish belonging to the stingray family, and the crest depicts the fish swimming across the blue seas. The submarine's mascot is the Sub-ray which is an amalgamation of the submarine and the stingray which symbolises the metamorphosis of the submarine's character with the qualities of a stingray, the Navy said. The new INS Vela carries forward the legacy of its name-

sake, the erstwhile Vela which was commissioned on August 31, 1973 as the lead boat of Vela class submarines and was decommissioned on January 25, 2010.

Navy's Project-75

Six Scorpene submarines are being built under Project-75 by Mazagaon Dock Ltd. (MDL), Mumbai, under technology transfer from Naval Group of France under a \$3.75-bn deal signed in October 2005.

The first submarine INS Kalvari was commissioned in December 2017, second submarine INS Khanderi in September 2019 and third one INS Karanj in March 2021. The fifth submarine, Vigir, was launched in November 2020 and is undergoing sea trials while the sixth one Vagsheer is in advanced stage of outfitting.

The Navy has drawn up plans to install Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) modules on all Scorpene submarines as they go for their refit beginning with INS Kalvari in 2023 to enhance their endurance.

That hinges on the successful fitment of the indigenous AIP module developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation on board a submarine. The land-based prototype has recently undergone successful trials.

In parallel, the Navy recently issued the Request For Proposal for procurement of six advanced submarines under Project-75I. The Navy has a 30-year submarine building programme and after the P-75I, the Navy intends to design and build conventional submarines indigenously. "This is going to be the last time (P-75I) that we will take any outside assistance; henceforth we will design and build our own submarines," Navy Chief Adm Singh told *The Hindu* recently.

Cong. seeks Opposition unity in House

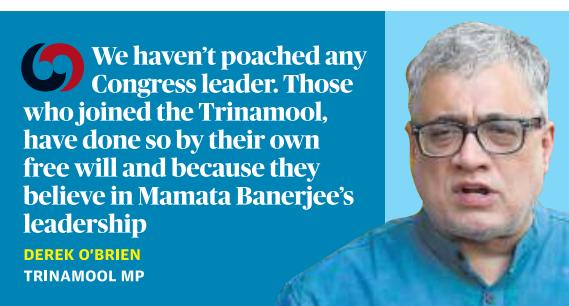
Despite tensions over losing its leaders to Trinamool, party decides to reach out over farm laws

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress will reach out to Opposition parties, including the Trinamool Congress, to seek the repeal of the farm laws on the first day of the winter session of Parliament, and to demand a new law to guarantee minimum support price (MSP), an immediate debate on price rise and the dismissal of the Minister of State for Home Affairs Ajay Mishra 'Teni', whose son is an accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident.

This was decided at a meeting of the Congress parliamentary strategy group on Thursday, held at party president Sonia Gandhi's residence.

Ms. Gandhi is said to have asked the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, reach out to other Opposition par-



We haven't poached any Congress leader. Those who joined the Trinamool, have done so by their own free will and because they believe in Mamata Banerjee's leadership

**DEREK O'BRIEN
TRINAMOOL MP**

ties. Deputy Leader Anand Sharma and Chief Whip Jairam Ramesh would also be reaching out to Opposition leaders for joint action on key issues.

But party leaders also agreed that disruption of proceedings should be the last resort and MPs must get a chance to raise their issues during the Question Hour and the Zero Hour.

The Congress would also insist on debating the Pegasus issue in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra

Modi and seek a reply from him, demand ₹4 lakh compensation for COVID victims and seek a discussion on the reported Chinese incursion across Indian territory on the Arunachal Pradesh border.

Apart from Mr. Kharge, Mr. Sharma and Mr. Ramesh, those who attended the meeting included senior leader A.K. Antony, Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, deputy leader Gaurav Gogoi, chief whip K. Suresh, Manickam Tagore

and Ravneet Singh Bittu.

Some of the leaders present at the meeting told *The Hindu* that all the leaders expressed their displeasure over the Trinamool's newfound aggression against the Congress but Mr. Kharge reiterated the earlier stand taken by former party chief Rahul Gandhi that "parties may have differences in the State but need to work together in Parliament".

"As the principal Opposition party, we will make sincere efforts to take everyone along and take collective decision. Mr. Kharge will convene a meeting of Opposition parties in the morning of November 29. It is up to Trinamool whether they would reciprocate or not. But we won't let it dictate terms," a senior leader said.

Trinamool Rajya Sabha floor leader Derek O'Brien said it was not unusual for an

Opposition strategy meeting not to take place before the session. "There are certain obvious issues, the MSP, compensation for 750 farmers who lost their lives in the agitation, the continuous attack on federalism and so on. We are all on the same page on this issue," he said.

He denied allegations that the Trinamool's recent recruitment drive, poaching Congress leaders, will throw Opposition unity into disarray. "We haven't poached any Congress leader. Those who joined the Trinamool have done so by their own free will and because they believe in Mamata Banerjee's leadership," he added.

The winter session will be the first one for two former Congress leaders – Sushmita Dev and Luizinho Falero – who joined Trinamool and were elected to the Upper House.

China protests Rawat's comments on security threat

Remarks 'incite geopolitical confrontation', it says

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

China's military said on Thursday it had lodged "solemn representations" with India and expressed its "firm opposition" to Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat's comments earlier this month on China being the biggest security threat to India and mutual suspicion rising between the two sides.

People's Liberation Army (PLA) Senior Colonel Wu Qian, who is spokesperson for the Ministry of Defence, described Gen. Rawat's comments as "irresponsible and dangerous", speaking at the Ministry's monthly press conference in Beijing.



... We hope India and China will work together to maintain peace on the border

WU QIAN
Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson

along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) starting last summer – mobilisation of two divisions, deployment of troops in forward areas and multiple transgressions to unilaterally redraw the LAC – had not only violated bilateral understandings but also brought ties to their lowest point in years.

The Chinese frontier defence forces are determined to safeguard national sovereignty and security, and are also committed to maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas, and are making great efforts to promote the de-escalation of the situation," he said.

"There is an old Chinese saying: if you use bronze as a mirror, you can correct your appearance. If you use history as a mirror, you can understand the rise and fall of a state. If you use good people as a mirror, you can understand right from wrong. As neighbouring countries, we hope India and China will meet each other halfway and work together to jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas and jointly maintain the healthy development of relations."

that while disengagement had taken place in some areas and was in progress in others, de-escalation remained a far-off possibility given a lack of trust and mutual suspicion, not to mention the Chinese side's construction of infrastructure in forward areas.

Indian officials have said China has so far not offered "a credible explanation" of its deployments last year that sparked the crisis.

'Clear, unambiguous'

The PLA spokesperson said China's position on the border issue was "clear and unambiguous".

"The Chinese frontier defence forces are determined to safeguard national sovereignty and security, and are also committed to maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas, and are making great efforts to promote the de-escalation of the situation," he said.

"There is an old Chinese saying: if you use bronze as a mirror, you can correct your appearance. If you use history as a mirror, you can understand the rise and fall of a state. If you use good people as a mirror, you can understand right from wrong. As neighbouring countries, we hope India and China will meet each other halfway and work together to jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas and jointly maintain the healthy development of relations."

At last week's meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs, both agreed to also "ensure a stable ground situation and avoid any untoward incident" until the situation is resolved.

Gen. Rawat had said, at an event earlier this month,

position that can effectively take the party or coalition in power head-on. We looked at available options and reached out to people and friends. We tried to understand the pulse of the people and it said there is a need for a strong pan-India alternative to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and him and 11 other Congress MLAs join the Trinamool Congress.

He also said Congress was failing to play its role as the main Opposition party in the country and people were beginning to believe it was weakening.

Democracy needs an

opposition as the party that could stand up to the BJP and its allies. The 12 MLAs had on Wednesday evening submitted the letters of resignation from the Congress to Assembly Speaker Metbah Lyngdoh. The Congress had 17 MLAs and the anti-defection law will not affect the departure of 12 of them.

The State is ruled by a coalition of parties led by the National People's Party, a member of the BJP-led North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA).

BJP whip for RS MPs on attendance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday issued a three-line whip for its Rajya Sabha members to remain present in the House on November 29, the first day of the upcoming Winter Session, as very important businesses will be taken up for discussion.

The Government has listed 26 Bills, including the repeal of the farm laws, to be taken up during the session.

Tripura polls rigged, says Opposition

A CORRESPONDENT
AGARTALA

Sporadic incidents marred Tripura's municipal elections for 13 urban local bodies held on Thursday.

The Opposition CPI(M) and Trinamool Congress alleged widespread rigging, attacks and intimidation. Both parties lodged complaints with the State Election Commission (SEC) and the police.

Sources reported an 80% turnout, adding the figure may vary after final evaluation.

Trinamool fits the role of pan-India Opposition: Sangma

'Congress failed to play effective role in Meghalaya'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Former Meghalaya Chief Minister Mukul Sangma on Thursday said the need for a pan-India alternative to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) made him and 11 other Congress MLAs join the Trinamool Congress.

He also said Congress was failing to play its role as the main Opposition party in the country and people were beginning to believe it was weakening.

Democracy needs an

opposition as the party that could stand up to the BJP and its allies. The 12 MLAs had on Wednesday evening submitted the letters of resignation from the Congress to Assembly Speaker Metbah Lyngdoh. The Congress had 17 MLAs and the anti-defection law will not affect the departure of 12 of them.

The State is ruled by a coalition of parties led by the National People's Party, a member of the BJP-led North-East Democratic Alliance (NEDA).

Opposition to skip today's programme

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Opposition parties are likely to skip the Constitution Day celebrations in Parliament on Friday.

The Congress has taken a decision not to send in any representative to the Central Hall, where President Ram Nath Kovind will read the Preamble.

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Cabinet Ministers and MPs will be participating in the event. The Government has also invited the public to participate through a special portal, where the Preamble in 23 languages is being provided.

Samajwadi Party allies with Apna Dal faction

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The main Opposition Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh has added another OBC-based ally in the run-up to the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly election.

The Apna Dal-Kamevaravi headed by Krishna Patel has announced support for SP president Akhilesh Yadav.

Ms. Krishna Patel is the mother of BJP ally and Union Minister Anupriya Patel. The mother and daughter head rival factions of the Apna Dal, with Ms. Anupriya the president of the Apna Dal (Sonelal), named after her father Sone Lal Patel, a former

er BSP leader. Both factions stake claim to his legacy as well as the Kurmi votes especially in the Varanasi and Prayagraj divisions.

At a press conference here on Wednesday after meeting Mr. Yadav, Ms. Krishna Patel said the two parties would contest the election together. Seat allocation would be discussed later, she said.

"Seats were not a big priority for us. Our priority was to walk together," she said. Later Mr. Yadav tweeted that the "movement for equality" would continue with Ms. Krishna Patel on the "important and decisive issue" of caste census.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NOIDA

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday said the solution to the 'pain' of Partition lies in undoing it and asserted that division of the country won't happen again.

Releasing a book, *Bharat ke Vibhajan ke Sakshi*, he also said the essence of traditional Indian ideology has always been to take everyone along and not to consider itself right and others wrong.

"On the contrary, the thinking of the Islamic invaders was to consider others wrong and themselves right," Mr. Bhagwat said.

A statement issued by the publicity department of the RSS, quoted Mr. Bhagwat as saying "Bharat ke vibhajan ki peera ka samadhan vibhajan ko nirast karna hi hai (the solution to the pain of India's Partition lies in undoing it)."

Heal pain of Partition by undoing it: Bhagwat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NOIDA

Mohan Bhagwat

Withdraw public sector bank privatisation Bill'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Communist Party of India (CPI) general secretary D. Raja on Thursday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to withdraw the Banking Laws (Amendments) Bill, 2021, which seeks to privatise public sector banks. The Bill is listed in the tentative legislative agenda for the winter session of Parliament.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had proposed this Bill in her Budget 2021-22 speech.

Mr. Raja called the move retrograde and said it would jeopardise the interests of the common people and the backward regions of the country.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Mr. Raja said the public sector banks had acted as catalysts in the economic development of our nation in general and particularly for the underprivileged sections of society and the backward regions of the country. He added that public sector banks help sustain the country in times of economic crisis.

NOTICE INVITING QUOTATION

Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Aquaculture (RGCA) – a Society functioning under MPEDA, (Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India), inviting competitive quotation from various firms/manufacturers for supply of chemicals, glassware and other aquaculture related materials for RGCA projects located in various parts of the Country.

The list of the chemicals, glassware, other materials and the location of the projects are given in RGCA website: www.rgca.co.in. Last date for submission of quotation is 27/12/2021.

DIRECTOR, RGCA

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

(CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)
E-TENDER NOTICE NO.: SG-CNMTTP-21-3-SA-OML-TELE
Dated: 24-11-2021

Provision of Telecommunication Arrangements at Salem, Magnisite and Omular Stations on Salem Division in connection with Doubling of Track between Salem and Omular Stations.

Approximate Cash Value: Rs. 275.87 Lakhs, EMD: Nil - Bid Security Declaration to be Submitted. Period of Completion: 3 months.

Date and time of Tender Closing: 20-12-2021 at 14.00 hrs

For further details refer Website address: www.irps.gov.in

Executive Signal and Telecom Engineer, Construction and Metropolitan Transport Project, Southern Railway, Chennai-31

Follow us on:

GMR

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY

e-Tender Notice
Tender No: e-Tender No.06/2021-22/SE/PHC/ALP. Green Book-2017-18-CWSS- to Haripad and adjoining Panchayaths Phase II. EMD : Rs. 50,000/-.. Tender fee : Rs. 16,800/- Last Date for submitting

Tender : 24-12-2021, 02:00:pm.

Phone : 0477- 2237954

Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in

www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

KWA-JB-GL-6-570-2021-22

Superintending Engineer
PH Circle
Alappuzha

Sd/- Chief Engineer, Transmission

NFHS says women outnumber men

The fifth edition of the National Family Health Survey confirms signs of a demographic shift in India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The fifth edition of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) has confirmed signs of a demographic shift in India. For the first time since the NFHS began in 1992, the proportion of women exceeded men: there were 1,020 women for every 1,000 men. In the last edition of the survey in 2015-16, there were 991 women for every 1,000 men.

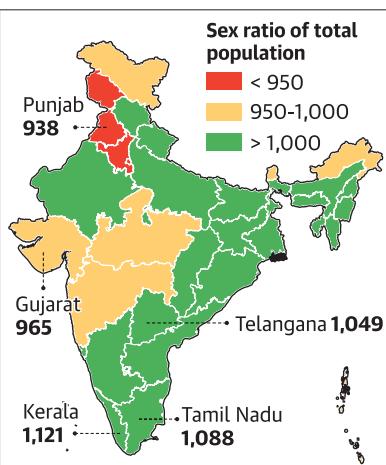
Only the decadal Census is considered the official marker of population trends in India and has wider surveillance programme. The NFHS surveys are smaller, but are conducted at the district level and are a pointer to the future.

Only improved

However, sex ratio at birth for children born in the past five years only improved from 919 per 1,000 males in 2015-16 to 929 per 1,000, underscoring that boys, on average, continued to have better odds of survival than

Growing in numbers

In 23 States and Union Territories, sex ratio was more than 1,000, i.e. more women than men in the total population. In six States and Union Territories, including Delhi and Punjab, sex ratio was less than 950



girls.

Most Indian States and Union Territories (UTs) had more women than men, the NFHS-5 shows. The States that had fewer women than men included Gujarat, Maharashtra, Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab and Union Territories such as Jammu & Kashmir, Chandigarh, Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Ladakh.

All of these States and

UTs, however, showed improvements in the population increase of women.

A State-wise breakup of the NFHS data also show that India is on its way to stabilising its population, with most States and UTs having a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of less than two. A TFR of less than 2.1, or a woman on average bearing two children over a lifetime, suggests that an existing generation of people will be exactly replaced.

Anything less than two sug-

gests an eventual decline in population over time. Only six States – Bihar, Meghalaya, Manipur, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh – have a TFR above two. Bihar has a TFR of three which, however, is an improvement from the 3.4 of the NFHS-4. Again, the TFR in all States has improved in the five years.

Most populous country
India is still poised to be the most populous country in the world, with the current projection by the United Nations population division forecasting that India's population will peak at 1.6 billion to 1.8 billion from 2040 to 2050.

A Government report last year projected that India would overtake China as the world's most populous country around 2031 – almost a decade later than the United Nations projection of 2022.

A notable exception is Kerala, a State with among the highest ratios of women to men at 1,121 and improvement over 1,049 recorded in

the NFHS-4. However, the TFR in Kerala has increased to 1.8 from 1.6. The State has also reported a decline in the sex ratio of children born in the past five years. There were 1,047 females per 1,000 males in 2015-16 that has now declined to 951 per 1,000 males.

The findings of NFHS-5 from 22 States and UTs covered in Phase-I were released in December 2020, and the remaining comprising Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, Odisha, Puducherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand were made public on Wednesday.

The NFHS-5 survey work has been conducted in around 6.1 lakh sample households from 707 districts (as on March, 2017) of the country, covering 724,115 women and 101,839 men to provide disaggregated estimates up to the district level.



Students being checked for anaemia at a school in Salem, Tamil Nadu.

Centre mulls new testing modes after anaemia surge

NFHS-5 found rise in cases across spectrum of population

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Concerned at the rise in cases of anaemia in India across the spectrum of its population, as revealed by the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), the Centre plans to change the mode of testing for it, along with initiating discussions with the World Health Organization (WHO) on whether "racial characteristics" ought to be accounted for in determining anaemia levels in India.

The survey, the full findings of which were made public on Wednesday, found that anaemia in children had increased from 58.6% in the NFHS-4 to 67% in the NFHS-5. The NFHS-4 was conducted in 2015-16 and NFHS-5 in 2019-21.

Anaemia in pregnant women increased to 52.2% from 50.4%, and the percentage of women (15-49 years) who were anaemic also increased from 53% to 57%.

of iron in the body. Anaemia is also believed to result from a lack of nutrition and inadequate intake of fresh fruits and vegetables as well as a deficiency of vitamin B-12. "It was surprising that the proportion of the anaemic increased so significantly between the two editions of the NFHS," said a senior Health Ministry official.

The official said the Government would work with States that showed the most serious deterioration to determine if its ongoing programme of providing folic acid tablets and deworming pills was inadequate. "In the forthcoming NFHS that will begin in 2022 end, we will employ the venous blood extraction method and analyse the results. While our focus will be on improving nutrition and achieving WHO standards, we will also have to see if other factors determine anaemia levels," the official added.

The percentage of men aged 15-49 who were anaemic also rose from 22.7% to 25%.

The Centre has an ongoing programme called Anaemia Mukt Bharat (Anaemia-free India) to reduce the proportion of anaemia among children to 40%, pregnant women to 32% and lactating women to 40% by 2022. The current NFHS shows a lack of progress towards these goals.

Anaemia is commonly characterised by low levels



CBI official elected to Interpol panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Interpol on Thursday elected Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Special Director Praveen Sinha as a Delegate for Asia in its Executive Committee.

Mr. Sinha was among the five contestants from five countries for the two posts of Delegates for Asia. The elections were held at the ongoing 89th Interpol General Assembly in Istanbul. The Executive Committee has 13 members from different countries comprising the President of the Interpol, two Vice-Presidents and nine Delegates. It supervises the execution of the Interpol General Assembly's decisions and the administration and work of its General Secretariat. It meets three times a year and sets organisational policy and direction.

The Interpol General Assembly has also elected Ahmed Nasser Al-Raisi of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as the organisation's President for a four-year term. Mr. Al-Raisi was elected following three rounds of voting.

Ministry issues alert on COVID-19 variant

It was first detected in South Africa

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday issued an alert on the risk posed by a COVID-19 variant first detected in South Africa.

"It has now been reported by National Centres for Disease Control [NCDC] that multiple cases of a COVID-19 variant 8.1.1529 have been reported in Botswana [three cases], South Africa [six cases] and Hong Kong [one case]. This variant is reported to have a significantly high number of mutations, and thus, has serious public health implications for the country, in view of recently relaxed visa restrictions and opening up of international



Samples being collected for COVID-19 testing in New Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

travel," it said. Travellers from South Africa must be screened and those who test positive must have their samples sent to the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) by the authorities, it added.

India willing to supply jabs to countries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India is willing to supply COVID-19 vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin – to countries that require them, Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said while interacting with the Ambassadors of Latin America and the Caribbean nations on Thursday.

Under the Vaccine Maitri initiative, 6.63 crore doses were sent to 95 nations. Stating that vaccination in India was recognised by 110 countries at present, he said mutual recognition increased ease of travel for tourism and business, which would boost economic recovery that the world needs.

"It is unfortunate to note that there have been repeated attempts to deliberately bring bilateral issues into SCO. This violates the well-established principles and norms of the SCO Charter.

Both India and Pakistan joined the SCO at the Astana summit in 2017, and Pakistan has ever since tried to raise the Kashmir issue on this

India flays raising bilateral issues at SCO

Such acts are counterproductive and should be condemned, says Jaishankar

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Raising bilateral issues is counterproductive to the spirit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday.

Delivering a speech virtually at the 20th meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government, Mr. Jaishankar obliquely criticised Pakistan and China, and called for reform in the multilateral institutions, including in the World Health Organization (WHO).

"It is unfortunate to note that there have been repeated attempts to deliberately bring bilateral issues into SCO. This violates the well-established principles and norms of the SCO Charter.

Such acts are counterproductive to the spirit of consensus and cooperation that define this organisation and should be condemned," the Minister said.

Both India and Pakistan joined the SCO at the Astana summit in 2017, and Pakistan has ever since tried to raise the Kashmir issue on this

platform. Both India and Russia have urged Islamabad not to raise such bilateral matters repeatedly. The SCO Charter sealed in 2002 calls for "peaceful settlement" of conflicts and disputes among member states.

Mr. Jaishankar said the pandemic had exposed the weaknesses of vital global mechanisms that should have acted more efficiently, adding, "This is the time to bring in much needed reforms to our global institutions, including the WHO, and rework our development strategies to face a post-COVID-19 world".

Addressing the virtual meeting chaired by Kazakhstan, Mr. Jaishankar said India had taken steps to operationalise the port of Chabahar in Iran for expanding connectivity options of the Central Asian countries.

In a veiled criticism of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that passes through parts of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the Minister added that connectivity corridors should respect sovereignty.

■ S. JAISHANKAR
External Affairs Minister



Panel set up for community kitchens

Food Secretaries from eight States to formulate national policy, says Goyal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

should be to provide food to people dying of hunger.

The court pulled up the Centre for its lack of progress in framing a national policy to run community kitchens in consultation with the State Governments, including the funds required, and gave it a three-week deadline.

Addressing a meeting of the State Food Ministers, Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal said, "It was a huge achievement that even during the peak of COVID-19, [the Centre] did not allow

any food shortages to occur," crediting the success of the Centre's free ration scheme.

According to an official statement, the Minister added that as a result of collective efforts, no case of death due to starvation had been reported during the pandemic.

Setting up the group of Food Secretaries, Mr. Goyal said a new community kitchen scheme needed to be simple and transparent, and built on the four pillars of quality, hygiene, reliability and the spirit of service.

The group would be headed by the Food Secretary of Madhya Pradesh and include the Food Secretaries of Kerala, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam, Bihar, and West Bengal.

It would meet next virtually on November 29 to deliberate on the proposal.

The Minister emphasised the need to distribute quality foodgrains to deserving beneficiaries on the basis of need, for a focused and identified set of people who are vulnerable especially women and children".

'Better connectivity with Bangladesh'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

dian Chamber of Commerce.

He said peace had been restored in the northeast in the last seven years along with economic and political stability, and the Governments were able to complete their full five year-term.

"Pre-2014, differences were created between the rest of India and the northeast. I went to a pharmacy in Nagaland once and the shopkeeper did not recognise me. He asked where I had come from. I said Kolkata. Oh, you have come from India, the shopkeeper said. My heartbeat stopped for two seconds. I asked him if

Nagaland was not part of India, but he did not say anything. I mention this incident because post-2014, Mr. Modi worked to remove the emotional rift with people in the northeast," Mr. Shah said.

"By 2024, the Modi Government will connect capitals of all the eight States by air, seven of the eight State capitals will be connected through rail, and a network of roads is operational. Time has come to invest in the northeast, empower the northeast, give a boost to the northeast and bring the northeast into the nation's development trajectory," Mr. Shah said.

FAITH

Unparalleled devotion

The Bhagavata purana highlights the efficacy of bhakti over karma or jnana as these get assimilated in bhakti. Bhakti is thus held to be a sure route to salvation. This is most convincingly exemplified in the case of the Gopis' love for Krishna which the Lord wished to demonstrate to the world through Uddhava's experience, pointed out Sri Dushyantha Sridhar in a discourse. Known for his staunch devotion to Krishna, Uddhava is also a close relative and friend of Krishna. Owing to these factors, he has begun to nurture a sense of pride about his devotion. The all-knowing Lord plans to rid him of this flaw that mars true devotion.

Once after Krishna had left Gokula and was in Mathura, He thinks of the Gopis' love for Him and wishes to cheer them up with tidings from Him. So He sends Uddhava to Gokula on this mission. Uddhava is able to vibe with the experience of the God love that pervades the way of life of the Gopis. Even in Krishna's absence, they have learnt to live in the same state of love for Him every moment, and feel His presence in all their activities.

Narayana Bhattachari says in this context that Uddhava salutes their bhakti as something unheard of or unseen so far in all the worlds. How many can reach the level of devotion evinced by the Gopis, he wonders. No amount of scholarship in scriptures or engaging in austere practices and rituals can take one to this quality of devotional attainment. Even the sages and rishis in meditation have to strive hard to reach such oneness with God. God's grace alone can confer such total and pure love for Him and the Gopis are recipients of His unfailing love. Symbolically it also indicates the jivatma's longing for the highest Purushartha, attaining oneness with the Paramatma through bhakti pure and simple.

TH CROSSWORD (set by Incognito)

13412

Display keystrokes of genius.
Type your answers in our online grids!
<https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCAN TO PLAY

17 See old boy begin to play tennis (7)

19 Combat wear carried around a long distance (7)

22 Golly! Confused about first compound intermediate between glycerine and alcohol? (6)

24 Replied, "One small, weak deer was injured" (8)

26 Relating to a group of peoples' state after thine break down (8)

28 Bear expenses of a couple of ladies having fish (6)

30 Japanese redcap has high class hop (4)

31 Group of soldiers return poor model (5)

32 Queue's left Indian exasperated, to begin with (4)

■ DOWN

1 Parcel's initially confiscated in Pakistan (4)

2 Make sixfold production of telex and UPS (8)

3 Familiar with second-hand shirt opening in the front (4,2)

4 Milder man gets fifty English roses to start with (7)

5 State: North-eastern king confiscates metal endlessly at first (8)

6 Question is not whimsical (6)

7 Short group of sentences from average article (4)

14 Engineers start to booby-trap the Spanish fighter (5)

16 Spooky East European retainer is evil, for starters (5)

18 Tempo of love spread by Raleigh, for example (8)

20 No charge before autumn in the US leads to rapid decline (8)

21 Plaything has three balls at the end of session (7)

23 Copy an unusual awning (6)

25 Heady Indian souvenirs old Bob caught in front of the mountains (6)

27 Gangster leaders of Tajikistan have Uranium? Good! (4)

29 The Princess Royal residing in Bannerghatta (4)

ACROSS

8 Ignoble like e or 10 (4)

9 European married in Southern Europe (5)

10 Father's in American tree (4)

11 Second knight had first dance and moved in a gliding way (6)

12 Last word in a line (8)

13 Target of the Fallschirmjäger? Let fall Zulu on England (4,4)

15 Dog me, for example (6)

SUDOKU

2	9							4</td

Channel deaths fuel U.K.-France tensions

War of words breaks out over how to stop migrants from crossing the world's busiest waterway in boats

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON

The deaths of at least 27 people in the English Channel is fuelling tensions between the U.K. and France over how to stop migrants from crossing the world's busiest waterway in small boats.

Despite a pledge from British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron that they would "do everything possible" to stop people smugglers from endangering lives, politicians on both sides of the channel are already sniping at their counterparts for failing to prevent Wednesday's tragedy.

Police patrol

U.K. officials criticise France for rejecting their offer of the British police and border officers to conduct joint patrols along the channel coast with the French police. French authorities say Britain is stoking the crisis because it is too easy for migrants to remain in the



Safe landing: Migrants being brought ashore on a lifeboat, after having crossed the channel, in Dungeness, Britain. ■ REUTERS

country and work if they manage to cross the channel.

Amid the finger pointing, British lawmakers on Thursday will debate the soaring number of migrants who are crossing the channel in small boats. Mr. Macron is scheduled to discuss the issue with European Union officials.

Meanwhile, migrants are continuing to brave frigid weather in small boats and unseaworthy dinghies in hopes of getting to British shores to seek asylum or better opportunities.

More than 25,000 people have made the dangerous Channel crossing so far this year, about triple the total for the whole of 2020.

"This tragedy was completely predictable, indeed it was predicted and it was

completely preventable," Zoe Gardner, of the Joint Council of Welfare for Immigrants, told the BBC. "This has to be a time for our government to mark a turning point."

"We need to offer people alternatives to the smuggling boats."

'Not enough measures'

Mr. Johnson said on Wednesday it was clear that French operations to stop migrant boats from leaving French shores "haven't been enough", despite millions of pounds of support promised by the British Government this summer meant to fund more police patrols on French beaches.

But Calais lawmaker Pierre-Henri Dumont told the BBC that more patrols "will not change anything because we have 200 to 300 kilometres of shore to monitor."

"I think it's time for both our Governments to stop blaming each other and to

try and talk to each other and find real solutions, not a crazy solution such as having more and more people patrolling, sending the British Army to the French shore," Mr. Dumont said. "That is not acceptable and will not change anything."

On Thursday, Natalie Elphicke, a Conservative member of Britain's Parliament for Dover and Deal on the southern English coast, said it was "absolutely vital that the French police stop the boats leaving in the first place".

"Rather disappointingly, yesterday we saw the French police in footage standing by while boats got together and migrants got in them and they went off the shore in France," she told The Associated Press.

"Britain has offered to help with people and resources, and I hope the French will now take up that offer and other European countries will come to France's aid."

230 migrants crossed Belarus border by force, says Poland

'Belarusian forces used lasers to try and blind Polish officers'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WARSAW

Some 230 migrants forced their way through the border from Belarus with the help of Belarusian border guards but were immediately sent back across, Poland said on Thursday.

"They destroyed the fence and a group of 232 people made their way several metres into Polish territory," border guard spokeswoman Anna Michalska told Polish news agency PAP.

"The officers instructed them to leave Polish territory and escorted them to the border demarcation," she said, adding that the incident happened late on Wednesday. The EU and U.S. accuse Belarus of manufacturing the crisis by bringing in migrants from West Asia and then taking them to the border – an accusation that Belarus denies.

In a statement, Polish border guards said the migrants "threw rocks and sticks at protest in the capital, Honiara, demanding his resignation over a host of domestic issues.

Tensions between the Government and the leadership of the most populous island of Malaita have been simmering for some time. The premier of Malaita has been outspokenly critical of Mr. Sogavare's 2019 decision to cut the country's diplomatic ties with Taiwan, switching its diplomatic allegiance to China instead. The province has also complained it has been unfairly deprived of Government investment.

The protesters on Wednesday breached the National Parliament building and burned the thatched roof of a nearby building, the Government said. They also set fire to a police station and other buildings.

The protesters on Wednesday breached the National Parliament building and burned the thatched roof of a nearby building, the Government said. They also set fire to a police station and other buildings.

Hazara elders pledge support for Taliban, call for inclusive Govt.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KABUL

More than 1,000 Afghan Shia Hazaras pledged their support on Thursday for the country's new Taliban rulers, insisting that the "dark period" of previous Western-backed Governments had ended with the return of the Islamists.

Afghanistan's Hazaras have been persecuted by Sunni Islamists for centuries, but on Thursday community elders gathered in Kabul alongside Taliban leaders in a show of support.

Senior Hazara leader and former lawmaker Jafar Mahdawi, who organised the gathering, said the previous Government of President Ashraf Ghani was the "darkest point" in the history of Afghanistan.



Ray of hope: Hazara women attending a gathering in Kabul in which elders pledged their support for the Taliban rulers. ■ AFP

had no independence and (foreign) embassies ruled every aspect of the Government," he said. "Thank God, we have now passed this dark period."

The new rulers have put an end to the war, stopped corruption and increased security, Mr. Mahdawi said.

But he called for a more inclusive Government from

Russia puts into orbit classified military satellite

It is said to be part of anti-missile system

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOSCOW

Russia on Thursday successfully placed into orbit a military satellite believed to be part of the Kremlin's early warning anti-missile system.

A Soyuz rocket carrying a classified payload blasted off from the Plesetsk cosmodrome in northern Russia in the early hours of Thursday morning, the Defence Ministry said.

According to the Spaceflightnow website, which covers space launches, the launch could be delivering a

Tundra satellite. Russia has previously launched Tundra satellites in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

Specialist website Russian Space Web said the ground track of Thursday's launch "matched previous missions" delivering satellites for Russia's missile warning system named Kupol or dome.

Unveiled in 2019, Kupol is designed to detect launches of ballistic missiles and track them to their landing site, though its exact configuration is unknown.

'U.S. should not have any illusions about Taiwan'

Beijing says no room for compromise, slams U.S. provocations

REUTERS

BEIJING

There is no room for compromise over Taiwan and the United States should not have any illusions about this, China's Defence Ministry said on Thursday, adding that Washington had of late made a series of "provocations" on several issues.

China says the issue of Taiwan, which it claims as Chinese territory, is the most sensitive in its ties with the United States, the country that is also Taiwan's most important international backer and arms supplier.

Sharp differences over Taiwan persisted during a virtual meeting earlier this month between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Mr. Xi said that those in Taiwan who seek independence, and their supporters in the United States, were



A file photo of a protest in Taipei. ■ AFP

tion with the United States, he added.

'Irresponsible things'

"However, for a period of time, the U.S. side has said a lot of irresponsible things and done a lot of provocative things on Taiwan, the South China Sea, and close up reconnaissance by warships and aircraft," Mr. Wu said.

China has principles for the development of relations between the two militaries, which is to say its sovereignty, dignity, and core interests cannot be violated, he added. "Especially on the Taiwan issue, China has no room for compromise, and the U.S. side should not have any illusions about this."

Democratically-ruled Taiwan has denounced China for its stepped up diplomatic and military pressure to try and force the island into accepting Chinese sovereignty.

Three found guilty of murdering African American man in Georgia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Three white men were found guilty of murder on Wednesday for shooting dead an African American man after chasing him in their pickup trucks, following a racially-charged trial in the U.S. State of Georgia that gripped the nation.

Travis McMichael, who shot Ahmaud Arbery, his father Gregory McMichael, and their neighbour, William "Roddie" Bryan, who took part in the chase, were all convicted of multiple counts of murder, aggravated assault and false imprisonment.

A predominantly-white jury in Brunswick, Georgia, deliberated for less than 12



Ahmaud Arbery

hours over two days before delivering their verdicts.

Travis, 35, Gregory, 65, a retired police officer, and Bryan, 52, face potential life in prison for the February 2020 shooting of the 25-year-old Arbery.

A crowd erupted in cheers outside the courthouse as the verdict was announced, chanting: "Say his name. Ahmaud Arbery!" "Today is a good day," Arbery's father, Marcus, told the gathering. "I don't want to see no daddy watch their kid get lynched and shot down like that."

SPORTSTAR

NORTH-EAST CONCLAVE

Presents

Associate Partner

IndianOil

Witness the congregation of key stakeholders, esteemed dignitaries, and Tokyo Olympics 2020 champions in Sportstar's first ever North-East Conclave as they discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region. The full-day conclave aims to provide an in-depth review of the local sports infrastructure and how to transform the North-East as the sports hub of India.

Follow the conclave live on sportstar.thehindu.com on November 26, Friday between 12:00 PM – 5:30 PM.



Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma

Chief Minister of Assam



Shri Anurag Thakur

Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports



Lovlina Borgohain

Olympic Bronze Medalist



Baichung Bhutia

Former Indian Football Captain



Mirabai Chanu

Olympic Silver Medalist

The conclave will be conducted by adhering to strict Covid-19 protocols.

Admission strictly by invite only

Banking Partner



The Banker to every India

Insurance Partner



Life Insurance Corporation of India

MARKET WATCH

	25-11-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	58,795	-0.78
US Dollar	74.52	-0.16
Gold	46,625	0.02
Brent oil	81.81	-0.34

NIFTY 50

	PRICE CHANGE
Adani Ports	762.45 -0.60
Asian Paints	3144.25 -12.75
Axius Bank	679.90 -5.25
Bajaj Auto	3391.70 -15.40
Bajaj Finserv	17368.85 -39.85
Bajaj Finance	7125.80 -51.50
Bharti Airtel	765.15 -6.25
BPLC	400.10 -3.25
Britannia Ind	3573.40 -49.95
Cipla	899.95 -6.50
Coal India	158.55 -0.55
Divis Lab	4799.80 11.70
Dr Reddys Lab	4591.60 -6.45
Eicher Motors	2520.40 -16.55
Gasim Ind	1766.75 19.80
HCL Tech.	1124.80 5.35
HDFC	2867.75 -15.80
HDFC Bank	1525.95 -7.90
HDFC Life	688.80 -1.60
Hero MotoCorp	2594.70 -26.35
Hindalco	447.05 -5.05
Hind Unilever	2349.05 -25.70
ICICI Bank	751.05 -9.15
IndusInd Bank	959.30 -11.10
Infosys	1722.40 -26.40
Indian Oil Corp	125.65 -1.95
ITC	231.30 -3.60
JSW Steel	680.90 -2.35
Kotak Bank	2035.10 -23.70
L&T	1849.90 -12.60
M&M	891.20 -2.00
Maruti Suzuki	7572.50 -96.95
Nestle India Ltd.	19178.05 91.15
NTPC	135.20 -0.15
ONGC	155.10 -1.65
PowerGrid Corp	204.25 0.95
Reliance Ind	2492.95 141.55
SBI Life	1159.50 -4.25
State Bank	490.55 -2.60
Shree Cement	26670.50 -213.25
Sun Pharma	782.90 -3.95
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	807.80 8.85
Tata Motors	492.75 4.10
Tata Steel	1173.65 -4.85
TCS	3445.90 2.60
Tech Mahindra	1559.35 21.25
Titan	2397.80 21.95
UltraTech Cement	7608.80 31.50
UPL	727.30 5.60
Wipro	636.70 0.20

EXCHANGE RATES

INDICATIVE DIRECT RATES IN RUPEES A UNIT	EXCEPT YEN AT 4 P.M. ON NOVEMBER 25
CURRENCY	TT BUY TT SELL
US Dollar	74.31 74.63
Euro	83.39 83.75
British Pound	98.96 99.39
Japanese Yen (100)	64.40 64.70
Chinese Yuan	11.63 11.69
Swiss Franc	79.59 79.93
Singapore Dollar	54.33 54.57
Canadian Dollar	58.68 58.94
Malaysian Ringgit	17.55 17.65
Australian Dollar	53.42 53.65

Source: Indian Bank

Dixon to manufacture Acer's laptops in NCR

NEW DELHI

Taiwanese PC maker Acer has partnered with Dixon Technologies to manufacture laptops at the latter's manufacturing facility in Delhi NCR.

China non-committal on U.S. oil release plan, OPEC+ unmoved

Beijing says will release reserves as per needs, oil producers to meet Dec. 2

REUTERS

BEIJING/LONDON/WASHINGTON

China, the world's largest crude importer, was non-committal about its intentions to release oil from its reserves on a request from the United States, while OPEC producers were not mulling changing tactics in light of the U.S. action, said three sources in the group.

On Tuesday, U.S. President Joe Biden's administration announced plans to release millions of barrels of oil from strategic reserves in coordination with other large consuming nations, including China, Japan and India, to try to cool prices. U.S. gasoline prices are up more than 60% in the last year, the



Uncertain impact: Goldman Sachs said the reserves release volume announced was "a drop in the ocean". ■ REUTERS

fastest increase since 2000.

The U.S. has made the largest commitment for a reserves release at 50 million barrels of pre-approved sales along with loans to the market, but without China, the action is considered less

dramatic.

On Wednesday, China said it was working on its own reserves release.

Washington's move raised speculation that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies,

collectively known as OPEC+, might consider pausing its current agreement to boost output by 4,00,000 barrels per day every month, but the group is not considering that, three sources told Reuters.

Fuel demand rebounds

Fuel demand cratered early in the COVID-19 pandemic but has come roaring back this year, and oil prices have surged.

Brent jumped by 3.3% on Tuesday, after falling 10% in the days prior to the news on rumours of a coordinated release.

Goldman Sachs said the volume announced was "a drop in the ocean".

Amazon seeks pause on CCI review of Future deal

U.S. firm moves SC; CCI to pass order

REUTERS

NEW DELHI

Amazon.com Inc. has asked the Supreme Court to pause an expedited review of allegations that the U.S. firm concealed information while seeking antitrust clearance for a 2019 deal with Future Group, legal papers seen by Reuters showed.

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) in June accused Amazon of concealing facts and making false submissions when it sought approval for the \$200-million investment into a Future unit in 2019.

The Supreme Court approach by Amazon comes as the CCI on Wednesday held a closed-door hearing where the U.S. firm's lawyers declined to argue and



explain their position on the matter, saying they had asked the top court to pause the process. The watchdog noted in an internal document, seen by Reuters, that it had decided to give no extensions to the firm to explain its position and will now issue an order.

Amazon and the CCI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

IL&FS sells tech business, clears ₹1,275 cr. debt

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

IL&FS Group said it has completed sale of its 52.26% stake in Terracis Technologies Ltd. (TTL) to Falcon SG Holdings, (Philippines) Inc.

TTL was formerly known as IL&FS Technologies Ltd. and Falcon SG is a wholly owned subsidiary of Falcon Investments Pte Ltd., a part of Gateway Partners and Avenue Capital.

With this stake sale, IL&FS said it has resolved about ₹1,275 crore of group debt and completely exited the technology business.

"This is an equity positive transaction wherein the entire debt has been taken over by the new promoter," IL&FS said.

BMW to roll out 3 new EVs in India, favours import duty cuts

Not enough demand yet, but there is inquisitiveness: Pawah

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI



Vikram Pawah

facturing should be incentivised instead.

"We're not asking for a blanket exemption... these could be either time-limited exemptions or quantity-limited. Then it is a clear path, there's a clear sunset date," Mr. Pawah explained.

He said BMW would unveil three electric mobility products in the next 180 days. The first car would be the BMW iX next month.

"There is not enough demand yet [for EVs]," he said.

"There is inquisitiveness about it, but the demand is not there because of factors such as not enough products available, lack of charging infrastructure and the policy framework," Mr. Pawah said.

ITC trials nasal spray to ward off COVID-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

ITC on Thursday confirmed that it is developing a nasal spray for COVID-19 prevention for which it has initiated clinical trials.

Developed by scientists at ITC Life Sciences and Technology Centre, Bengaluru, the company plans to market the nasal spray under the Savlon brand once it gets approvals, according to sources. Confirming that clinical trials are underway, a spokesperson declined comment on where the trials were being done.

Sources said the firm had won approvals from ethics panels and is registered with Clinical Trial Registry-India for trials. The spray is designed to arrest the virus at the entry point in the nasal cavity itself.

EID Parry cuts total debt by more than 63%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Sugar manufacturer E.I.D Parry (India) Ltd. has cut total debt by more than 63% during the current financial year.

The company had been working to cut debt periodically and the debt position was 'much better' compared to what it was as of March, he said. Long-term debt, which was about ₹200 crore in March, had been brought down to ₹101 crore and short-term loans, from ₹355 crore to ₹102 crore, he pointed out.

He said the firm had had tight control on borrowing costs, adding that the finance cost for the quarter dipped by ₹9.67 crore to ₹12.98 crore.

SPORT

TV PICKS

India vs New Zealand: 1st Test, day 2, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9:30 a.m.

Badminton: Indonesia Masters, Star Sports 2 HD & Star Sports 3, 10:30 a.m.

South Africa vs Netherlands: 1st ODI, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 1:30 p.m.

ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7:30 p.m.

Bundesliga: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 1 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF

Lakers down Pacers

LOS ANGELES

Los Angeles superstar LeBron James returned from the first suspension of his NBA career to score 39 points on Wednesday and lead the Lakers to a 124-116 overtime victory over Indiana Pacers.

Other important results: Warriors 116 bt 76ers 96; Timberwolves 113 bt Heat 101; Cavaliers 115 lost to Suns 120. AFP

Sporting gatecrashes into last 16

Sporting gatecrashes into last 16

Big teams make the grade; Haller's scoring streak continues

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LONDON



wait by beating Borussia Dortmund 3-1. Pedro Goncalves scored twice.

Sporting seemed over-

matched in September when

routed at home by Ajax then

beaten in Dortmund, but

three straight wins lifted the

surprise Portuguese title-

holder to advance with a

game to spare.

Ajax and Liverpool ex-

tended their dominating

group-stage campaigns with

fifth straight wins.

Ajax's 2-1 win at Besiktas

came thanks to two goals

<p

Debutant Shreyas and Jadeja give India the first day's honours

Gill hits half-century, but a few batters guilty of frittering away starts; Jamieson makes an impression; decision to leave out Wagner, Santner raises eyebrows

NZ IN INDIA

RAKESH RAO
KANPUR

Sunil Gavaskar never gets tired of reiterating the importance of batters converting a good start, particularly in Test cricket.

On this day, in perfect batting conditions at the Green Park Stadium, some Indian batters were guilty of not putting a price tag on their wickets. They did all the hard work to get their eye in but could not proceed to optimise their stay. The saving grace was the domination of debutant Shreyas Iyer and Ravindra Jadeja in the third session that made India feel a lot better as it took its total to 258 for four at stumps.

Good recovery

The importance of the ongoing 113-run stand can be understood if one considers that India was reduced to 145 for four in the second session.

New Zealand had its moments when Kyle Jamieson was rewarded with three wickets for his consistently teasing line close to the off-stump – the dismissal of Mayank Agarwal was a prime example.

None of the bowlers looked half as effective. In fact, young half-centurion



Going strong: Shreyas and Jadeja revived the Indian innings with an unbroken 113-run partnership for the fifth wicket. ■ PTI & AP



GILL That's the thing about Test cricket, you have to read the conditions fast. In this particular innings, I wasn't able to read that ball. I wasn't expecting it to reverse

JAMIESON It's nice to be back out there. Probably I think not having game time in the IPL and the T20 World Cup gave me a chance to take a step back and work on a few things

GILL
JAMIESON

arm bowling options, spinner Mitchell Santner and speedster Neil Wagner, raised eyebrows.

surprising to find all four wickets falling to the fast bowlers.

Tim Southee, who scalped Pujara, did have his fitness issues but returned to bowl another spell.

Reflecting on the day's play, Jamieson said, "I found the swing early and it was up and down a little bit. Hopefully, the new ball swings a little bit in the morning and we can get them. India is a fraction ahead but I think we hung around pretty well. We need a good start in the morning."

SCOREBOARD

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS

Mayank Agarwal c Blundell b Jamieson 13 (28b, 2x4), Shubman Gill b Jamieson 52 (93b, 5x4, 7x6), Cheteshwar Pujara c Blundell b Southee 26 (88b, 2x4), Ajinkya Rahane b Jamieson 35 (63b, 6x4), Shreyas Iyer (batting) 75 (136b, 7x4, 2x6), Ravindra Jadeja (batting) 50 (100b, 6x4); Extras (b-1, lb-1, nb-4, w-1); Total (for

four wkts, in 84 overs): 258.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-21 (Mayank, 7.5 overs), 2-82 (Gill, 29.6), 3-106 (Pujara, 37.4), 4-145 (Rahane, 49.2).

NEW ZEALAND BOWLING

Southee 16.4-3-43-1, Jamieson 15.2-6-47-3, Ajaz 21-6-78-0, Somerville 24-2-60-0, Ravindra 7-1-28-0.

Toss: India.

Priyank and Abhimanyu lead India-A's strong reply



On the ball: Abhimanyu hit 16 fours in his 103. ■ GETTY IMAGES

INDIA-A IN SA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BLOEMFONTEIN

Skipper Priyank Panchal (96, 17lb, 14x4) and Abhimanyu Easwaran (103, 209b, 16x4)

helped India-A reach 308 for four, chasing South Africa-A's 509 for seven declared, on

the third day of the first 'Test' on Thursday.

Resuming at 125 for one, Priyank and Abhimanyu took the score to 222 when

the former departed. Abhimanyu added 42 for the third wicket with Hanuma Vihari (25) before the latter was dismissed by left-arm spinner George Linde.

Abhimanyu then fell to seamer Lutho Sipamla. B. Aparajith (19) and Upendra Yadav (5) were at the crease.

The scores: South Africa-A 509/7 dec. vs India-A 308/4 in 93.1 overs (Prithvi Shaw 48, Priyank Panchal 96, Abhimanyu Easwaran 103).

Abhimanyu then fell to seamer Lutho Sipamla. B. Aparajith (19) and Upendra Yadav (5) were at the crease.

The two side had suffered bitter 2-4 losses in their opening round and appeared to be a bit cautious in the opening half.

The first half was slow,

both teams gained their first points of the season

■ NorthEast forward Brown appeared to have an off-day

there were many mispasses too and both teams struggled to keep possession.

Luna stands out

Blasters' midfielder Adrian Luna was one man who stood out, winning the ball frequently and coming up with nice runs and passes, but he did not get much support from the others.

Blasters' first good opportunity came in the 36th minute with Diaz finding a way into a near-empty box from the left.

He danced past a defender and appeared to be at the right place, but delayed

his attempt a bit and shot wide. Five minutes into the second half, Vincy Baretto, making his debut, produced a brilliant run on the right and sent a promising cross into the box but Samad, who ran and received it, sent it wide under pressure.

Brilliant save

Towards the end, North-

East goalkeeper Subhashis Roy came up with a brilliant save to deny Spaniard Alvaro Vazquez, whose arrival towards the 70th minute appeared to give new life to the Blasters attack.

Much was expected from NorthEast forward Deshorn Brown but he appeared to have an off-day.

The result: NorthEast United FC 0 drew with Kerala Blasters 0.

Today's match: FC Goa vs Jamshedpur FC, 7.30 p.m.

Brilliant save

Towards the end, North-

East goalkeeper Subhashis Roy came up with a brilliant save to deny Spaniard Alvaro Vazquez, whose arrival towards the 70th minute appeared to give new life to the Blasters attack.

Much was expected from NorthEast forward Deshorn Brown but he appeared to have an off-day.

The result: NorthEast United FC 0 drew with Kerala Blasters 0.

Today's match: FC Goa vs Jamshedpur FC, 7.30 p.m.

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Highlight

The participation of Tokyo 2020 Olympic medal winners – weightlifter Mirabai Chanu (silver medallist) and boxer Lovlina Borgohain (bronze medallist) – will be the highlight of the occasion.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

India. Bhaichung Bhutia, former Indian football captain, Satish K. Sarhadi, Director - SAI, RC Guwahati, Kothajit Singh, India hockey player, and M.C. Mary Kom, Olympic bronze medallist will share their views.

Other attendees include Robert Romawia Royle (Mizoram Sports Minister), Bimal Bora (Assam Sports Minister), Larsing Ming Sawyan (President, Meghalaya Football Association), Abu Metha (Associate Vice-President, Athletics Federation of India) & Secretary General Nagaland Olympic Association.

The Conclave will be held in association with the Directorate of Information and Public Relations Assam, IOC, SBI and LIC India. Readers can follow the Conclave live on the Sportstar website.

The first edition of the Sportstar Sports Conclave was held in July in Kerala.

have different segments including a panel discussion on North-East Sports and Infrastructure.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Highlight

The participation of Tokyo 2020 Olympic medal winners – weightlifter Mirabai Chanu (silver medallist) and boxer Lovlina Borgohain (bronze medallist) – will be the highlight of the occasion.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will host the first-ever North-East Sports Conclave on Friday (Nov. 26) at Guwahati where a host of speakers will discuss key issues pertaining to the sports ecosystem in the region.

Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, Chief Minister of Assam, is scheduled to share his vision for sports development for the region while Anurag Thakur, Union Minister of Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, will deliver the keynote address virtually.

Discussing the traditional sports of the North-East will be Jayanta Talukdar, Olympic archer, boxer Sarita Devi, gold medalist at World Championship, and Tetea Hmar, secretary, Mizoram Football Association.

There will also be a discussion on how to make North-East the sports hub of

Sportstar will

IN BRIEF



Rain ruins Stokes' comeback game

BRISBANE Talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes' return to action after almost five months – England's three-day practice match against England Lions – was washed out. Stokes took an indefinite break in July and had been due to pad up for the first time since then. Only 29 overs were bowled on Tuesday, no play was possible on Wednesday and the final day on Thursday also abandoned. AFP

ATP Cup kick-starts Oz Open tune-up events

MELBOURNE The ATP Cup team event will kick off the slate of tune-up tournaments ahead of the Australian Open in January. Tennis Australia said on Thursday the Jan. 1-9 ATP Cup will be held in Sydney, followed by the new Sydney Tennis Classic. Adelaide will host two weeks of combined men's and women's competitions and Melbourne Park will host three events – two WTA 250 tournaments and one ATP 250 – from Jan. 3-9. AP

No Nadal as Spain begins title defence

All eyes will be on 18-year-old Alcaraz, touted to be Rafa's heir

DAVIS CUP

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MADRID

Spain is set to begin its title defence at the Davis Cup Finals without Rafael Nadal, and with all eyes on the teenager touted as his heir.

The 18-year-old Carlos Alcaraz will be attracting attention when Spain starts on Friday against Ecuador. Spain is looking to triumph again two years after winning the inaugural edition of the revamped nations' competition. The tournament wasn't played in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Debut

Coming off a title at the Next Gen ATP Finals, Alcaraz will be making his first Davis Cup appearance alongside Pablo Carreno Busta and Albert Ramos-Vinolas, who are both more than 10 years older than him. Alcaraz wasn't even born when another member of Spain's team, 40-year-old Feliciano Lopez, began playing on tour.

"For me it's a dream come true to be here," the No. 32 Alcaraz said Wednesday.

"I watched this tourna-



Trump card: Spain will hope for Carlos Alcaraz to come good as it begins its campaign against Ecuador. ■ REUTERS

ment since I was a kid and I always wished to be here representing my country, so I'm really excited to be with the team."

Left-foot injury

Nadal went undefeated in singles and doubles when Spain won the title in 2019, but the 20-time Grand Slam champion isn't playing this

year because of a left-foot injury that ended his season early.

"It's true that we had a big advantage. If you have Nadal in your team you go straight to being the favorite because he is the best player in the history of the Davis Cup," Spain captain Sergi Bruguera said.

Alcaraz is capping an impressive season that included a quarterfinal appearance in the U.S. Open and victories over top-10 players Stefanos Tsitsipas and Matteo Berrettini.

Bruguera said Alcaraz has helped bring new life to the team with his great character.

"Carlos is an unbelievably nice guy, he's very humble,"

Bruguera said.

"And he's adjusting very well. He's happy. The veterans are very good friends already and Carlos is like fresh air in the team. It's nice."

Tough task

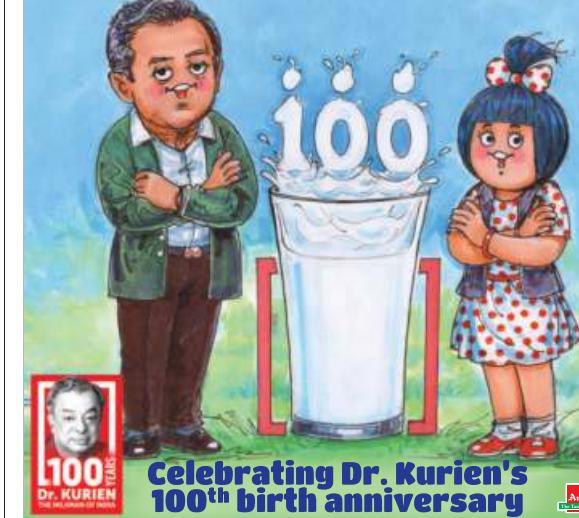
Spain is facing a difficult task trying to retain the title, though, as the other team in Group A is a Russian squad featuring two top-10 players in No. 2 Daniil Medvedev and No. 5 Andrey Rublev. Also in the team is Olympic silver medalist Karen Khachanov and 2021 Australian Open semifinalist Aslan Karatsev.

Russia will be called the Russian Tennis Federation (RTF) during the event amid an ongoing doping suspension from international sports.

"It's the strongest team," Bruguera said. "It's the most complete team, with Medvedev probably the most inform player right now, so it will be our most difficult rival."

Spain's team took a hit when No. 19 Roberto Bautista Agut had to be replaced by No. 45 Ramos-Vinolas at the last minute because of an abdominal injury.

100 / 100 always!



daCunha/AB/780

Dahiya outclasses Munim

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Aman Dahiya routed Deep Munim 6-1, 6-1 to set up a semifinal against sixth seed Yuvan Nandal in the ITF grade-4 junior tennis tournament here on Thursday.

The results: Boys (quarterfinals): Aman Dahiya bt Deep Munim 6-1, 6-1; Yuvan Nandal bt Parv Nage 6-4, 6-4; Monil Lotlikar bt Muni Ananthmani 6-4, 6-3; Max Batyutenko (Kaz) bt Daksh Agarwal 6-3, 6-0.

Doubles (semifinals): Aman Dahiya & Rushil Khosla bt Daniil Rustemova (Kaz) bt Rutuja Chaphalkar & Renne Single 3-6, 6-2, [12-10]; Shruti Ahlawat & Ruma Gaikwari bt Lakshmi Prabha & Sonal Patil 6-0, 6-4.

Felker & Islam Orynbasar (Kaz) 6-2, 6-1; Max Batyutenko & Arthur Kharutdinov (Kaz) bt Parv Nage & Aditya Nandal 6-4, 6-3.

Girls (quarterfinals): Shruti Ahlawat bt Saina Deshpande (US) 6-3, 6-4; Erkezhan Arystanbekova (Kaz) bt Lakshmi Prabha 6-3, 6-0; Sulitha Maruri bt Renne Single 6-0, 6-2; Vaishnavi Adkar bt Sonal Patil 6-2, 6-0.

Doubles (semifinals): Erkezhan Arystanbekova & Zhanet Rustemova (Kaz) bt Rutuja Chaphalkar & Renne Single 3-6, 6-2, [12-10]; Shruti Ahlawat & Ruma Gaikwari bt Lakshmi Prabha & Sonal Patil 6-0, 6-4.

Arjun – the new shining star

Anand among those impressed by youngster's rapid rise

CHESS

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KOZHIKODE

It turned out to be an unforgettable week in Kolkata for Arjun Erigaisi. And he wasn't even supposed to be there for a week.

The 18-year-old from Warangal was scheduled to play only the rapid section of the Tata Steel Chess, which he won, after being seeded eighth in a field of 10.

Opportunity knocks

Then, on the eve of the blitz tournament, an unwell B. Adhiban pulled out and he was replaced by Arjun. Two days later, he finished runner-up in that event too, after tying for first with Levon Aronian of Armenia.

"I was delighted to get that opportunity in the blitz, as I would have preferred it in the first place, to the rapid event," Arjun told *The Hindu*. "I never expected to win the rapid tournament; I would have been happy with a third."

Arjun played some sup-



Arjun Erigaisi.
■ DEBASISH BHADURI

jun. "I have been working with him of late and he helped me a lot at Kolkata."

As for not hogging the limelight like Nihal or Praggnanandhaa, he said it didn't matter much. "But, I thought I wasn't getting as many invitations for stronger tournaments," he said.

He added it would be nice if he got some sponsorship. "My parents have been taking care of my expenses, but I think it would be great if that burden is softened by some sponsors," he said. "Chess at the highest level is very expensive."

World championships

Arjun's focus now is back on classical chess. "I will be playing two tournaments in Spain over the next few weeks," he said. "I am also looking forward to the World rapid and blitz championships (to be held from December 26 in Kazakhstan)."

After his exploits in Kolkata, he surely will be one of the players to watch out for there.

Gill says that Mahindra Racing is focusing on nailing race pace.

FORMULA E
S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

Ahead of the first pre-season testing for the 2021-22 season of Formula E, the electric single-seater championship that starts next week in Valencia, Indian team Mahindra Racing is optimistic of a good run after a few years of struggle.

Mahindra Racing has been part of the series since the first year in 2014-15 and this will be the final season for the Gen2 car before the Gen3 car is introduced next year.

Downturn

The team showed good progress for the first few years finishing as high as third and fourth in the third and fourth seasons respectively. Since then it has slipped to ninth over the last two years.

Dilbagh Gill, Team Principal of Mahindra Racing, though feels optimistic about his side's chances this year.

Gill spoke to *The Hindu*

ahead of the launch of Formula E Unplugged, a documentary series about the last season, similar to F1's 'Drive to Survive' where there will be an episode centring around the Mahindra team.

"I don't want to say a number like second or third but I would say we will be back in the top half of the championship. We are in the bottom half right now, we'll come back to the top half," said Gill on his targets for this year.

Explaining what has held the team back, Gill said, "Our weakness essentially has been largely around tyre

management and a bit of a race strategy."

"In qualifying, we have always been one of the best teams, we can get the best single lap pace out of a car. But in race pace is where we are (lacking). We have been good at preparing for the sprint but not for the marathon. For the race, there is a bit more strategy, you push for a bit, you hold back and we are tuning ourselves towards nailing race pace," he added.

The team in its inaugural year had Karun Chandhok, only the second Indian to race in Formula One, as one of its drivers but since then has not had an Indian behind the wheel.

When asked about that, Gill said, "We haven't had the resources even though we had the intention. There has been a vacuum of talent but some really good drivers like Arjun (Maini) and Jehan (Daruvala) are coming up even though they are largely FI-focused so far."

"We have had some conversations and, I would say I think at some point in time, I don't want to jump the gun, but there would be some Indian talent joining the team," he added.

Saurabh bags 50m free pistol gold

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Saurabh Chaudhary announced his entry in 50-metre free pistol in style by clinching the gold in the 64th National Shooting Championship here.

The 19-year-old Saurabh, famous for his exploits in 10-metre air pistol, shot 564 to beat Army's Ravinder Singh by five points for the gold. Jitu Rai, who holds the national record at 568, finished 13th with a modest total of 550.

Saurabh's effort saw him beat the national junior record of 563 set by Arjun Singh Cheema in Plzen in 2018. Arjun himself shot 548 for the 15th place in the men's field of 286 shooters.

Free pistol was taken off the Olympic schedule and so it doesn't feature a final.

The results: 50m free pistol: **Men:** 1. Saurabh Chaudhary 564; 2. Ravinder Singh 559; 3. Pardeep Kumar 555. **Junior men:** 1. Saurabh Chaudhary 564 (NJR), 2. Harsh Gupta 553; 3. Shaurya Sarin 548.

Australian bowlers bat for Paine

Lyon echoes mates' support for 'best keeper in the world'



Popular demand: Paine may yet wear the Baggy Green in this Ashes series. ■ AP

CRICKET

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRISBANE

Text & Context

NEWS IN NUMBERS



A new COVID-19 variant

B.1.1.529

The scientific lineage number of a new

COVID-19 variant with multiple mutations detected in South Africa. The variant has a high number of mutations and is causing a resurgence of infections, virologist Tulio de Oliveira said. It has also been detected in Botswana and Hong Kong among travellers from South Africa. South Africa Health Minister Joe Phaahla said the variant was behind an "exponential" increase in reported cases, making it "a major threat". AFP

High but true mortality

1,00,000

Total deaths due to COVID-19 in

Germany. Germany is the 13th country to register more than 1 lakh deaths. While this number is quite high, it is also reflective of the true mortality as excess deaths in Germany have only been about 0.8 times the total COVID-19 deaths as of September 2021. In contrast, India has registered nearly 4.7 lakh deaths, but excess deaths were at least 5.8 times the number of deaths (based on data analysed in about 10 States). THE ECONOMIST

Chinese firms blacklisted

12

The number of new Chinese companies that were added to a blacklist by the U.S. These are companies to which U.S. exports of components are prohibited. Many of these companies are involved in quantum computing. This is a ploy that the U.S. says China uses to crack the U.S.'s encryption codes for the Chinese Army. More than 25 companies had already been added to the list earlier this year while the corresponding number for 2020 and 2019 were nearly 150 and 80, respectively (during the Donald Trump regime). THE ECONOMIST

Liquor sales soar

12,005

In ₹crore, the profit earned by the Andhra Pradesh government through liquor sales in the first eight months of this calendar year. The State government is the sole wholesaler and retailer of liquor in A.P. The government, however, claimed that consumption of liquor fell by 37%. It said the money would be used for some major freebie schemes. In 2020, despite the lockdown, the government earned a profit of ₹13,435 crore from a revenue of ₹16,979 crore. PTI

T20 viewership surges

167

In million, the total number of viewers globally who saw the ICC men's T20 World Cup matches on television and digital streams. Increased viewership was recorded across India, Pakistan, the U.K., Australia and the U.S. The highly anticipated India-Pakistan clash recorded a total consumption of 15.9 billion minutes in India on the Star India Network. The encounter is now the most-viewed T20I match in history, exceeding the previous high of the India-West Indies semi-final match from ICC 2016 held in India. PTI

EXPLAINER

The uncertainty around cryptocurrency

Why has the latest Bill regarding digital currencies, which is to be tabled in Parliament, caused widespread distress among crypto-investors?

PRASHANTH PERUMAL J

The story so far: A bill that the Centre is set to introduce in the Winter Session of Parliament has got investors in cryptocurrencies worried. The prices of cryptocurrencies across the board fell by as much as 20% after news of the Centre's new cryptocurrency bill hit the market on Wednesday. With details of the bill not out yet, many investors are left hoping that there will be no blanket ban on cryptocurrencies.

What is it?

A bulletin released by the Government on Wednesday stated that the Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021 will "create a facilitative framework for creation of the official digital currency to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India." It also seeks to "prohibit all private cryptocurrencies in India" except for a few in order to "promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses."

If so, it would be illegal to purchase goods and services using any cryptocurrency and people would only be able to speculate on the price of cryptocurrencies.

Crypto enthusiasts, however, still argue that cryptocurrencies can serve as an asset like gold or silver that helps people protect their wealth from inflation.

What seems clear as of now, however, is that cryptocurrencies will not be allowed to function as a full-fledged medium of exchange

in order to "promote the underlying technology of cryptocurrency and its uses."

The "official digital currency" here refers to the central bank digital currency that is expected to be issued by the RBI. A number of central banks across the globe have been working on issuing their own digital currencies. This, some say, is to offer an alternative to private cryptocurrencies. It should be noted that the RBI, in an order in 2018, banned financial institutions from facilitating cryptocurrency transactions. The RBI's order was overturned by the Supreme Court last year saying that there was no legal basis for the ban. But the new cryptocurrency bill may offer a legal basis for a strong ban.

Is this the end of the road for cryptocurrencies?

The bulletin released by the government has led to some confusion over what counts as "private cryptocurrency" in the context of the bill. Since, at least according to the bulletin, the primary purpose of the bill



seems to be to facilitate the creation of an official digital currency issued by the RBI, "private cryptocurrencies" in this context likely refers to digital currencies created by entities other than the state. Others, however, have argued that "private cryptocurrencies" refers only to a small number of cryptocurrencies that do not make their transaction ledgers and other data available to the public.

What seems clear as of now, however, is that cryptocurrencies will not be allowed to function as a full-fledged medium of exchange. So, it would be illegal to purchase goods and services using any cryptocurrency. People may only be able to speculate on the price of cryptocurrencies. This was expected given the risk that private currencies could possibly out-compete fiat currencies issued by central banks. Fiat currencies are seen as assets that can be

easily debased by governments.

Crypto-enthusiasts point out that the ban on cryptocurrencies in other countries has not led to a halt in crypto trading. They say that it is hard for authorities to crack down on cryptocurrencies and further argue that blanket bans on cryptocurrencies will only push cryptocurrencies into the black market.

Central bankers, however, may not be concerned about such underground trading as long as the value and volume of these transactions are limited and pose no serious threat to their monetary powers.

What does this mean for the value of cryptocurrencies?

Cryptocurrencies were initially flaunted by many as alternative currencies that could compete against fiat currencies such as the U.S. dollar and the rupee. But governments

and their central banks have been unwilling to accept these private currencies as a legal form of money. This, some argue, is because the ability of the State to create money out of thin air may be constrained by citizens switching to private currencies. With the Centre now likely to ban cryptocurrencies as a medium of exchange, the real fundamental value of cryptocurrencies as currency may come under question.

Crypto enthusiasts, however, still argue that cryptocurrencies can serve as an asset like gold or silver that helps people protect their wealth from inflation. But it should be noted that assets like gold and silver are able to act as hedges only because they possess fundamental value either as a medium of exchange or as a useful commodity in the first place. This is what allows their price to rise in tandem with fiat money supply.

In this picture taken on November 23, 2021, the Bitcoin symbol is pictured at the entrance of a private office in Bangalore. Between 15 and 20 million people in Asia's third-largest economy are estimated to own cryptocurrencies, according to the industry body the Blockchain and Crypto Assets Council (BACC).

AFP

EXPLAINER

The democratic backsliding of India

What is the Global State of Democracy report which has recently categorised India as a 'major decliner'?

VASUNDHARA SIRNATE

The story so far: Between 2016 and 2020 the number of countries that have moved towards authoritarianism has steadily increased and outnumbering the number of countries that have seen democratic gains. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, democratic backsliding (state actions that erode the quality of democratic institutions, processes) has accelerated. India has been no exception to this global pattern with a sudden extended lockdown in 2020 leading to massive economic and social disruption for marginalised and vulnerable groups. In March 2021 Sweden's V-Dem Institute categorised India as an "electoral autocracy" while Freedom House listed India as "partly free". This month another Swedish think-tank, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), has categorised India as a backsliding democracy and a "major decliner" in its Global State of Democracy 2021 (GSoD) report.



The GSoD report is a document compiled and released by International IDEA, a Stockholm based intergovernmental think-tank that works to boost democracy globally. India is one of the founding members of this organisation. The GSoD 2021 report assesses 165 countries on 116 indicators spread across five identified core attributes of democracy - representative government, fundamental rights, checks on Government, impartial administration and participatory engagement.

What are the findings of the report?

The GSoD 2021 report states that the

number of countries that have slid towards authoritarianism is three times as high as those that are moving in a democratic direction. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this trend. In 2020, the GSoD report can categorise only 59 per cent of the countries on its index as democratic. The report also notes, "70 per cent of the global population now live either in non-democratic regimes or in democratically backsliding countries". The report counts Brazil, India and the United States as the biggest backsliders. It also identifies illiberal and populist parties, social and political polarisation,

economic crises and disinformation as factors that have influenced the decline of democracy. India is described as the "backsliding democracy with the most democratic violations during the pandemic". The GSoD report further notes that along with the rise in authoritarian tendencies, there has also been an explosion of civic activism. 135 countries (82 per cent) saw protests during the pandemic. The report states that the procedural aspect of democracy, elections, have shown "remarkable resilience" even though some countries saw a decline in clean elections.

What is India's overall assessment? The GSoD does not use its data to design a final aggregated score that can be interpreted as a rank. It favours a comparison of indicators of a country with itself over time so that attributes of democracy for that country can be studied individually. The core attribute scores for India date back to 1975 and can be accessed from the public GSoD database. Interestingly, across almost all attributes, India does well between 1996 and 2014. Starting in 2015 the scores give a clear indication of democratic gains being lost. For instance, between 1975

and 1995 India's representative government score moved from .59 to .69. In 2015 it was .72. However, in 2020 it stood at .61, i.e., closer to the score India had in 1975 when it underwent the Emergency. Similarly, the clean elections score was .85 in 2015. In 2020 it stood at .65. India's fundamental rights score in 2010 was considered low at .58. By 2020 it had fallen to .54. Between 2010 and 2020 India's civil liberties score fell from .65 to .53, while the checks on government score fell from .71 to .58 during the same period. The report also shows that between 2015 and 2020, the media integrity score fell by 7.9 per cent, judicial independence fell by 2.5 per cent and effectiveness of parliament fell by 9.6 per cent.

Thus, the GSoD report does find India to be in trouble as a democracy, viewing it now as a "mid-range performing democracy". India is also listed alongside Sri Lanka and Indonesia for the lowest score on the religious freedom indicator since 1975. The report also notes that "executive aggrandizement" has taken place in India through "multiple and small scale systemic assaults" which has led to a dilution of checks on the executive.

THE GIST

A Swedish think-tank, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), has categorised India as a backsliding democracy in its Global State of Democracy 2021 (GSoD) report.

The GSoD report assesses indicators spread across five core attributes of democracy - representative government, fundamental rights, checks on Government, impartial administration and participatory engagement.

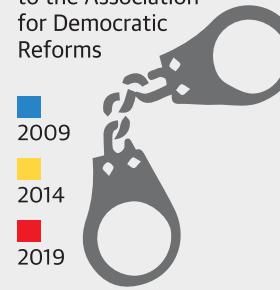
The report counts Brazil, India and the United States as the biggest backsliders.



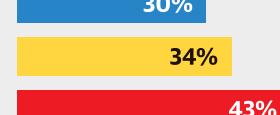
The Karnataka Election Watch, the National Election Watch and the Association for Democratic Reforms at a joint press conference in Bangalore in 2013. • FILE PHOTO

Under the scanner

Close to 43% winners of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls have criminal cases against them, according to the Association for Democratic Reforms



0% WITH CRIMINAL CASES



*rape, murder, kidnapping, crimes against women etc



IN THE LIMELIGHT

A rich seam in cinema

How do filmmakers pull off a successful fashion biopic?

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Gone are the days of fashion biopics being merely fever dreams of fabrics thrown about, camera flashes, sun-seeking parties and excesses of cash flow. From the more reverent *Coco Avant Chanel* (2009) to the darkly superfluous *Greed* (2019), the lens of fashion biopics over the years has been switched out for something more unflinching and less insipid.

But why do we care so much? The world of fashion may be one far removed from our own reality and this in itself elevates a sense of intrigue, escapism and attachment. Dennis Bingham, in his 2010 book *Whose Lives Are They Anyway?* sums it up fairly succinctly: "So as to plumb that mystery of humanness, the inability completely to know another person, and the absolute importance of knowing them and ourselves."

In a sense, the decade-plus of progress has helped pave the way for filmmaker Ridley Scott's *House Of Gucci* which casts our gaze over the establishment of the Italian luxury couture house, but also dives into the murder plot set by Patrizia Reggiani against her husband Maurizio, the label's founder. Like most biopics, the element of scandal has propelled much of the fan-fuelled excitement for the feature film (not just owing to the casting of Adam Driver and Lady Gaga), proving the demand for biopics is not expiring, but instead, evolving and growing.

If made 10 years ago, *House Of Gucci* may have had a wholly different texture. Bingham unravels Hollywood's somewhat patriarchal approach to biopics in the early years, writing, "Madness, hysteria, sexual dependency, the male gaze, and a patriarchal authorship: that is the classical female biopic." It was either this or an overtly puritanical dimension as seen in Audrey Tatou's performance in the still-riveting *Coco Avant Chanel*.

But more complex portraits have been painted of leading personas - whatever their gender - in recent years. The cases in point are Michael Winterbottom's satire *Greed* (2019) loosely based on Topshop giant Philip Green, Daniel Minahan's *Halston* (2021) following the rise and fall of the American fashion designer in the 1970s, and Scott's *House Of Gucci*. Even Ryan Murphy adopted a more human approach for *The Assassination Of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story* (2018), while retaining his signature maximalist and high-octane approach.

Creative direction equals liberties equals accountability equals trust, for most biopics. The trust required to make any sort of biopic is harder than ever; in the 1920s, if a filmmaker wanted to kickstart and sustain their career, a biopic was the way to do that, whereas now, audiences expect that more established filmmakers - such as Scott and Murphy - be entrusted with that privilege, whatever the creative direction may be.

But there are exceptions to creative hyperbole, such as Bertrand Bonello's *Saint Laurent* (2014) which offered a more sombre perspective on the titular designer, and Raj Rachakonda's *Mallesham* (2019), a loyal tribute to Chintakandi Mallesham who revolutionised India's weaving industry.

While these audiences revel, to some extent, in authenticity, biopics usher in an expectation of dramatic fiction from the get-go - which is probably why filmmakers who often flirt with controversy are immune to inevitable backlash that comes from releasing any biopic. Fashion biopics taking the extra step into some culturally dangerous territory has proven largely successful as audiences may not always want to be educated, but do want to be thoroughly entertained, ultimately making for a rich seam in cinema.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Owning up to criminalisation in politics

The February 2020 order pushes the envelope further on restricting criminal candidates from contesting elections

TRILOCHAN SAstry

With State elections just around the corner, the Supreme Court asked the Union Government again whether it would ban candidates with convicted criminal records. While the Centre refuses to do so, in this article dated July 10, 2020 Trilochan Sastry argues how the ever-increasing criminalisation in the political system has created a crisis in democratic governance. Edited excerpts:

A February 2020 Supreme Court judgment on criminalisation in politics may have far-reaching consequences for Indian democracy. It will first be implemented in the coming Bihar elections in October 2020. The Court has asked the political parties to state "the reasons for such selection, as also as to why other individuals without criminal antecedents could not be selected as candidates." If a political party fails to comply, it would be "... in contempt of this Court's orders/directions." In other words, the political party and its leadership would for the first time have to publicly own up to criminalisation of politics. They had been denying it all these years. Earlier orders state that (a) each candidate shall submit a sworn affidavit giving financial details and criminal cases; (b) each candidate shall inform the political party in writing of criminal cases against him or her; and (c) the party shall put up on its website and on social media as well as publish in newspapers the names and details of such candidates.

Why did the Court pass such an order? The judgment notes that "In 2004, 24% of the Members of Parliament had criminal cases pending against them; in 2009, that went up to 30%; in 2014 to 34%; and in 2019 as many as 43% of MPs had criminal cases pending against them." India is the only democratic country with a free press where we find a problem of this dimension.

An ever-present crisis

We are in the midst of more immediate crises – the COVID-19 outbreak, the economic recession due to the lockdown, the migrant workers crisis, small businesses shutting down in many sectors, massive unemployment, a highly stressed banking

and financial sector, and now the conflict with China. Added to this is an ever-present silent crisis: the steady deterioration in politics over decades, with the decline accelerating in the past 16 years. As politics dominates the bureaucracy, and reins in business, civil society and the media, we need governance that is free of the "criminal" virus. Capability is not sufficient. The intent to do public service is also required. The British were capable, but we still did not want them. Today, it is not about any party, it is about the political

system. The result has been that we get bad governance, and survey after survey show that people around the country are unhappy with the quality of governance. Using money power to buy MLAs and MPs sometimes makes a mockery of election outcomes. Meanwhile, electoral bonds bring secrecy back into political funding.

An ever-present silent crisis: the steady deterioration in politics over decades, with the decline accelerating in the past 16 years

Several laws and court judgments have not helped much, as the data show. One reason is lack of enforcement of laws and judgments. It is also not clear what penalty would be imposed if the recent orders are not followed. Would the law enforcement agencies act vigorously to ensure that the guilty are prosecuted? Would any top political leader responsible for not complying be found guilty? Would an election be set aside? Without such action, will there be change?

Being vigilant

Therefore in the coming Bihar elections we need to be far more vigilant. This includes monitoring the affidavits of candidates, working with the Election Commission to ensure that information is promptly available on their websites, and widely circulating this information to voters using all the social media tools available. It also includes monitoring compliance with the Supreme Court

judgment to see if details of tainted candidates are promptly put up on their websites, and on their social media handles, along with proper reasons for giving them ticket. The Court has said that "winability" cannot be cited as a reason. Voters also need to be vigilant about misuse of money, gifts and other inducements during elections. Till we realise that people bribe us for votes cannot be trusted, change will be very slow. Fortunately, an ever-growing number of voters and organisations are joining in this work of cleansing politics.

Meanwhile, the waters will be muddied with fake news, trolling, and fanciful claims. This may drown out the little that citizens can do. Yet there is hope. Ensuring prosecution with public pressure may help. If one political leader is hauled up for giving ticket to large numbers of tainted candidates, something positive may happen. A root cause diagnosis shows that political party leaders are squarely responsible for this state of affairs as they field such candidates.

The Court order is to be welcomed. But we are still unable to ban people with serious criminal charges from contesting elections. While there are various arguments for and against such a move, the Court has dismissed several petitions calling for a ban due to legal and technical constraints. Meanwhile, the political system is unwilling to change the law or the system. Politics for now has been captured by those who want power for its own sake.

In conclusion, we may not see dramatic changes in the quality of candidates. Campaigns may continue to be more and more personal and even abusive. We may not see a big change in money power, or in buying of MLAs post-elections in the case of a hung Assembly. But all these steps are required, however insignificant they may seem. All the dozen and more Supreme Court judgments on electoral reforms since 2002 are in fact responses to citizen initiatives. Not one initiative has come from the political system. The strategy so far has been to methodically try and break down the solid wall of corruption. When the dam will be breached and the pure waters of a new India flow over the land cannot be predicted.

THE GIST

■ A February 2020 Supreme Court judgment mandates political parties and its leadership to cite reasons for selection of electoral candidates with criminal antecedents against them.

■ Survey after survey show that people around the country are unhappy with the quality of governance. We need governance that is free of the "criminal" virus.

■ Voters also need to be vigilant about misuse of money, gifts and other inducements during elections. Till we realise that people who bribe us for votes cannot be trusted, change will be very slow.

■ A member of nine committees in the Constituent Assembly including the Drafting Committee

THE DAILY QUIZ

Today is the Constitution Day commemorating the 72nd year of the adoption of India's Constitution. Here are a few questions related to the members of India's Constituent Assembly that deliberated and adopted the Constitution.

1 One of the members of the Constituent Assembly representing the tribal people of India, was also a stalwart hockey player who captained and won gold for India in the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam. Name him.

2 The first Dalit woman graduate from India, she went on to become the only Dalit woman in the Constituent Assembly and who vociferously articulated the need for abolishing untouchability leading to Article 17 in the Indian Constitution. Name her.

3 A member of nine committees in the Constituent Assembly including the Drafting Committee

and Advisory Committee, here's what Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said of him - "There were in the drafting committee men bigger, better and more competent than myself such as my friend ____". Fill in the blanks.

4 The only Muslim woman in the Constituent Assembly, she strongly opposed the idea of separate electorates for Muslims, besides being a key voice in the abolition of the Zamindari system. Name her.

5 One of three Anglo-Indian representatives in the Constituent Assembly, he was a curator of the Bombay Natural History Society and the Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay for a long time. Name her.



◀ In this picture taken in May, 1949, the person to Jawaharlal Nehru's right was the then Head of State of his country and also responsible for the country's Constitution that is in one way connected to the Indian Constitution. Name him and the connect. ■ THE HINDU

Please send in your answers to the dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. Gray Wolf (Canis lupus), 2. Chihuahua and Mexico, 3. Kanni, 4. Canine and Cynology, 5. Beagle and (Wire) Fox Terrier, 6. Basenji, 7. Saluki

Early Birds: Siriram Kalingarayar| Mohammad Kiron Karim| Ch So| Pratibha Lohiya

THE HINDU

<https://www.thehindu.com/subscription/>

<https://www.thehindu.com/newsletter-subscription/>

<https://open.spotify.com/show/5yESTCj0iikA81EP3uXkQC>

S U B S C R I B E

