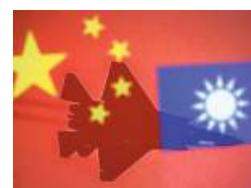




57 norovirus cases reported from a college hostel in Thrissur
page 5



BJP registers landslide victory in Tripura civic elections
page 9



27 Chinese jets enter Taiwan air defence buffer zone
page 11



Shreyas, Ashwin and Saha help India fight back in Kanpur Test
page 13



Miscreants vandalise church in west Delhi
NEW DELHI
A newly opened church in west Delhi's Matiala was allegedly vandalised by miscreants while devotees were holding Sunday mass, police said. One of the accused has been arrested.
CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Prohibitory orders imposed in Mathura
LUCKNOW
The Mathura administration imposed prohibitory orders on Sunday after right-wing groups threatened to install an idol of Lord Krishna inside Shahi Idgah Mosque on December 6, the anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9
18 killed as vehicle hits truck in Bengal's Nadia
KOLKATA
At least 18 persons were killed in Nadia district of West Bengal on Sunday when the vehicle they were travelling in collided with a truck parked on the roadside.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8
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EDUCATIONPLUS BACK PAGE



Costly plan: It requires between ₹3 crore and ₹4 crore to install WiFi facility in one aircraft. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In-flight WiFi hits a dead zone in India

Domestic carriers slow in offering the service

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Three years after the Department of Telecom permitted WiFi services on commercial flights, it is yet to become a reality for domestic air travellers as airlines grapple with the huge installation costs and the impact of COVID-19 on passenger demand.

Domestic carriers have been slow in offering the service because retrofitting aircraft with the required antenna is an expensive affair that takes nearly 12 hours. Airlines find it difficult to pass on the costs to the passengers in an extremely competitive market for the cheapest ticket.

However, international airlines such as Lufthansa, Air France and Emirates have started offering the service, though earlier they were switching it off on entering India skies.

"The equipment costs ₹3 crore to ₹4 crore for one aircraft, which is the entry barrier because it is difficult to recover the cost from passengers. As customers start expecting this service and airlines increasingly treat it as an amenity instead of a value-added service, in-flight connectivity will evolve and mature," says Shivaji Chatterjee, senior

Omicron risk: Centre tightens rules for overseas travellers

14-day travel details, negative RT-PCR test must; flight resumption under review

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Sunday revised guidelines mandating that all international passengers entering India have to submit 14-day travel details and upload a negative RT-PCR test report on the Air Suvidha portal before the journey. The new guidelines will come into effect from December 1.

The RT-PCR test should have been conducted within 72 hours prior to the flight.

Earlier, the Union Government, in a release issued after a meeting chaired by Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, said it would review "the decision on effective date of resumption of scheduled commercial international passengers service as per evolving global scenario while keeping a closer watch on emerging pandemic situation within the country".

The Health Ministry's guidelines say travellers from "countries at-risk", including the U.K., South Africa, Brazil, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel, will need to take a COVID-19 test post-arrival and wait for results at the airport. If tested negative, they have to undergo home quarantine for



Abundant caution: With a new coronavirus variant emerging, a corporator marshal asking people to mask up near the K.R. Market Junction in Bengaluru on Sunday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

seven days followed by a re-test on the eighth day.

"On arrival, the passengers found to be symptomatic during screening shall be immediately isolated and taken to medical facility as per protocol. If tested positive, their contacts shall be identified and managed as per laid down protocol," the guidelines say. Travellers from countries not considered "at risk" will be allowed to leave the airport and must self-monitor their health for 14 days post arrival.

The Ministry has written to the State Governments stating that in the absence of sufficient testing, it is ex-

tremely difficult to determine the infection spread. "States must strengthen the testing infrastructure," he said.

The Central Government had already placed countries, where this variant of concern (Voc) had been found, in the category of "at risk" for additional follow-up of international travellers visiting India, he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

NETHERLANDS REPORTS
13 OMICRON CASES ▶ PAGE 11

Step up testing facilities, Centre urges States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Noting that the overall testing and the proportion of RT-PCR tests have declined in some States, Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Sunday said "ample testing infrastructure need to be operationalised to tackle any surge due to Omicron".

The Ministry has written to the State Governments stating that in the absence of sufficient testing, it is ex-

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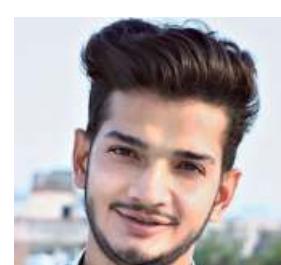
Bengaluru show nixed, comedian Munawar Faruqui hints at quitting

Hindu right-wing groups had threatened to disrupt his show

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Stand-up comedian Munawar Faruqui on Sunday hinted that he may not do any more shows, a day after his scheduled event in Bengaluru was cancelled.

Citing possible law and order problems, the Bengaluru City Police on Saturday night "advised" the organisers to call off the event, 'Dongri to Nowhere', scheduled for Sunday evening.



Munawar Faruqui
Mr. Faruqui left Bengaluru on Sunday morning after posting a statement on his

social media handles where he hinted that he was quitting the space. Several of his shows have been mixed in a similar way in other cities.

Lamenting that he was jailed for a joke he did not tell, he wrote: "I think this is the end. My name is Munawar Faruqui and that's been my time, you guys were a wonderful audience. Goodbye! I am done."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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Minor girl raped by stepfather

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her stepfather at her home in Chirag Delhi, the police said on Sunday.

DCP (South) Benita Mary Jaiker said that a case under POCSO has been registered at the Malviya Nagar police station after they received a complaint on November 27.

According to the complaint, the minor stayed at an institution in Dehradun that catered to children from poor families.

"The victim came to her rented house in Chirag Delhi for a vacation from June to August this year where her mother and stepfather were residing. Further, it was alleged that during her stay, her stepfather repeatedly raped her," the DCP said. A case under Sections of IPC and POCSO Act has been registered and efforts are on to nab the accused, the police said.

Miscreants vandalise church in west Delhi

A few devotees were also manhandled during mass; 1 held

ARNABJIT SURI
NEW DELHI

A newly opened church in west Delhi's Matiala was allegedly vandalised by miscreants while devotees were holding Sunday mass, police said, adding that one of the accused has been arrested.

According to locals, a group of 20 to 30 people were holding Sunday mass at Ankur Narula Church around 11 a.m., when a group of miscreants, allegedly belonging to Bajrang Dal, came and disrupted the proceedings. Further, they went on to vandalise the church's entrance and signboard and allegedly manhandled a few devotees attending the prayer.

A woman who was part of the prayer, requesting anonymity, said that a group of 30 to 40 people entered the church, which had opened only a week ago, and started



A videogram of the incident that took place on Sunday.
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

using foul language at the worshippers. She added that the group arrived at the church again towards the evening and vandalised it. "All of them were armed and we managed to catch hold of one of them who confessed that he belonged to the group," the woman said.

However, according to a senior police officer, the place was originally a go-

down, which was turned into a church recently. The officer said after receiving information about the violence, a police team from Bindapur police station rushed to the spot and took statements from both the parties.

'Godown turned church'
The locals raised objections and claimed that the godown had been turned into a church overnight and started raising slogans and vandalising the place," the officer said.

An FIR has been registered against the miscreants under Sections of rioting and a case has also been lodged against those attending the mass for violating DDMA guidelines related to COVID-19, the officer said. Efforts are on to identify the miscreants, the officer added.

HC to look into functioning of children's homes

Court was hearing a plea alleging that 5 children were kidnapped from care home

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Taking a serious view of the incident of escape of five minor girls from a children's home at Bakhtawarpur in March this year, the Delhi High Court has called for the presence of Joint Director, Child Protection Unit, Department of Women and Child Development, to assess the overall functioning of such institutions in the Capital.

'Building in bad shape'
The locals raised objections and claimed that the godown had been turned into a church overnight and started raising slogans and vandalising the place," the officer said.

Justice Subramoniu



This petition cannot be confined only to the one incident of March 26-27, 2021, where five minor children escaped from the home

JUSTICE SUBRAMONIUM PRASAD

said.

The institution has recently got CCTV cameras installed at the rear side after the escape incident. The police said that at present 63 girls are lodged in KGNMT, Bakhtawarpur, and a total of 16 CCTV cameras are found installed.

14 incidents of escape

The police further said that no security guard, especially female guards, were found deployed at KGNMT. During enquiry, it was revealed that total 14 incidents of escape of girls, including the escape of five girls, had taken place. "In all the previous incidents, separate FIRs were

registered. No active connivance or negligence of the staff of KGNMT could be established till date in the investigation," the police said in its report.

Taking note of the status report, Justice Prasad said, "This petition cannot be confined only to the one incident of March 26-27, 2021, where five minor children escaped from the home. The overall functioning of the institutions has to be assessed to see as to whether adequate measures have been provided at the homes so as to ensure that the children do not escape from such homes and what facilities have been provided to the children in the homes."

The judge ordered the Joint Director, Child Protection Unit, Department of Women and Child Development, to be present in the court on December 9 for assisting the court in giving directions to ensure better functioning of various child care institutions.

Gautam Gambhir gets another death threat

Message originated from Karachi: officers

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Former cricketer and BJP MP Gautam Gambhir on Sunday received a death threat allegedly from 'ISIS Kashmir', just days after he received a similar message from the same group.

The e-mail threatened to kill him and his family members. Police officers said the message originated from Karachi. The message that was received on Sunday added: "Delhi police and IPS Shweta Chauhan cannot do anything." Ms. Chauhan is the Deputy Commissioner of Police of Central district.

The message, which was sent to the official e-mail of Mr. Gambhir, added that the group's spies had been deployed in the forces.

Earlier, after receiving the first threat, Mr. Gambhir's office had written to



Gautam Gambhir •

the DCP to lodge an FIR and also look into the security arrangements. Following this, security was beefed up outside his house. However, later he received a second threat which also contained a video showing Mr. Gambhir's house. Officials said it was an old video which was shot outside his house. The district cybercell team and the Special Cell are investigating the source of the video, the police said.

Man gets 3 months jail for concealing income

He tried to suppress facts to evade court orders to pay his ex-wife maintenance

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has sentenced a man to three months simple imprisonment for acting 'oversmart' with the court by suppressing his true income with an intent to evade compliance of the orders passed by the courts asking him to pay maintenance to his estranged wife.

A Bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh was miffed at the man, who did not come clean despite granting repeated opportunities by the court.

"The conduct of the respondent [man]... shows that he has tried to act oversmart with the court by concealing his true income and expenditure, and the channels into which his incomes are flowing, and the manner in which they have been utilised," the Bench said.



The estranged wife had filed a contempt petition before the High Court after her husband failed to comply with a December last year order of a Family Court here ordering him to pay \$35,000 per month as an interim maintenance till the divorce case was settled. They got married in November 2013 and later filed for divorce in April 2018.

The High Court, in February this year, further ordered the husband to comply with the interim

maintenance order passed by the Family Court.

Deliberate violation

While hearing the contempt petition filed by the woman, the Bench observed that the man was guilty of intentionally and deliberately violating and not complying with the order passed by the Family Court and the High Court.

It added, "If such action is permitted, it will lead to anarchy and the rule of law would become a casualty. The orders of the courts would be taken lightly and breached at the own will of the individual concerned".

The court, which also imposed a penalty of \$2,000 on the man, noted that mere imposition of a fine would not meet the ends of justice, and that a sentence of imprisonment was necessary considering the fact that the ar-

rears owed by him are far in excess of the fine imposed, and he has deliberately, wilfully, intentionally and defiantly disobeyed the directions issued to him.

The Bench, however, said if the man exhibits his apology by complying with the orders passed by the courts, makes payment of entire arrears of maintenance within two weeks, undertakes to continue to pay the same during pendency of divorce case and tenders an unconditional apology to the court, it will consider recalling the punishment of him undergoing simple imprisonment.

"However, in case, he does not comply with this direction in the next two weeks, he is directed to surrender before the Jail Superintendent, Central Jail, Tihar, on December 09, 2021," the court ordered.

Man found dead at tenant's house with throat slit

FIR registered, no arrest made yet

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A man was found dead inside his tenant's house with his throat slit in outer Delhi's Ranholi on Friday, the police said. An FIR has been lodged and no arrest has been made yet.

The deceased has been identified as Pawan of Ranholi village. According to police, the complainant Mamata, Pawan's sister, stated that her brother owns several houses in the area, which he had rented out to a few families. On November 26, Pawan's mobile phone was switched off since the morning. So she went to her parents' house but it was locked. Thereafter she began enquiring about her brother and eventually made a PCR call.

"When she searched for Pawan at his tenant's house, she found that all the tenants had locked their rooms and no one was present there

Mamata [deceased's sister]

found that all the tenants had locked their rooms and no one was present there

PARVINDER SINGH
DCP Outer

she found that all the tenants had locked their rooms and no one was present there. When she checked on the first floor of the building, she found the door locked from outside and a man lying inside the room on the bed," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Parvinder Singh said.

The body was identified as her brother's and his throat was found slit, the DCP said, adding that an FIR has been lodged and efforts are on to find the accused.

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

At the busy ITO intersection on a Sunday morning, seven-year-old Anjali was going from one vehicle to another seeking alms. A little distance away, Durga, 20, who identified herself as Anjali's mother, was selling pens, carrying a baby in her arms.

"We are residents of an area near Jaipur and came to Delhi during the lockdown in search of work. My husband is a daily-wage labourer," Durga said. She, however, refused to talk further and walked away in a hurry with another woman.

There were at least four child beggars at the intersection, which is hardly one km from the Delhi Secretariat.

Despite laws and multiple directions by the Government to end child begging, it is still a menace in the capital.

The Delhi High Court had on August 13 issued notices to the Centre, Delhi Government and Delhi Police on a PIL for eradication of child begging in the city. Since then, the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR) has coordinated the rescue of 69 children from different areas, officials said.

As per the results of a study carried out by the Delhi Government and the Institute for Human Development, which were made public in November, there are a total of 4,871 child beggars in the capital. But activists call the number "gross underestimate" and say the figure has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"In many cases, the family members push the child into begging. These cases are difficult because when such a child is presented before a Child Welfare Committee (CWC), the parents want the child back and they eventually end up in the street again," said Amod K. Kanth, ex-IPS officer and founder of Prayas, an NGO working for children.



Activists say in many cases, families force children into begging and the situation has worsened after the pandemic, but question the Delhi Government efforts to fight the menace

CHILD BEGGING remains a worry

Mr. Kanth said the Government and the judiciary are in a way against institutional care for children.

Children in need of care

"There are 20 million children who are either orphans or homeless or on the streets in India. They should be given a roof over their heads, but the children homes in the country have a capacity to accommodate only 2.5 lakh inmates. The Government is supposed to create infrastructure, but it is not supporting institutional care or non-institutional care," he said.

Under the Juvenile Justice

(Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, a child found working in contravention of labour laws, begging, or living on the streets is called a 'Child in Need of Care and Protection' (CINC).

A CINC, according to the Act, can be presented before a CWC by any official, a social worker or a "public spirited citizen". Even if a child has a family, but falls under the category of CINC, the CWC can send the child to a children's home, if it feels it is needed.

The PIL, on which the High Court had issued the notices, was filed by advocate and activist Ajay Gautam, after the authori-

ties "failed" to act.

In 2015, he had filed a writ petition in the HC seeking an end to child begging and the HC had disposed of the petition, asking him to first approach the DCPCR. "It is open to him to institute a fresh petition before this court in case the Commission (DCPCR) fails to respond," the HC had said in its order dated January 1, 2015.

Responding to it, on September 4, 2015, the DCPCR issued a 23-point direction to different departments to fight child begging.

Six years later, the menace is still prevalent across Delhi and in August, Mr. Gautam approached

the HC stating that the Government had failed to stop the practice.

Since 2015, Mr. Gautam said, the ground reality on child begging has worsened in Delhi and now, it has become an organised crime. "A four-year-old child doesn't beg on his own; there is always someone pushing them into this. The Government had accepted in its documents in 2015 that there were child beggars, but why is it not doing anything in this regard?" he asked.

Rashmi Singh, director, Department of Women and Child Development, Delhi, said in many cases, parents or guardians push children into begging.

"All of these children are not homeless. They stay in settlements in the city and they are forced into begging by parents and guardians in many cases. This makes it difficult for the Government to stop this practice. However, we are trying different measures to bring greater community awareness and vigil to put an end to child begging," Ms. Singh said.

Pandemic

Apart from begging, the pandemic has forced many children to become ragpickers for survival and these children also fall under the category of CINC.

Rabhatti, II, was collecting bottles and plastic from waste bins in a plastic sack on his tricycle in Jor Bagh. He was neither wearing a mask nor gloves. "I live with my brother near a drain. I used to work at a hotel in Bihar, but during the lockdown, it was closed and we came here," he said.

His teeth are stained with paan and he doesn't go to school. "I earn about ₹300 to ₹400 a day and my brother and I send money to my parents in Bihar every month," he added.

I don't want to go back home'

Two brothers, who were rescued from the street, have settled in children's shelter

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Barely weeks into his stay at a children's shelter in the city, nine-year-old Arjun (name changed) has developed a special liking for the place and doesn't want to go back home now.

"I like it over here... We ate pasta in the morning. Sometimes, we get Maggi too," he said.

Arjun and his younger brother, who were ragpickers, were rescued in an operation coordinated by the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights two weeks ago. They were presented before the Child Welfare Committee and have been sent to the children's home.

Since then, the duo has made a lot of friends and stopped going around parks collecting bottles.

"They are teaching us the alphabet... I have not memorised the letters yet though. But

I want to study. In Patna, we had been to an anganwadi but never to a school," Arjun added.

He said their father was no more and mother works as a daily-wage labourer.

"We started picking up bottles one year ago. My mother was not aware of it as we used to walk out of our rented house in Delhi after she left for work and came back before she returned," the nine-year-old said.

Arjun said their elder brother is also a rag picker. "We used to hand over our daily earnings to him after keeping ₹20 to ₹30 to buy chips and samosas," he said.

Arjun and his younger brother cried a lot when officials found them on the street, but now he smiled when asked about it

IN BRIEF

AAP to start 'MCD Badlaav' campaign

NEW DELHI With the civic body elections around the corner, the Aam Aadmi Party will start a 'MCD Badlaav' campaign on December 2, AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai said on Sunday. Mr. Rai said an in-charge will be appointed in each division. On December 5, teams in every division will launch the campaign at the ground level. In view of the elections, he said, a big membership drive will start soon. "In this campaign, we will upload the data through an app."

Timings
DELHI

MONDAY, NOV. 29
RISE 06:55 SET 17:25
RISE 01:15 SET 14:03
TUESDAY, NOV. 30
RISE 06:56 SET 17:25
RISE 02:15 SET 14:36
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 01
RISE 06:57 SET 17:25
RISE 03:18 SET 15:12

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	27	11
Safdarjung	27	11
Palam	26	14

Delhi Palam Today
27°C The weather will be dry. Pollution level will be severe. Morning will be very cool with moderate fog. Day will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
28°C The weather will be comfortable with severe pollution level. A very cool morning with shallow fog and mist turns comfortable day.

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THE HINDU
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Restrict air traffic from countries hit by new variant, CM tells Modi

Kejriwal to attend DDMA meeting today; Capital reports 32 new cases, one death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid concerns over a new variant of COVID-19, Omicron, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to restrict air traffic from countries currently seeing a rise in virus cases.

The CM's letter came on the eve of a crucial Delhi Disaster Management Authority meeting to assess the Government preparedness to handle a possible surge in cases caused by the new variant.

According to sources, the CM will attend the meeting to be chaired by Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal.

"Our country has been fighting a tough battle against coronavirus for the last one-and-a-half years. With great difficulty and due



A health worker administering a COVID-19 vaccine dose to a construction labourer in New Delhi. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

to the selfless service of millions of our Covid warriors, our country has recovered from the virus. We should do everything possible to prevent the new variant of concern, recently recognised by the WHO, from entering India," Mr. Kejriwal said.

may prove harmful," the letter said.

Meanwhile, the Capital on Sunday reported another death due to COVID-19 for the second consecutive day as the positivity rate went up to a notch to 0.06% from 0.05% a day earlier. With 32 new infections, the total case tally stands at 14,40,866.

Mr. Kejriwal had on Friday issued directions to the departments concerned in addition to requesting an expert committee to submit suggestions on what steps to be taken to control the new variant.

In a tweet, the Chief Minister had also sought to assuage people's concerns over Omicron and said that the Delhi Government would take all steps necessary to protect citizens and their families from the new threat.

Residents of NDMC area can now get free water every month

CM directs officials to waive connection charges, maintain cleanliness as per best international standards

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Citizens residing in Lutyens' Delhi too will now get 20,000 litres of free water every month after Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's intervention, the Delhi Government said on Sunday.

Every house in B.K Dutt Colony will get a free water connection and the benefits under the free water scheme following the CM's directions to waive metering charges.

In addition, residents of East Kidwai Nagar and New Moti Bagh multi-storey complexes will receive personal water meters and there will be no need for bulk connections.

Connaught Place, Janpath and rest of New Delhi will now be cleaned as per international standards, Mr. Kejriwal said, adding that the Government will also hear the grievances of all New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) employees and stakeholders pertaining to pay scales.

A meeting of the NDMC was held under the leadership of Mr. Kejriwal on Sunday.

B.K Dutt Colony was established as a refugee colony and the residents initially were dependent on common toilets.

The Government said that new water pipelines were laid in the area about four years ago but a lot of residents still

have not taken connections. The major reason behind this is the connection charges amounting to ₹7,500.

"We can waive the connection charges and extend the benefits of the free water scheme to the residents," he said.

A proposal for bolstering cleanliness in the NDMC area was also presented in the meeting. Officials said despite being one of the cleanest sites of Delhi, the area has scope

Sisodia releases list of 250 Delhi Govt. schools for Punjab Minister's scrutiny

He suggests a debate to decide on the better education model

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Sunday said that he had accepted his Punjab counterpart Pargat Singh's challenge and released a list of 250 Delhi Government schools which Mr. Singh could visit to witness the "revolution" ushered in the field of education in the last

five years.

He also asked the Education Minister to similarly release a list of 250 Government schools in his State so that the education model of Punjab could be studied and a debate could be held to decide which one was better.

"It is a matter of great pride that education is finally becoming an important issue in the politics of the country. When Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that AAP would fix the decaying education system in Punjab, Education

Minister Pargat Singh responded that the Punjab Government had worked a lot for education in that State," the Deputy CM said.

system in their State," the Deputy CM said.

World class infra

He said that in the last five years, the Delhi Government had developed world class infrastructure in Government schools, provided leadership training to the school heads by institutions like IIMs, and sent teachers abroad for training.

The result of which, he said, was that the Government schools had fared better than private schools, with 99.96% pass rate in Class XII exam this year.

Around 500 children, including 51 students from one school, had qualified NEET while 500 children had cleared the JEE Mains and 70 students had qualified JEE Advanced. "We will also visit the schools in Punjab and then debate on the education model of both the States," he added.

Two-day camps held in city for voter enrolment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Delhi, Ranbir Singh, on Sunday said special voter awareness camps were organised on Saturday and Sunday at all polling stations in the city.

Mr. Singh said that the Special Summary Revision-2022 is going on in full swing with the theme "Chalo Voter Bane Hum" under the campaign "Delhi ka Voter Utsav".

ID cards and deletion of names, he said.

There are 13,820 polling stations across the Capital. Mr. Singh said that this campaign also helped meet the objective: 'No Voter To Be Left Behind'.

The camps aimed to provide every possible assistance to people like searching names in the voter list, enrolment for voter ID cards, corrections in voter

Govt's war on pollution only on paper: BJP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday accused the Delhi Government of carrying out its war on pollution only on paper while citizens were being forced to breathe and drink "poisonous" air and water.

Led by former Union Minister and ex-Delhi BJP president Vijay Goel and MLAs Mohan Singh Bisht and Om Prakash Sharma, the party staged a protest at the ITO intersection.

"Mr. Kejriwal announced that he would clean the Yamuna by 2025. How many more years will he take to curb the pollution in Delhi? Till then the people will continue to drink dirty water," Mr. Goel said.

Mr. Kejriwal is constantly doing drama for everything, he said. "Firstly, in the name of fight against pollution, they put up placards in the hands of volunteers by paying them and posted them at different chowks in Delhi. Is this the way to tackle the pollution?" he asked.

Mr. Goel said people will not follow a Chief Minister who is not serious about pollution. Mr. Kejriwal, he said, who used to blame stubble burning in Punjab for pollution in the city needs to answer why the situation remains the same despite no incidents of stubble burning.

As much as 80% of the pollution in Delhi, he said, is contributed by factors such as dust, industrial pollution and one crore private vehicles.

City's air quality in 'severe' level



The South Block in Central Vista covered in heavy smog on Sunday afternoon. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Board showed.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.

Parked proposals

The South civic body's plan to end haphazard parking in commercial and residential areas is yet to gain traction

parking facilities, stack and puzzle parking, removal of dumped vehicles, prohibiting parking in congested areas, clearing encroachments and charging a high fee for on-street parking – to discourage long-duration parking. "In most of the 16 locations, the demand for parking surpasses the supply that is available. We've observed that even owners with stilt parking facility park their vehicles on streets," said Mr. Jha.

However, the implementation of the policy, aimed at reducing congestion caused by haphazard parking, is yet to gain pace. Take the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), for instance. According to the corporation, PMAPs for 16 locations under its jurisdiction have been developed and put in the public domain. Prem Shankar Jha, Deputy Commissioner of SDMC's Remunerative Project Cell, said that encroachments, vehicles parked in front of homes, lack of space for cyclists and pedestrians and dumped vehicles were among the long-standing list of problems that were identified across these 16 locations.

Surveys, solutions Solutions mooted include setting up multilevel car

was also highlighted.

The SDMC plans to convert 713.13 sq.m. of a park in Kailash Colony into a multilevel parking and a portion of the Amir Khushro Park in Nizamuddin Basti into an off-street parking for tourists. Such conversions are prohibited under the proposed Master Plan of Delhi-2021 (MPD-2021). However, Mr. Jha said that the portions marked in Kailash Colony and Nizamuddin Basti were not green areas under master plan.

Mr. Jha said the plans will help ensure ample walking space for pedestrians, cycle stations and decongestion in areas that have long-standing issues of haphazard parking; 2% of the parking space will be made available for disabled individuals, including facilities such as ramps.

Not surprisingly, only the PMAPs for Lajpat Nagar Market and Lajpat Nagar III have been implemented so far.

from frequent congestion, no parking of additional vehicles will be allowed there. Alternative spots will be given instead. Available parking facilities will have 2-3 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations," said Mr. Jha, adding the next step is for the area parking plans to be finalised for implementation.

Consultations with RWAs While physical consultations of PMAPs for three locations - Malviya Nagar, Lajpat Nagar Market, Lajpat Nagar III - were carried out with RWAs, the consultations for the remaining areas were conducted online, said Mr. Jha.

However, Rajiv Kakria, member of Greater Kailash I RWA, said that there was no communication regarding the online consultations and that civic bodies consult RWAs only when they want to implement a plan and not while designing it.

Atul Goyal, president of United Residents' Joint Action, said that lack of transparency has led to trust deficit among RWAs. However, he agreed that on-street parking charges may discourage long-duration parking: "It should be implemented because people will be responsible for where they park and for how long."

Not surprisingly, only the PMAPs for Lajpat Nagar Market and Lajpat Nagar III have been implemented so far. "Apart from the owners who park their vehicles in their colonies which suffer

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Govt. can't function in Uddhav's continued absence, says Patil

'Administration in a shambles; no Speaker chosen in 10 months'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE
The Maharashtra Government cannot keep functioning in the face of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's continuing absence, said BJP State president Chandrakant Patil while expressing dissatisfaction over no appointment of Speaker in the Assembly in 10 months.

Mr. Thackeray, who has been recuperating following a cervical spine surgery, has been conducting business of the State virtually. The Chief Minister's indisposition has sparked speculation of a possible change in the State's leadership.

'No way to function'
While refusing to directly comment on this, Mr. Patil said this was not the way in



Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil. • FILE PHOTO

which the State Government ought to function.

"While I pray for Mr. Thackeray's speedy recovery, a State cannot be run in this fashion... He has not handed over his post to anyone else and the CM's work has been stalled for the last 19 days. The Assembly has not had a Speaker for the last 10 months. That is not how the Government works," he said.

said the BJP State chief.

Stating that if a Chief Minister was unwell for even three days, the work ought to be handed over to a "caretaker", Mr. Patil questioned why Mr. Thackeray was conducting the Cabinet virtually.

"Why has the upcoming winter session of the State Legislature been curtailed to just five days? As it is, we have not had too many sessions owing to the pandemic. Why is the session not being held in Nagpur [traditional place of the winter session] but in Mumbai? Who will sign important papers?" he asked.

Chastising the MVA government for its alleged failures in the last two years, Mr. Patil said the State administration had "completely collapsed".

'MVA Govt. turned crisis into opportunity'

CM Uddhav Thackeray completes two years in office; Sanjay Raut mocks Opposition's 'disorientation'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

Expressing satisfaction over the performance of the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday said it had successfully turned the "COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity".

In a statement to mark the completion of his two years in office, Mr. Thackeray, who is recuperating from a spine surgery, thanked the people for supporting his Government in all its endeavours and said it was a true "people's Government".

Mr. Thackeray said most part of his Government's two-year tenure was spent on COVID-19 management.

"We did not panic either during man-made or natural calamities and our focus remained on ensuring the wel-



Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray thanked the people for supporting his Government in all its endeavours • FILE PHOTO

fare of the common public...

There was no negativity in the Government or the administration while tackling the pandemic," Mr. Thackeray said, adding that there was a vast difference between the medical facilities and the health infrastructure that existed before the pandemic and today.

He further said that his three-party Government (of the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party and the Congress) had worked hard to increase industrial investment, generate more employment and enhance the State's agriculture infrastructure while focusing on ensuring better water supply

and improving sanitation facilities.

Sena MP and the party's chief spokesperson Sanjay Raut mocked the BJP's "general disorientation" during the two years that Mr. Thackeray-led Government had been in power in the State.

'Failed attempts'

"It has now become a joke that the Opposition, which has not been able to overthrow the Government in the last two years, keeps giving new dates for toppling the MVA. The Thackeray Government has stood firm despite all efforts of the Opposition to discredit and malign it," said Mr. Raut in his weekly column 'Rokhthok' in the Sena's mouthpiece *Saamna*.

"Allegations of corruption and malpractice have been levelled against the MVA leaders, while cases like

Sushant Singh Rajput's death have been politicised. This has followed the defamation of the Thackeray and Pawar families, intimidation of Sena MLAs and NCP leaders like former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh's imprisonment... The BJP has not been able to bring down the Thackeray Government despite misusing Central agencies and inciting communal riots in Amravati and elsewhere," Mr. Raut said, adding that what credit Devendra Fadnavis had formerly earned as Chief Minister was lost by him as the Leader of the Opposition.

Taunting the BJP, the Sena MP noted that the early morning swearing-in of Mr. Fadnavis as the State's Chief Minister in November 2019 (before the formation of the MVA Government) also completed two years.

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This winter, fairs and festivals return to Kolkata

Events to last until book fair in Feb. 2021

BISHWANATH GHOSH

KOLKATA

The return of the numerous winter festivals and fairs after a long pandemic-forced gap is lending an air of normalcy to what is popularly known as the City of Joy and that thrives largely on public celebrations.

This weekend marks the beginning of a series of events and exhibitions that will extend well into 2022 and last until the book fair in February and will see gatherings in different parts of Kolkata. Unless the new Omicron strain plays the spoilsport, this winter in Kolkata, always sweetened by the arrival of fresh date-palm jaggery, won't be very different from those of the pre-COVID times.

"It's a relief to see the festivals and fairs crawling back to life. After two years of staying indoors, it's surreal to actually be at a venue and enjoy a performance live. The thought itself is giving me goosebumps. What was as regular as drinking water has suddenly become a vanity. The pandemic did turn things around," said advertising professional Sreelekha Maitra, summing up the general mood in the city.

Handicrafts fair begins

The events started on Saturday with the West Bengal Government-run Hasta Shilpa Mela, or handicrafts fair, at Eco Park in New Town; it will end on December 20. Then there's the Backyard Pop-Up, a flea market organised by 'youthpreneurs' in south Kolkata from December 10 to 12. These young entrepreneurs had shifted their businesses online due to the pandemic. This three-day event will coincide with Tillottama, a winter carnival to be held at the popular Maddox Square Park.

"It's that old feeling of happiness," said Howrah-based orthodontist Trisha Ghosh, who also intends to visit The Harvest of Winter, an art and craft exhibition to be held at the Birla Academy of Art & Culture from December 2 to 5.

City-based Bharatanatyam dancer Sohini Roychowdhury is looking forward to perform with her troupe at the Art Haat, to be

organised by renowned artist Shuvaprasanna's Art-SAcre Foundation from December 17-20.

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GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA Superintending Engineer Hydrology O/o Engineer-in-Chief (General) Irrigation & CAD Department 2nd Floor, Lalasourda Building Erramanzil, Hyderabad-500082

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COVID-19: 'no room for complacency in Kerala'

Low level of testing a cause for concern

C. MAYA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The anxiety expressed by the Centre that the lack of sustained COVID-19 testing levels across States would "hide the true level of infection in a geography" seems to be justified now that a new SARS-CoV-2 variant, B.1.1.529 or Omicron, has been reported from many nations.

With the waning of the second wave of COVID-19, a sense of complacency had set in everywhere. COVID-19 testing rates might be back in relevance now that the vigil is being heightened to look out for the new variant.

From an average 1.3-1.5 lakh tests daily during the thick of the pandemic, Kerala's testing had dwindled to



Virus threat: A file photo of a person giving nasal swab sample for COVID-19 test in Palakkad. ■ K.K. MUSTAFAH

about 50,000 tests.

"There is no room for complacency as the future course of the pandemic is still uncertain," a senior public health expert said.

The Centre has directed Kerala and many other States to maintain a high level of

'Impose ban on travellers from Omicron-hit countries'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

The Karnataka Government has requested the Centre to impose a travel ban on passengers coming from South Africa, Hong Kong, and Botswana in view of the new variant of COVID-19, Omicron, spreading there.

"We do not know much about the strain, but it is spreading quickly. We have

testing so that the actual level of infection and any trends are not missed.

Senior Health officials maintained that while the State had not given any formal direction, testing levels had gone down because the

requested the Centre to prohibit (movement) from these three countries," Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai said on Sunday.

Pointing out that European countries had already imposed restrictions after WHO said it was a variant of concern, the Chief Minister said that India also should take adequate precautions.

resources available with districts had dwindled. Hence the RT-PCR labs in public sector could handle only a limited number of samples a day. A good proportion of the tests done are contributed by the private sector.

Telangana Government steps up surveillance

HYDERABAD

The new variant of COVID-19, Omicron, has forced the Telangana officials to increase surveillance measures to detect the positive cases and the variant. Tests will be conducted on people who come to the State from the countries where Omicron has been detected, said the State's Director of Public Health Dr. G. Srivatsa Rao.

RT-PCR certificate must to enter Karnataka

BELAGAVI

Travellers coming in from Maharashtra will need to produce either a fresh RT-PCR test negative certificate or a certificate of their second dose of vaccine, Karnataka Deputy Commissioner R. Venkatesh Kumar said here on Sunday. "With the rise in cases of Omicron variant of COVID-19 virus, we are taking all precautions," he said.

57 norovirus cases confirmed in Thrissur

All are staying in St. Mary's hostel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THRISSUR

Norovirus infection has been confirmed in 54 students and three workers in the hostel of St. Mary's College, Thrissur.

Health officials suspect that the infection might have spread through food or drinking water distributed in the hostel.

At present, there are 240 students and 15 workers in the hostel. A team of health officials led by the district medical officer (DMO) N.K. Kuttappan examined the hostel and surroundings, the kitchen and drinking water supply.

Students have been complaining about symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting,

nausea and fever from November 8, according to the college authorities. But nobody suspected it as norovirus infection.

The DMO has asked the medical team to monitor hostels, old age homes and migrant labour camps in the district. This is the first time norovirus infection has been reported from Thrissur.

According to available information, norovirus is a highly contagious virus and spreads through contaminated food, water and surfaces. Close contact with the infected person too can spread the virus.

Infection usually occurs in closed and crowded environments.

KCR to take the battle over paddy to Delhi

Asks TRS MPs to protest in Parliament over Centre's refusal on procurement



Strong pitch: Telangana CM K. Chandrasekhar Rao has demanded that the Centre procure paddy from the State..

of Ministers from the State met Union Food and PDS Minister Piyush Goyal and officials led by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar discussed the matter with officials in the Ministry.

The meeting also deplored the irrational attitude

of the Centre in refusing to lift paddy in rabi and yet keeping the issue live by acknowledging Mr. Rao's proposal for release of an annual calendar on foodgrains procurement at the national level, but not fixing the target of procurement in the State.

Therefore, it was decided to launch a struggle against the Centre-sponsored chaos which was a catastrophe for farming community of Telangana.

The State was a role model for the country in terms of steep increase in agricultural yields within a short span of time, the release said.

Mr. Rao asked the MPs to raise the voice of the farming community by confronting the Centre on the crisis using Parliament as a platform. The BJP should shed its double standards on procurement policy, he added.

He also asked the MPs to raise the demand for a uniform national foodgrains procurement policy in Parliament to provide a level playing field for all States.

Special camps to help augment income of BPL families in Haryana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

Special camps will be held across Haryana over the next one month till December 25, aiming to pass on the benefits of various government welfare schemes and provide self-employment opportunities to around 1.5 lakh Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, identified through the State government's "Parivar Pehchan Patra" scheme. This was announced by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal at a press conference in Chandigarh on Sunday.

The camps will be held at 180 blocks across districts starting from November 29 under Mukhyamantri Antyodaya Utthan Yojana.

The Chief Minister said the details provided under "Parivar Pehchan Patra" scheme had revealed that around 3.25 lakh families in the State had income of less than ₹1 lakh per annum, and the government had decided to help augment the income of 1.5 lakh of these families in the first phase of the programme.

He said that around 38,000 families had income even less than ₹50,000 per month. "The series of meet-



CM Manohar Lal

ings in this regard have led to the conclusion that these people are not able to take advantage of various Central and State government schemes for lack of knowledge or face other difficulties. There are schemes for

self-employment, but they face difficulty in availing these too. So a joint effort involving the government agencies and the banks will be made to help these people double their income and lead a better life," said Mr. Lal.

He said that according to the schedule, eligible families short-listed for the programme would be invited to Antyodaya Gram Utthan Melas, which would be held for two or three days initially.

"Based on the feedback, schedule would be released for the remaining weeks," said Mr. Lal.

I will do PhD on Mahabharata: Channi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KHATI (PHAGWARA)

Addressing after laying the foundation stone of a Bhagwan Parshuram Taposthal here, he also compared SAD patriarch Parkash Singh and a doctorate on the Mahabharata as he announced to set up a research centre on the Hindu texts Ramayana, Mahabharata and Bhagavad Gita.

Yellow alert in 10 districts in Kerala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Rainfall in Kerala is likely to be fairly widespread till Monday under the influence of a cyclonic circulation persisting over the Kanyakumari region and the coast of Sri Lanka, the IMD has indicated.

All districts except Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam and Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha are on yellow alert on Monday for isolated heavy rainfall.

The cyclonic circulation is expected to emerge into the Arabian Sea region by Monday. It is likely to move in a north-northwestward region subsequently.

According to a Sunday evening update, rainfall is likely to taper off from Tuesday.

Meanwhile, a low pressure area is likely to form over the south Andaman Sea by Tuesday. It would become more marked and move north-northwestwards over the subsequent 48 hours.

An extended range forecast by the IMD has indicated the possibility of it concentrating into a depression.

Floods cause ₹1,190 crore loss to Nellore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NELLORE

A spell of rains on Sunday brought misery to Nellore which is yet to recover from the flood fury, even as an Central team extensively toured the district to assess the damages the rains caused last week.

Briefing the Central team members about the trail of destruction District Collector K.V.N.Chakradhar Babu put the loss at ₹1,190.15 crore.

+ A.P. HC to resume hearing of three capital cases today

It gains momentum due to revocation of CRDA Repeal Acts

V. RAGHAVENDRA

VIJAYAWADA

The hearing of the three capitals cases by the Andhra Pradesh High Court on Monday is set to take a curious turn due to the unanticipated withdrawal of the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions and CRDA Repeal Acts by the Government last week and its decision to come up with a new legislation in favour of separate capital cities for legislative, executive and judicial functions.

A full Bench headed by Chief Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra will examine along with its background the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Repeal Act, 2021 which was passed in the Legislative Assembly on November 22 when the High

Court was hearing a batch of writ petitions that challenged the Decentralisation and the CRDA Repeal Acts of 2020. It was ratified by the Council on November 23.

The Acts have been in the eye of a storm since they were approved in the Assembly in July 2020 but referred by the Council to a select committee amidst dramatic scenes viewed from the gallery by the Opposition leader N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Farmers who gave their lands for the development of Amaravati, approached the High Court seeking justice.

However, the hearing of the cases made no significant progress mainly due to the change of two Chief Justices (J.K. Maheswari and Arup Kumar Goswami) and the sheer volume of material

that needed scrutiny.

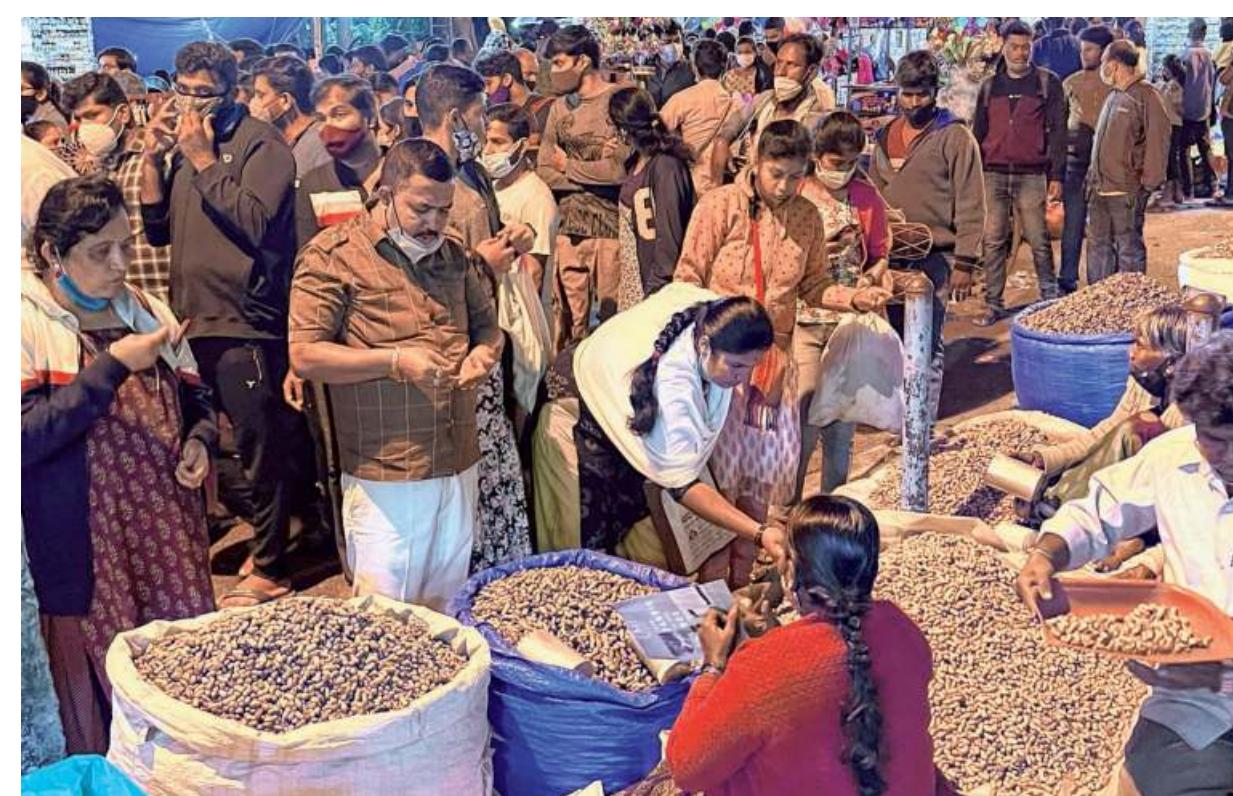
Regarding the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Repeal Act, 2021, the Government made it clear that it was actually intended to bring a new comprehensive Bill that will dispel the wrong notions of the aggrieved land-givers and clarify its position on alleged acts of Constitutional impropriety being argued upon in the High Court.

In the 'statement of objects and reasons' for the said Repeal Act, Finance and Legislative Affairs Minister Bugganna Rajendran Reddy said the Decentralisation and CRDA Repeal Acts were in line with the long-cherished promise of the Sribagh Pact and the development of backward areas, including Uttarakhand.

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Tasty treats



Visitors at Kadelekai Parashe (groundnut fair) at Basavangudi in Bengaluru on Sunday. Farmers from the neighbouring States will assemble at the annual event to sell their produce. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

Yelagiri Hills in T.N. off limits for unvaccinated visitors

Help desk to check jab certificates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

TIRUPATTUR

The scenic Yelagiri Hills are now out of bounds for those who haven't been vaccinated against COVID-19. The Tirupattur administration has made it mandatory for visitors to the hill station to have taken both doses of the vaccine.

A special help desk comprising a team of police personnel and district health officials has been set up on the foothills of the Yelagiri Hills, 12 km away from the hillock, to check the vaccination certificates provided by the visitors. The help desk will be open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. "The aim is to encourage everyone to take the vaccine, especially the second dose.

Door-to-door visits for vaccination are also being carried out to cover all tribal villages on the hillock," an official said.

The hill station is getting a facelift to draw more tourists from neighbouring areas like Krishnagiri, Vellore, Tiruvannamalai and Hosur. Boathouses are being readied for long-distance travellers, especially those from Chennai and Bengaluru. The boat complex has about 15 fibre boats with a capacity of six persons each.

Among the measures being taken are the setting up of more recreational facilities like an open-air stadium, separate parks for fruits, flowers and herbal plants and a botanical garden.

Drop proposal to shift human space flight programme out of State: DKS

The plan is to move it from Bengaluru to Gujarat



D.K. Shivakumar

of locals," Mr. Shivakumar said in a letter to Mr. Bommai, which was released to the media on Sunday.

He pointed out: "Already there is outrage over the step-motherly treatment being meted out to Karnataka by the Centre in several spheres. The move will cause adverse effects on con-

solidation of the federal system in the country."

The KPCC president has also written to the Prime Minister, urging him to drop the proposal.

Launched in 2007 by ISRO, the Indian Human Space Flight programme is to develop technology needed to launch crewed orbital spacecraft into low earth orbit. Mr. Shivakumar said: "If it is completed, India will become the fourth nation in the world to launch independent space flight. People of Karnataka are very proud of this programme."

"Ensure that the proposal to shift the programme from Karnataka is dropped by the Centre," said the letter.

A.P. couple may retain place on adoption list

State adoption agency writes to CARA

K.S. SUDHI

KOCHI

The couple from Andhra Pradesh who had returned to the baby under their foster care to its biological mother in Kerala may retain their seniority in the adoption process.

The State Adoption Resource Agency is understood to have written to the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) to maintain the seniority of the couple in the adoption process. If a baby, which is given in foster care or adoption, has to be returned for no fault of the foster-care or adoptive parents, State agencies usually request the Central authorities to retain the seniority of the couple in the adoption process.

sources privy to the process said.

The parents can opt for the States from which they wish to adopt the baby. Once babies are available for legal adoption from those States, the allotment process, which is a system-generated one, will be set in motion. There is absolutely no human intervention in the process of allotting a baby, sources said.

The baby of Anupama S. Chandran, who was given in foster care to the Andhra Pradesh couple, was reunited with its biological parents on November 23 after Ms. Chandran moved a court complaining that her consent for the adoption was obtained illegally.



Scale up supplies

Vaccines must be made widely available across the world if the pandemic is to end

A new Greek tragedy has risen with the World Health Organization (WHO) designating Omicron, a SARS-CoV-2 variant, as a 'variant of concern' (VOC). While it took WHO several weeks to designate older VOCs such as Alpha, Beta and Delta as a VOC when they emerged, in the case of Omicron, which was first confirmed in Botswana, it moved without even waiting for reports on the variant's increased likelihood to cause disease and whether it is denting the normal public health response. Omicron has now been confirmed in South Africa, Botswana, the U.K., Germany, Italy and travellers into the Netherlands and Israel. It reportedly has over 50 mutations, 32 of which are on the spike protein, which binds to human cells and is the preferred target for vaccines. Several of the mutations confer the virus resistance to monoclonal antibodies (mAbs) such as etesevimab, bamlanivimab, casirivimab and their combinations. Antibodies are the first line of defence against viral infection and mAbs are used in treatment. However, it is important to emphasise that every single mutation does not independently increase virulence and combinations of them might sometimes temper, and sometimes aggravate, virus properties.

The virus has been detected in comparable numbers only in South Africa's Gauteng province, but the variant comprises over 90% of the fraction of genomes from those who tested positive there within just 10 days. Some nations have already imposed travel bans on flights from South Africa. Given that Omicron is a variant of the virus that can be detected by the PCR test, these countries, rather than imposing a ban, should have taken the more considered step of screening passengers and followed the usual protocols of isolation and treatment. India has done well so far to adhere to this system and observing caution. Detecting a variant in a country does not imply it originated there. Travel bans punish South Africa for its transparency and forthrightness in alerting the world to this variant. South Africa's number of daily infections – 2,828 on Friday – pales in comparison to daily numbers in the United States, Germany and Britain. However, a little over 10% in Africa have received one dose of a vaccine, compared with 64% in North America and 62% in Europe. The panic over the variant shifts blame away from the world's colossal failure in not making more vaccines available in Africa even as many countries roll out third doses. From day one, the science was clear cut that the pandemic cannot end unless the whole world is protected. India must scale up supplies to COVAX, the international consortium seeking to vaccinate countries with limited access, as well as coax countries with surplus stocks to do so.

Questionable criterion

The SC is right in asking for basis on which Centre fixed income limit for EWS quota

The questions raised by the Supreme Court of India about the criteria for identifying the 'Economically Weaker Sections' (EWS) for the purpose of granting reservation are quite apposite. Faced with sharp questions that it could not answer satisfactorily, the Union government has obtained time to reconsider the criteria, especially the income norm that only those from a family with annual income less than ₹8 lakh can avail of the 10% reservation earmarked for the EWS category. It is now a settled principle that quantifiable data or proof of a detailed study are required to justify any category of reservation, as well as the norms that determine which section gets it and which does not. In this backdrop, it is logical that the Court would want to know whether there was any study before the Centre prescribed the norms for identifying EWS beneficiaries based on indicators of economic disadvantage. The enquiry by the three-judge Bench is necessarily circumscribed by the fact that the validity of the 103rd Constitution Amendment, through which the EWS quota was introduced in 2019, is before a Constitution Bench. In the ongoing proceedings, the Bench is considering the validity of the 27% quota for Other Backward Classes (OBC) and 10% for Economically Weaker Sections introduced for admission to the All-India Quota (AIQ) of seats in medical admissions throughout the country. It has clarified that it is not examining any policy issue, but wants to determine if constitutional requirements have been complied with.

The income criterion is undoubtedly an anomalous aspect of the EWS quota. An annual income of ₹8 lakh is the limit beyond which an OBC family would fall under the 'creamy layer' and will be denied reservation. The same income figure is being used as the ceiling for identifying EWS. The moot question is whether those who do not face the impediments that come with social and educational backwardness can be equated with those who do. However, the current proceeding will only decide the validity of OBC and EWS reservation in admissions under the AIQ. It must be noted that the introduction of OBC quota in AIQ only brings the admission norms in line with prevailing policy. OBC reservation is applicable to admissions done separately by the Union and State governments in their respective medical institutions, but it was not implemented all these years for all-India quota seats. This pool is formed by the surrender of 15% of undergraduate seats and 50% of PG seats by the States. The absence of OBC quota in this category was an anomaly that has now been rectified. The larger issue that remains is whether reservation can be treated as a poverty alleviation measure and those not well-off but belonging to socially advanced communities can be given a share of the reservation pie. The Constitution Bench should resolve this question early.

What the Omicron variant means for India

It could pose a threat to progress made in the COVID-19 fight, but additional information is needed



BRIAN WAHL &
GAUTAM I. MENON

The continued decline in COVID-19 cases following the intense second wave in India has led to hope that a return to normalcy might be near. Across the country, emboldened by the fact that the festival season did not lead to a steep rise in cases, restrictions have eased and public behaviour is largely returning to normal.

Situation now

The low number of cases currently in India, even as cases are rising across much of Europe, appears largely attributable to two factors. First, seroprevalence studies indicate that a large proportion of the population has already been exposed to the virus providing some level of protection to subsequent infections. Second, the immunisation campaign has gained momentum. Approximately 44% of Indian adults have been fully vaccinated and 82% have received at least one dose. What is more, scientists believe that prior infection followed by one or two doses of vaccination may have a larger protective effect than two doses of the vaccination alone.

While vaccine-derived protection against symptomatic infection is expected to decay with time, current research suggests that breakthrough infections in fully vaccinated individuals are reduced in intensity and duration, compared to cases in individuals

who have not been vaccinated. This holds for the Delta variant as well. Other variants have raised concerns but none of them has appeared to be significantly more worrying than the Delta variant, at least until now.

What WHO says

A new variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus was recently identified in Botswana. Called the Omicron variant, early evidence suggests that it may be responsible for the steep rise of cases in the Gauteng province of South Africa. In this region, 90% of samples from the past few weeks have been of the Omicron variant. This variant has a large number of mutations. Some of them are cause for serious concern because they may allow the new variant to evade immunity obtained from a past infection or via a vaccine. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recently labelled this variant as a 'variant of concern'.

While the emergence of the new variant is concerning and requires extreme vigilance, there are several questions that remain unanswered at the moment. Is the variant more transmissible? Can it evade the immune system? And is the variant associated with more severe disease outcomes?

The possibility of a new, more transmissible variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has, of course, been the principal worry of epidemiologists. Some other recent variants, with a more limited repertoire of mutations, have raised concerns briefly, but have not risen to the level of being named a variant of concern so far. What is concerning here is that cases of the new variant have risen so sharply as to suggest that it may far outstrip the Delta variant in its ability to infect



people. There are no reliable estimates of just how much more transmissible the Omicron variant is compared to previous strains of the virus. But even crude calculations suggest it could be much larger than for those strains.

When new variants can evade immunity obtained through immunisation and prior infections, there is a greater chance for breakthrough cases and further transmission. WHO has recommended studies to understand the degree to which the immune system is evaded by the Omicron variant. This is a key question for India given the high proportion of individuals with some level of immunity, mostly from infection. If these mutations do lead to greater immune escape, vaccines and treatments like monoclonal antibodies might need to be reformulated.

Luckily, RT-PCR tests should still detect the Omicron variant.

Addressing the variant

Right now, we know very little about whether the Omicron variant might lead to more severe forms of COVID-19, both in vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. This is clearly a priority for research. Evidence related to increased severity associated with other variants, such as the Delta variant, remains largely inconclusive.

Where did the Omicron variant come from? Viruses mutate all the

time and SARS-CoV-2 is no exception. What is unusual is the very large number of mutations that the Omicron variant has accumulated. This is likely a consequence of a chronic infection in an immunocompromised patient, such as one infected with HIV. A strong immune response can ultimately eliminate the virus. However, in a weakened immune system the virus will continue to multiply and mutate, changing its form to evade immune response. Given this, prioritising the elderly and immunocompromised for a future additional dose would make sense.

While a number of nations have already closed their doors to travellers from South Africa, epidemiologists worldwide recognise that these measures can only offer temporary relief. Given that a case was found in Hong Kong in a traveller from South Africa a full four days into a mandatory quarantine, and that this patient may have infected another individual who turned positive some days later, it seems very likely that cases may have already crossed borders without being detected. Israel has also reported cases, with one of them, a 32-year-old woman, already triple vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine before testing positive. The symptoms in this case were mild.

Promote vaccination

As long as the virus circulates, the possibility remains that new variants could emerge. The best option is to reduce case numbers. For this, vaccination is an especially powerful tool. Even a single dose of vaccine can reduce dramatically the risk of hospitalisation or a worse outcome; two doses do even better. However, the current inequity in vaccine distribution means that this means of control is out of reach of most in lower and middle-income countries. While many rich countries are now arranging for booster doses to safeguard their populations, even younger and less vulnerable individuals, this policy comes at the cost of the rest of the world, where vaccine coverage remains abysmally low. More than 60 countries have vaccinated less than 25% of their population, including South Africa. It is these regions that hold the most potential for a new, more transmissible variant. Equity in the distribution of vaccines is an urgent global public health need, quite apart from being ethically and morally the right thing to do.

The Director of the Wellcome Trust, Sir Jeremy Farrar, has in a tweet said, "South Africa needs to be praised, offered whatever support is needed and acknowledged for the quality of speed of public health and genomic science in South Africa, sharing the data immediately, supporting the region and the world..." We concur and urge that India and other countries should learn from the South African experience, making its data available in real time for the world to study, and exhibiting the highest levels of transparency. At present, we do not know enough about the variant to truly understand the potential risk that it might pose, but – as with all such things – preparing adequately for an uncertain future is key.

Brian Wahl is an Assistant Scientist at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, U.S.; Gautam I. Menon is a Professor at Ashoka University, Sonipat and at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai. The views expressed are personal

COP26 pledges need a new climate of cooperation

Developing economies such as India are burdened with other issues and require the help of the developed North



SYED MUNIR KHASRU

As world leaders converged in Glasgow for the COP26 (October 31-November 12, 2021), there were some notable absences. The Presidents of China and Russia, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin, leaders of the world's second and fourth largest carbon emitters, failed to make it to Glasgow. Hence, understandably, all eyes fell upon India, the world's third largest carbon emitter, and which included what kind of commitment Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be making.

There was cautious optimism when India finally announced its net zero target, even though India's pledged deadline is 2070 – two decades after the desired deadline of the year 2050. After the net zero target, the United States and Europe led the next biggest climate goal, the Global Methane Pledge, to bring down global methane levels significantly by 2030; this was signed by as many as 104 countries. Despite being the third-largest methane emitter, India was not signatory. India also was not part of the pledge to deforestation despite hosting the

world's largest contiguous mangrove forest: the Sundarbans.

Pursuing green energy

India has been a promoter of green energy to reduce carbon emission. Although the country is yet to significantly transit to renewable energy, accounting only 22.5% of nationwide electricity production, India has been leading the global movement towards solar power. The country co-founded the International Solar Alliance (ISA) along with France – an alliance with more than 120 countries to promote solar energy. To strengthen India's stand for renewable energy like solar energy, India has signed to the Glasgow Breakthrough Agenda in this year's COP26 along with over 35 other nations to promote clean energy and make it more affordable.

Compared to China's 28.4%, the U.S.'s 19.8% and some North European country's 100% transition to renewable energy for power, there is much room for improvement in India. However, there are two key struggles that India has to deal with when transitioning to green energy: the consumption of the world's second largest population base and the lack of adequate available renewable energy options. Countries such as Iceland and Norway have the privilege to depend almost entirely on hydroelectricity adequate enough for a

small population such as theirs. Countries with a similar population scale to India such as China and the U.S. have been relying significantly on nuclear power to cut down on carbon emissions which India cannot facilitate due to not being a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. India did commit to transitioning to green energy for meeting at least half of nationwide power consumptions. However, the country requires significant measures to do so, which includes bringing down the cost of renewable energy to make it more affordable and attractive to the general public and private businesses.

The Indian government has been promoting green energy to abide by its COP21 climate commitments. The Government plans to make wide use of hydrogen fuel as a better substitute of fossil fuels and is promoting renewable energy such as solar powered energy production by reducing tariffs and even providing for subsidising which are falling. The Indian renewable energy industry is up

against an immense financial challenge with a recent report estimating the requirement of ₹2.61 trillion to install a balance capacity to achieve its target of 175 gigawatts of renewable power by the year 2022.

Difficult choices for the South

India has faced numerous economic adversities in recent years. The country is still reeling from the impact of demonetisation in 2016 that left GDP growth rate falling ever since. Foreign investment in India has also been declining since 2018.

The COVID-19 pandemic that hit in early 2020 further pushed down GDP growth, severely impacting several industries. Scarce resources are being used for economic survival. The Government is desperately trying to aid its economy by subsidising various industries during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as vaccinating its population to prevent another wave as worse as the COVID-19 Delta variant wave that had hit India earlier. The country is going through a resource constraint, having to choose between priorities.

Meeting climate goals with a population of 1.3 billion while combating the novel coronavirus pandemic has been a challenge for the world's largest democracy. India does not have privilege like its peers from the developed world to

financially support all of its economy, people and the climate. It is no surprise that Mr. Modi had to ask the international community for a new financial commitment to achieve the climate goals. More so, since the annual \$100 billion pledge by developed countries to the developing countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) back in COP16 is yet to be disbursed.

If powerful developing economies such as India are to play a constructive role in tackling climate change and achieving net zero target, the developed North needs to shore up its support by taking a common responsibility to help developing countries and LDCs to pursue climate goals as they already face the daunting tasks of fighting poverty, providing basic health-care services, and ensuring access to education. People without food when they are hungry, medicine and doctors when they are ill, and schools for their children cannot be expected to either relate or appreciate the adversities of climate change being debated in a place and country which most of them have not even heard of and leaders they hardly know.

Syed Munir Khasru is Chairman of the international think tank, The Institute for Policy, Advocacy, and Governance (IPAG), New Delhi, India, with a presence also in Dhaka, Melbourne, Vienna and Dubai

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.

It's Omicron now

The world is still grappling with the existing wave of SARS-CoV-2, and the advent of a new mutant, Omicron, is a development that will set alarm bells ringing. Amidst vaccine hesitancy and the slow pace of vaccination drive, the threat of any new variant would certainly pose formidable challenges in combat strategies. Existing surveillance and screening mechanisms must be strengthened. The people who are slowly drifting into the 'COVID fatigue stage' need to be monitored to ensure that they scrupulously adhere to COVID-19 appropriate behaviour. The Government needs to ramp up the vaccination drive and even explore possibilities of making vaccination mandatory. As many countries have already pre-emptively begun administering

booster doses, it would be prudent to consider a similar option in our country, and start with frontline health staff.

G. RAMASUBRAMANYAM,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

■ As the new variant has been identified in a handful of countries, it stands to reason that it could have spread well before the alarm was sounded. It is better that the Government of India reviews its decision to resume most international flights from December 15. India has already faced enough damage in the first and second waves due to international passengers.

T. KAILASH DITYA,
Hyderabad

■ One of the most probable reasons for the evolution of variant of concern is the presence of a large number of unvaccinated individuals. The vaccination rate in Africa, including

sub-Saharan Africa, is remarkably low. There are also reports that the G20 countries have acquired doses of COVID-19 vaccines that are far in excess when compared to sub-Saharan Africa. Vaccine inequity is the world's biggest obstacle to ending this pandemic.

D. SAMBU RAMESH,
Pala, Kottayam, Kerala

■ The new variant is a warning sign to all countries to err on the side of caution. The central government needs to regulate international travel. Moreover, citizens of our country ought to put off their travel plans. The Government should boost the vaccination drive.

A. ANITA SINGHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

■ There have to be swift measures such as ramping up vaccination, screening flight passengers and genome sequencing. The

Centre and States must synergise steps.

M. RISHIDEV,
Dindigul, Tamil Nadu

■ As the existing COVID-19 situation is under control to some extent, people have begun to get a bit lax as far as steps such as wearing face masks, observing social distancing and adhering to other specified precautions are concerned. A special drive is imperative to enforce these precautions.

N. RAMA RAO,
Chennai

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A. ANITA SINGHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

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honour of the Constitution in a spirited manner which was quite topical and relevant a theme for the occasion. He could have impressed upon the CJI to adjudicate and decide expeditiously, cases where constitutional validity is under challenge. The undermining and the subversion of constitutional institutions and the casting away of democratic norms should have been highlighted by the First Citizen of India.

P. K. SHARMA,
Barnala, Punjab

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A. ANITA SINGHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

■ There have to be swift measures such as ramping up vaccination, screening flight passengers and genome sequencing. The

Indian Railways should also put up additional 'train whistle boards' to scare away animals.

J. EDEN ALEXANDER,
Thanjavur

How to win over Kashmiri youth

A professional approach, a soft touch and long-term efforts are the solutions



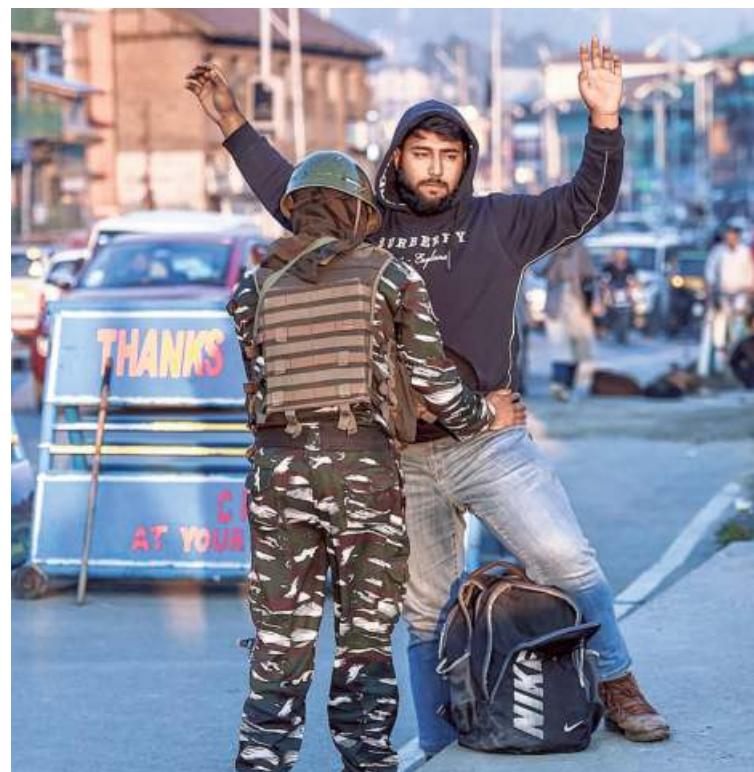
NARESH CHAND

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has been on the boil since Independence. Several solutions to the problem of militancy have been put forth. Recently, there was a suggestion that de-radicalisation camps should be organised for the youth. Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat said that it is a "positive sign" that the people in Kashmir are now saying they will "lynch terrorists". Before we talk about why a soft touch is required to win over the Kashmiri youth, let us look at the history of radicalisation in Kashmir.

Religion in state craft

The process of using religious overtones in state craft was initiated by General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, the dictator-President of Pakistan. He stressed that religion should be part of state policy. It is anybody's guess whether he tried to make Pakistan an Islamic state due to politics or piety or both, but the fact is that the proliferation of Madrasas started during his time and have contributed immensely to the Islamisation and radicalisation of Pakistani youth. This latter on spilled over into Kashmir as part of low-intensity conflict operations (LICO).

From 1989, insurgents, whose aim was the secession of J&K from India, began to use violent means to achieve their goal. This led to strong counter-insurgency operations. It was the beginning of the dividing line between Kashmiris and the rest of India. The Public Safety Act of 1978 and the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 were used to counter militancy. Those were harsh times and warranted harsh rebuttals. Back then, militants were sent to Kashmir from Pakistan; the local youth were not involved in militancy. Hundreds of *tanzeem* (groups) were created in Pakistan to fight in Afghanistan. Some of these were then deployed in J&K. Pakistani agents moved around recruiting youth to train in Pakistan in the name of Islam and freedom for Kashmir.



Security personnel frisk a man at a temporary checkpoint in Srinagar. ■ PTI

From the 1990s, militancy increased and then peaked in J&K. Due to threats from terrorist leaders, many Kashmiri families sent one of their sons to be trained in Pakistan and then to be deployed in Kashmir. Governor's rule remained in J&K for a long time keeping the democratic process at bay. When the due process of elections was brought back, the same Abdullah family from the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference and the Mufti family from the All Parties Hurriyat Conference called for violent protests which resulted in riots, burning of government vehicles and 'stone-pelting incidents'.

The situation on the ground changed for the worse with the birth of home-grown militancy. There were now twin challenges for the Army, the Central Armed Police Forces and the J&K Police. The first were the terrorists for whom the rules of engagement were different and the second were the Kashmiri youth who formed the bulk of the protesters – Indians for whom all the rules and laws applicable to any Indian citizen apply.

When stone-pelting incidents took a serious and alarming turn, armed personnel responded with pellet guns and other means of riot control. Injuries, especially eye injuries, were a serious fallout of this response. According to the United Nations Report on Children 2021, a total of 39 children (33 boys, six girls) were killed (nine) and maimed (30) by pellet guns (11) and torture (two)...". The Mufti government announced in January 2018 that 6,221 people had suffered pellet-gun injuries during the unrest in Kashmir after the killing of the Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist, Burhan Wani, in 2016.

Unacceptable suggestions

The suggestion that terrorists must be lynched is not a good idea as a vigilante approach in a democratic country is not acceptable. De-radicalisation camps for the youth have been conducted many times in a different, toned-down manner. In August this year, for instance, the In-

dian Army announced that it would subsidise undergraduate courses and school education to selected children and youth from J&K and Ladakh in residential schools and professional colleges functioning under the Army Welfare Education Society, as part of Operation Sadbhavna. In August 2018, the J&K Police organised a Bharat Darshan tour to Delhi and Agra for students to "provide them [the] opportunity to understand history and development of other parts of country". The Border Security Force (BSF) has been organising such programmes since 1999-2000. Till date, 1,539 children from J&K have participated in 55 BSF-sponsored Bharat Darshan tours, according to the Union Home Ministry. The Army has also been assisting in the construction of schools, medical aid, veterinary care and disaster relief. However, these measures have not had the desired effect as most of the youth selected are not from the militancy-prone regions.

Protecting Kashmiris

Kashmiri children in schools and colleges outside the State are often mistreated when any misadventure takes place in J&K. The incidents of violence against minorities, including Muslims, in north India have only worsened their problems. One cannot love Kashmiri Muslims in J&K and hate them elsewhere. The Kashmiri youth feel that they face hostility from the Indian state because of their Muslim identity and so the status quo cannot be effective. The suggestion of de-radicalisation camps for the youth can appear similar to the detention camps run by China for Muslim minorities. This suggestion will be exploited for political gains by the pro-Pakistani elements and further vitiate the atmosphere.

The administration has to provide protection to the Kashmiri youth when they are studying elsewhere in India. It is important for the Kashmiri youth, where ever they are, feel at home. This needs a real professional approach, a soft touch and long-term efforts. Otherwise, generation after generation will continue fighting their own country, India.

Lt. General Naresh Chand (Retd.) is an army veteran of four decades, who served in Kashmir at the height of the militancy in the early nineties

In pursuit of social justice

Illam Thedi Kalvi will bridge the pandemic-induced learning gap in Tamil Nadu and improve learning outcomes



PUHAZH GANDHI P.
& R. THIRUNAVUKKARASU

The recently launched educational programme of the Tamil Nadu government, Illam Thedi Kalvi (Education at the Doorsteps), triggered mixed reactions. The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) government launched this programme as it recognises the pandemic-induced gap in learning among schoolchildren. The lockdown disempowered children from the marginalised sections as they did not have access to technology-driven pedagogical methods as the privileged did. Many who find online teaching convenient and safe fail to recognise this class bias. The expensive nature of online teaching pushed a large number of underprivileged children out of the education system. The lockdown thus accentuated the asymmetrical structure of the school system.

Towards Paulo Freire's vision

It is commendable that experienced teachers and civic and education department officials will be monitoring the progress of the students at the district and block levels. By providing a concrete role to school management committees and community development activists, the programme is turning learning into a social engagement. The fact that a volunteer who has completed Class 12 becomes an instructor will challenge the inherent power dynamics between teachers and students. When young volunteers impart lessons creatively in an unconventional atmosphere, the possibility of better learning outcomes is higher. This also gives children an opportunity to develop a critical understanding of their social reality. This will enhance their self-respect and help them probe the reasons for oppression and injustice. This programme is an example of Paulo Freire's vision through 'conscientization'.

This policy will be implemented by volunteers first in 12 districts. It will be launched in other districts when the results from the 12 districts are positive. Some 68,000 of the 86,000 volunteers are women. This is quite encouraging as it could allay fears about the safety of female students and encourage them to participate in the programme. Otherwise, many may be compelled to become child labourers or domestic help. Allotting ₹200 crore for the programme is a welcome move especially since the Union government slashed the total education budget this year.

Though Tamil Nadu is among the most literate States, learning outcomes in have been a cause of concern. Nearly 59% of Class 5 students and 89% of Class 3 students were unable to read a Class 2-level textbook. In rural Tamil Nadu, according to the Annual Status of Educational Report (2018), Tamil Nadu got the lowest score among the

southern States in 'learning outcomes and quality' in the Performance Grading Index of the Union Education Ministry. Keeping these facts in mind, volunteers of this programme intend to improve learning outcomes. The idea is to do this outside school hours and away from the school premises in a comfortable and easily accessible location close to the child's home. The volunteers will teach an estimated 34.05 lakh children in the 5-13 age group in 93,000 neighbourhoods for 60 to 90 minutes between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Volunteers who have completed Class 12 and graduates will teach children from Classes 6-8. They will refer to textbooks prepared by the State textbook council. Creative pedagogical initiatives including activity-based learning will ensure positive outcomes.

Objectives of the programme

FROM PAGE ONE

Govt. revises guidelines for overseas travellers

A sub-section (5% of the total flight passengers) will be required to undergo post-arrival testing at random at the airport.

The guidelines have also stated that children under five years of age are exempted from pre- and post-arrival testing.

However, if found symptomatic for COVID-19 on arrival or during home quarantine, they shall undergo testing and treated as per laid-down protocol.

Details of the suspect case are the co-passengers seated in the same row, three rows in front and three rows behind along with identified cabin crew.

Step up testing facilities, Centre urges States

The Ministry also said in view of the possible threat that this variant can pose, it was imperative that intensive containment, active surveillance, increased coverage of vaccination and COVID-19 appropriate behaviour are enforced in the field in a very proactive manner.

The letter said the disease surveillance network should be geared up for rigorous follow-up of all international

Also, all the community contacts of those travellers who have tested positive (during home quarantine period) would be subjected to quarantine for 14 days and tested as per Government protocol.

Earlier the Central Government in a release issued following a meeting chaired by Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, said it will review "the decision on effective date of resumption of scheduled commercial international passengers service as per evolving global scenario while keeping a closer watch on emerging pandemic situation within the whole country."

travellers from all countries.

The Ministry said there was already a mechanism for obtaining travel details of passengers and that rigorous tests needed to be carried out on disembarkation of international travellers coming from "at risk" countries. States have been asked to keep a close check on the emerging trend of cases and the positivity in an area and quickly delineate hotspots for effective containment.

Govt. lists farm law repeal on House agenda

Several Opposition leaders also demanded the dismissal of the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Ajay Mishra 'Teni', whose son is an accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence.

The Government was represented by Deputy Leader of the Lok Sabha and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, and Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal, besides Mr. Joshi. Mr. Singh, who chaired the all-party meet, informed the Opposition floor leaders that though Mr. Modi had started the practice of attending the Government's all-party meet since 2015, he could not do so on Sunday because of an official engagement. Sharpening its legislative agenda for the 19 sittings spread over 25 days from November 29, the

Government listed 36 Bills to be taken up during the winter session.

Other issues that were raised included compensation for farmers who died during the year-long protests, alleged Chinese incursion, COVID-19 preparedness and past mismanagement, fuel prices and BSF's jurisdiction extension in border States. "Also, there was a discussion on a possible third wave of COVID and I demand that the Government corrects the death figures and offers ₹4 lakh as compensation to all the victims...We expected that the Prime Minister would attend the meeting and answer our issues. But, the PM did not come to the meeting," Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said.

Bengaluru show nixed, Faruqui hints at quitting

In a letter issued to the organisers on Saturday night, the police said several groups were opposed to Mr. Faruqui's show and this "could create chaos and could disturb the public peace and harmony, which may further lead to law and order problems".

Mr. Faruqui was not available for comment. Organisers of the event said he felt dejected at the way he was being "systematically targeted".

The stand-up comedian

was arrested in Indore in January 2021 after a Hindutva right wing activist alleged he had denigrated Hindu gods. He spent 37 days in jail before the Supreme Court granted him bail. Over the last two months, 12 of his shows have been cancelled by the police in Maharashtra, Goa and Gujarat following protest campaigns reportedly orchestrated by right wing organisations.

The action of the Bengaluru City Police has come under severe criticism.

In-flight WiFi hits a dead zone in India

Five months later, the aircraft were grounded globally following two crashes in Ethiopia and Indonesia that killed over 300 people.

The airline's chairman and managing director Ajay Singh told reporters at an event held to celebrate the resumption of Boeing 737 MAX 8 flights last week that it now plans to offer WiFi services on its aircraft from January 2022. "Passengers will be able to receive WhatsApp messages, check mails, but we will disable audio because we

don't want to allow calls as they cause inconvenience to other passengers," Mr. Singh said. The airline has 13 Boeing MAX 8 planes in its fleet, and will be inducting another 50 over the next two years.

The pandemic, too, has dented the appetite of airlines to innovate with new passenger amenities. "What has happened is that since the regulation came into place, the pandemic has hit the industry. Airlines are struggling to get consumer demand back to normal, which may take another one or two years," explains Mr. Chatterjee.

Mr. Chatterjee was in Mumbai to participate in a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' held in the city's Azad Maidan under the umbrella of the Samyukta Shetkari Kamgar Morcha (SSKM).

"The Centre should bring

a law to guarantee MSP to farmers. There are several issues related to the agriculture and labour sectors that need attention and we will travel all over the country to highlight them," he said.

The farmer leader further

India has turned into a nation of job creators, not seekers: PM

Modi hails surge in start-ups in country, says they are now solving global problems

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The turning point in India's growth story is that it has become a nation of job creators rather than job seekers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday, hailing a recent surge in start-ups valued over a billion dollars.

Addressing the nation through his monthly *Mann Ki Baat* radio programme, Mr. Modi also reminded listeners that the pandemic is still ongoing and urged them to maintain safety protocols.

"Never forget that coronavirus is not gone yet. It is the responsibility of us all to continue to take necessary precautions," he said, a day after chairing a review of the situation, public health preparedness and the status of vaccinations.

Matter of pride

During his address, Mr. Modi noted that till 2015, the country had only nine or 10 unicorns, the name given to start-ups whose valuation has crossed a billion dollars. "You will be very happy to know that India is now flying high even in the world of un-

icorns. According to a report, a big change has come this year. In just 10 months, a unicorn is being raised in India every 10 days. This is also a big thing because our youth have achieved this success in the midst of the pandemic. Today there are more than 70 unicorns in India," he said.

Solving global problems

Adding that Indian youth start-ups were solving global problems, Mr. Modi interacted with a young man named Mayur Patil who had developed air filter technology to reduce emissions while improving mileage in vehicles.

After installing it in 10 buses of the regional transport corporation in 2017-18, they found that fuel efficiency

had increased 10%, while emissions were reduced by 40%.

The patent was granted this year, and when Mayur and three of his friends participated in NITI Aayog's Atal New India Challenge, they received a ₹90-lakh grant which enabled them to start a factory to mass produce the air filters.

The PM offered Mr. Patil's experience as an example of a societal mindset change in favour of entrepreneurs.

"This is the turning point of India's growth story, where people are now not only dreaming of becoming job seekers but also becoming job creators. This will further strengthen India's stature on the global stage."

The PM also hailed com-

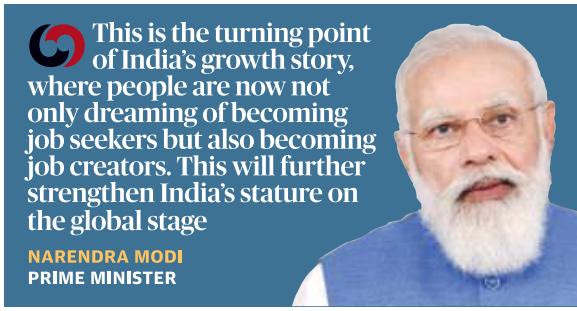
munity efforts to safeguard the environment, from river rejuvenation to support farmers in Uttar Pradesh's Jalaun to palmyra planting in Tamil Nadu's Thoothukudi to prevent soil erosion and the submergence of coastal islands during cyclones.

"Nature poses a threat to us only when we disturb her balance or destroy her sanctity," said Mr. Modi.

Mr. Modi also interacted with beneficiaries of the Ayushman Bharat scheme, who had received free medical treatment.

Looking ahead to December, the Prime Minister noted that the month will mark the golden jubilee of the 1971 war and the annual celebration of Navy Day and Armed Forces Flag Day.

Noting that the nation will commemorate the death anniversary of Babasaheb Ambedkar on December 6, the Prime Minister said the basic spirit of the Constitution expected all citizens to discharge their duties and urged the citizens to take a pledge to fulfil duties as an apt tribute to the drafter of the Constitution.



NARENDRA MODI
PRIME MINISTER



No respite from sorrow: Family members of the victims mourning in Nadia district on Sunday. •PTI

18 killed as vehicle hits truck in Bengal's Nadia

They were going to a crematorium

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

At least 18 persons, including six women and a child, were killed in a road accident in Nadia district of West Bengal in the early hours of Sunday.

The accident occurred at Hanskhali when a vehicle carrying a group of people taking a body for final rites to a crematorium collided with a truck parked on the side of the road. The deceased were residents of Bagda in North 24 Parganas and were on their way to the crematorium in Nadabipur.

Five persons who were injured were taken to a State-run hospital. Local people said the area was covered in dense fog when the accident took place. Ten of the deceased belonged to a family.

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee expressed their condolence.

Mr. Modi announced an ex gratia compensation of ₹2 lakh to the next of kin of the deceased and ₹50,000 to the injured.

Ms. Banerjee said the West Bengal Government would extend every necessary assistance and support to the kin of the victims. Triamool Minister Jyoti Priya Mullick, who visited the site of accident, said the driver of the vehicle was in an inebriated state.

"Deeply pained at reported death of 18 people and 5 others injured in Nadia District. Expect all efforts @MamataOfficial to the family of deceased and injured. Need to promote Road Safety," Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar said on social media.

The officer, however, said the question papers had not reached the examination centres on Sunday. The Spec-

U.P. TET cancelled after paper leak, 26 arrested

Chief Minister promises transparent test in a month

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The BJP-led Uttar Pradesh Government cancelled the TET (Teacher Eligibility Test) scheduled on Sunday after the police found that the question paper had been leaked.

While 26 persons involved in the alleged leak have been arrested, the Opposition parties raised concern over the incident and accused the Government of corruption in such recruitments.

Nearly 20 lakh candidates were appearing for the examination, said ADG law and order Prashant Kumar, announcing the cancellation of the examination at a press conference here.

Mr. Kumar said the police had found photocopies of the question paper and messages on WhatsApp displaying it and the answers from some of those apprehended. "The photocopies were shared with the Government and it came to light that these questions were the ones that were in the question paper in the examination," Mr. Kumar said.

The officer, however, said the question papers had not reached the examination centres on Sunday. The Spec-

ial Task Force will probe the matter.

Sixteen of the accused belonged to Prayagraj, while in Shamli, three persons were arrested with 10 copies of the question paper they had purchased for ₹5 lakh and had taken ₹50,000 from 50-60 candidates to provide them access to it and help them in memorising the questions, the police said.

The main accused was identified as Rajendra Patel of Pratappur, who, the police said, was the kingpin of the gang. Another accused Sunny Singh of Gaya in Bihar provided solvers to the gang from Bihar, the police claimed. A candidate was also arrested in Chitrakoot.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed officials to conduct the exam in a trans-

parent manner within a month. The Gangsters Act would be slapped on those found involved in the leak and their properties would also be confiscated, Mr. Adityanath said at an event in east Uttar Pradesh.

The Government said the candidates need not fill fresh forms or pay fee again.

The sudden cancellation left the candidates stranded, following which the Government provided them buses to return to their home districts without any charge.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav said the paper leak was akin to ruining the future of 20 lakh unemployed candidates. "Paper leaks and cancellation of examination and results are common things under the BJP Government," he said.

3 detained for attacking Kashmiri traders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RANCHI

The Jharkhand Police on Sunday said it has detained three persons who were a part of a group that forced some Kashmiri traders to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Pakistan Murdabad' in State capital Ranchi.

A 34-year-old man from Kashmir, who makes a living by selling winter clothes, lodged a complaint with the police on Saturday stating that a group of around 25 people attacked him and some other traders from the Union Territory in Ranchi's Doranda area and forced them to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Pakistan Murdabad'.

A purported video of Kashmiri traders complaining about the incident has been shared on Twitter.

One of them heard saying, "Is it a crime to be a Kashmiri. They have made our life hell here. Are we not Indians? They ask us always to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Pakistan Murdabad'.

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Chief Minister Hemant Soren retweeted the link to the video and sought strict action against the culprits.

RLD identifies 32 seats to contest in alliance with SP

Akhilesh will be CM if we win U.P. polls'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW

The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) has identified 32 seats, mostly in western Uttar Pradesh, to contest as a partner of the Samajwadi Party (SP) in the Assembly elections beginning early next year, its State unit chief said on Sunday.

RLD workers want party chief Jayant Chaudhary to contest the elections, the party's Uttar Pradesh unit chief Masood Ahmad said in an interview, adding that if the kin of farmers who died during the protest against farm laws are willing to contest on an RLD ticket, the party will take a decision based on their "winnability".

Mr. Ahmad, however, categorically stated that if the SP-led alliance is voted to power in Uttar Pradesh, Akhilesh Yadav will be its Chief Minister and the RLD a partner in the government.

"As of now, 32 seats of western Uttar Pradesh have been identified from where the RLD will be fighting. These seats are spread across Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Shamli, Bulandshahr, Hathras, Mathura, Agra, Aligarh, Moradabad and Amroha. The total number of seats on which the party will contest in the upcoming Assembly elections is likely to go up further," he said.

Asked if Jayant Chaudhary will be Deputy Chief Minister if the SP-led alliance wins, Mr. Ahmad said, "I don't know whether Jayant will contest or not. Almost three months ago, when I asked him if he would contest the U.P. Assembly elections, he had said no. But in politics, things change fast."



In unison: Rakesh Tikait with social activist Medha Patkar and other farmer leaders during a 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' in Mumbai on Sunday. •PTI

a law to guarantee MSP to farmers. There are several issues related to the agriculture and labour sectors that need attention and we will travel all over the country to highlight them," he said.

The farmer leader further

demanded that financial aid should be given to the kin of farmers who died during the protests against the three agriculture laws. The Prime Minister recently announced that the laws would be repealed.

Mr. Tikait, who was in Hyderabad earlier this week, had said that the onus lied on every Government in the country to come to the aid of the kin of the 750-odd farmers who lost their lives protesting against the three laws.

Cooperative model best suited for India, says Shah

'It will ensure inclusive development'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Sunday described the cooperative model as the best suited model to achieve an all-encompassing and inclusive development in a huge country like India with a population of 130 crore.

Mr. Shah said the cooperative model had the capacity to bring prosperity for all and there was a need

Trinamool to skip Opposition meeting

Cracks in unity visible as Pawar too expresses inability to attend the meeting convened by Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the winter session of Parliament that gets under way on November 29, cracks in the Opposition are already visible as the Trinamool Congress is likely to skip the floor coordination meeting on Monday, convened by Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge.

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar too called Mr. Kharge to inform him of his inability because of a wedding in Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut's family.

Mr. Kharge, however, played down the divisions within the Opposition ranks. He said the Trinamool leaders would be busy with the party's working committee meet on Monday.

"We will try to take everyone along and remain united on issues affecting the people," Mr. Kharge told presspersons on Sunday.

The Congress had man-



Widening cracks: Farooq Abdullah, Anand Sharma and Derek O'Brien meeting at Parliament Annex in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

aged to persuade around 15 Opposition parties on November 26 to skip the Constitution Day celebrations in the Central Hall of Parliament to "protest against the undermining of the Constitution under the Narendra Modi Government".

The Trinamool was part of the joint Opposition action but such unity may not be seen during the session.

Asked to comment about the reports, the party's leader in the Rajya Sabha, Derek O'Brien, did not specifically respond to his party giving it a miss.

"Yes, there will be Opposition unity. It's common issues that will bring about total unity in the Opposition," he told *The Hindu*.

"I also must point out that there is a distinction bet-

ween the RJD, DMK, RJD and the CPI(M) – they are all electoral allies of the Congress.

The NCP-Shiv Sena and JMM run a Government with the Congress. The Congress is not our electoral ally, nor are we running a Government with them. That's the difference," he said.

Relations between the Trinamool and the Congress have nosedived in recent

times after the former's ambitious expansion plans in States such as Goa and the induction of 12 Congress MLAs in Meghalaya to become the principal Opposition party in the northeasten State.

The Trinamool's new-found aggression against the Congress is not only driven by election strategist Prashant Kishor to project West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee as a prime ministerial candidate for the 2024 Lok Sabha election but also a fallout of the Congress choosing to ally with the Left Front in Bengal in the crucial Assembly election earlier this year.

"Indian National Congress is the principal Opposition party, the central pillar of the Opposition. We have long experience, both in governance and now for the last seven years or more in the Opposition," Deputy Leader of the Congress in Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma said at a briefing on Friday.

BJP registers landslide win in Tripura civic elections

CM links results to development initiatives of his Govt.

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

The ruling BJP on Sunday swept the municipal elections in Tripura, winning 217 of the 222 seats to which elections were held on November 25.

The Left Front, led by the CPI(M), won three seats, while the Trinamool Congress and the Tipraha Indigenous Progressive Regional Alliance (TIPRA) won one seat each. The Congress failed to open its account.

Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb led the BJP celebrations, and congratulated the people for rallying behind his party. Mr. Deb tweeted, "I consider your votes to the BJP as blessings and these blessings motivate us to work harder for the development of all 37 lakh people of the State." He linked the results to the welfare and development initiatives of his Government.



Big sweep: BJP supporters celebrating in Dharmanagar, Tripura, on Sunday. ■ PTI

The Opposition parties, however, rejected the results, alleging that they had predicted such an outcome after the BJP reduced the elections to a "farce".

The BJP captured with ease the Agartala Municipal Corporation and 13 other civic bodies where it now has 329 of the 334 seats. The party had earlier won 112 seats uncontested.

The party bagged all 51 seats in the Agartala Municipal Corporation. In the Ambassa Municipal Council in

Dhalai district, the BJP bagged 12 seats, while the Trinamool, the CPI(M) and TIPRA got one seat each.

The Trinamool Congress secured around 24% of votes in the Agartala Municipal Corporation elections.

Elections to the Agartala Municipal Corporation and other municipal councils and nagar panchayats were held amid allegations of widespread rigging, and attacks on Opposition candidates.

(With inputs from PTI)

4 panels formed to look into EPFO functioning

VIKAS DHOUT
NEW DELHI

The Union Government has formed four ad-hoc board-level committees to look into the functioning of different aspects of the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).

Labour and Employment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, who chairs the Central Board of Trustees of the EPFO, approved the formation of these panels. All the committees, notified on November 27, have been granted a three-month term.

Labour Secretary Sunil Barthwal has been tasked with steering two of the committees – on "pension reforms" and "IT and Communications". Mr. Barthwal was in charge of the EPFO as the Central PF Commissioner till late September.

As per its terms of reference, the eight-member panel on pension reforms had been told to submit a report advising "on matters relating to pension reforms for universalisation of social security". An EPFO official

Section 144 imposed in Mathura

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Mathura administration in Uttar Pradesh on Sunday imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC after some right-wing groups threatened to install an idol of Lord Krishna inside the Shahi Idgah Mosque on December 6, the anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition.

Senior Superintendent of Police Mathura Gaurav Grover said the administration had received information that some persons and outfits were making appeals on social media for such an event on December 6. No permission has been granted nor will be granted for such events, Mr. Grover told presspersons. The decision comes after an Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahaswara leader recently announced that the group would install an idol inside the mosque, claiming that it was the birthplace of Lord Krishna.

Rajya Sabha leaders express annoyance at CJI's remarks

Justice Ramana had complained about lack of debate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Floor leaders of the Rajya Sabha, at a meeting with House Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu on the eve of the winter session of Parliament that begins on Monday, expressed concern over the Chief Justice of India's recent remarks on disruptions in Parliament.

Chief Justice N.V. Ramana, speaking at the 75th Independence Day function organised by the Supreme Court Bar Association, complained about a lack of debate in Parliament. He said it is a "sorry state of affairs" and that absence of quality debate leaves many aspects of the laws unclear, increasing the burden on the court.

The floor leaders said it is for the Presiding Officers to take appropriate action if the norms of functioning are being violated in the legislatures, and other constitutional agencies should not



Justice N.V. Ramana

comment adversely, sources said. They did not, however, name Justice Ramana.

In response, Mr. Naidu said, "I can understand your concerns. But such comments should be viewed in the context of the functioning of legislatures marked by persistent disruptions, unruly behaviour and violent actions which have deleterious effects. The best way to counter them is to ensure proper functioning of the legislatures by ensuring their dignity and decorum since such comments are finding

resonance with the public from what they see about the functioning of the legislatures."

Productive session

A few Opposition leaders – Prasanna Acharya of the BJP, Satish Chandra Mishra of the BSP, John Brittas of the CPI (M) and Binoy Viswam of the CPI – expressed concern over the course of events during the last monsoon session. They also said a repeat of the monsoon session should be avoided.

As per an analysis by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat, 70% of the functional time of the House was lost to persistent disruptions.

Mr. Naidu urged the Government and the leaders of the Opposition to regularly talk to each other to enable effective functioning of the House. He appealed to all sections to cooperate in ensuring a productive winter session.

Trinamool's Meghalaya mission began in 2004

Former Speaker Sangma had joined it

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Trinamool Congress gained 12 MLAs in Meghalaya in an evening coup on November 24. This was not the first such foray for the Mamata Banerjee-led party in the northeastern State.

The Trinamool has its first lawmaker from Meghalaya in 2004. Former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno Agitok Sangma won the Tura constituency that year after quitting the Nationalist Congress Party and joining the Trinamool. The man he defeated was Mukul M. Sangma, a former Congress heavyweight and now the president of the Trinamool's Meghalaya unit.

"Our supporters and friends in Meghalaya have said we made a good move, as the Trinamool is the only party that can rival the BJP."

quit the Trinamool a year later.

The Trinamool Congress is now the principal Opposition party in Meghalaya, and its main rival is the National People's Party (NPP) that the late P.A. Sangma founded. His son, Conrad K. Sangma, is the Chief Minister heading a coalition Government with the BJP.

Mr. Mukul Sangma, who left for Kolkata on Sunday to meet Ms. Banerjee, debunked theories that the Trinamool was too Bengal or Bengali-centric to be accepted in Meghalaya.

"Our supporters and friends in Meghalaya have said we made a good move, as the Trinamool is the only party that can rival the BJP."

India, Bangladesh to deepen ties as partners, says Goyal

It is imperative to improve connectivity, says Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The India-Bangladesh CEO Forum will meet soon for the first time, even as the two countries work towards finalising a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) to deepen trade and economic ties as partners rather than competitors, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

Congratulating Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on the country's transition from a less-developed country to a developing nation status, Mr. Goyal said India stands "shoulder to shoulder" with the country's leadership and people in their development journey.

Noting that India-Bangladesh supply chains worked uninterrupted through the pandemic, Mr. Goyal said improving connectivity is "imperative" for expanding and realising the potential for bilateral trade and investments. A bilateral textile industry forum has also been constituted to facilitate cooperation in the textile sector," Mr. Goyal said, emphasising that over 350 Indian companies are now registered in Bangladesh.

"India is also developing two Indian economic zones at Mirsarai and Mongla. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation to 50 young entrepreneurs from Bangladesh will further augment our ties," he pointed out at the Bangladesh International Investment sum-



Shoulder to shoulder: A file photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his Bangladeshi counterpart, Sheikh Hasina.

billion. We are looking to advance a CEPA with Bangladesh," he said. India, he said, had sent over one crore COVID-19 vaccine doses to the country and has extended concessional credit lines of about \$8 billion, the highest for any single country.

We are looking forward to hold the first meeting of the India-Bangladesh CEOs Forum to promote mutual investments. A bilateral textile industry forum has also been constituted to facilitate cooperation in the textile sector," Mr. Goyal said, emphasising that over 350 Indian companies are now registered in Bangladesh.

"India is also developing two Indian economic zones at Mirsarai and Mongla. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation to 50 young entrepreneurs from Bangladesh will further augment our ties," he pointed out at the Bangladesh International Investment sum-

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU TAMIL NADU SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

RFP No: 2210 / SDC 4 / 2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) Dated: 24.11.2021

For Establishing Apex Skill Development Centres (ASDC) under Automobiles Section REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (in single cover System) to impart high-end skill training will be received from interested firms/ agencies to act as the Lead Implementation Partner (LIP) at the office of Tamil Nadu Skill Development Corporation upto 3.00 P.M. (as per office clock) on 21.12.2021.

Pre Qualification criteria for LIP, Management of ASDC, EMD, Price of RFP document, place and availability of RFP document, receipt of RFP, opening of RFP and all other details are available in the website www.tenders.tn.gov.in & www.tnskill.tn.gov.in If there are any changes / corrections in the RFP, it will be published on the above website (s) only.

Sd/-
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
TAMIL NADU SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION,
GUNDY, CHENNAI - 600 032.

DIPR/3660/Tender/2021
Tender Inquiry No. PPR- 13/2021
Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in
(Contact Number 9646123323)

Dated: 26.11.2021
Chief Engineer/PSPCL Organization, Shed No.D-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender under three part bid system for supply of renewable electrical energy (Solar) from interstate/instate sources viz. Generators, Traders having valid Inter State Trading License issued by CERC for interstate trading of energy, Interstate trading license issued by PSERC for interstate trading of energy, State Electricity Boards, State Electricity Utilities, States, IPPs & CPPs from 15th December 2021 to 31st March 2022. The link for the e-Bidding portal is www.msteccommerce.com and is also available on the website of Ministry of Power (Powermin.nic.in) and PFC Consultancy Limited (www.pfcindia.com). For detailed NIT & tender specifications please refer to www.msteccommerce.com and official website of PSPCL i.e. www.pspcl.in from 26.11.2021 onwards.

Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at www.msteccommerce.com

C-242/21
PSPCL 76155/12/554/2021/10487

PSPCL (Regd Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala), OFFICE OF CHIEF ENGINEER/PSPCL, # D-3, Shakti Vihar, PATIALA-147001
Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813
Registration Number: 33813

PRESS NOTICE
NOTICE INVITING TENDER FOR CLIENT MEMBERSHIP OF POWER EXCHANGE
TENDER SPECIFICATION NO: PPR - 15 / 2021

PSPCL invites tenders for obtaining Client membership of both the Power Exchanges (i.e. Indian Energy Exchange) as well as Power Exchange of India Ltd (from traders having valid Inter-State Trading license issued by CERC and Membership of both the Power Exchanges to enable PSPCL for Sale/purchase of power through exchanges for the year 2022-23.

Note:- Tender specifications can be downloaded from website <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The prospective bidders are requested to get clarification from this office and/or M/s GePNIC well in time in case any difficulty regarding uploading of the tender is experienced and no last minute request for extension in the opening of tender on this account will be entertained.

2. Last date & time for submission is 10.00 Hrs of 13/12/2021.

3. It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspaper. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on e-tendering website <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.

C-424/21
PSPCL 76155/12/556/2021/10489

RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY OF KNOWLEDGE TECHNOLOGIES ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA

No. RGUKT-AP/5th Convocation/Notification/2021 Date: 28-11-2021

CONVOCATION NOTIFICATION

The 5th Convocation of RGUKT-AP is scheduled in the last week of December, 2021 at RGUKT R.K. Valley campus, Idupulapaya, Kadapa District.

Candidates who have passed Bachelor engineering degree programme from RGUKT-AP during the academic years 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 are eligible to apply for this Convocation on or before December 10th, 2021. For details visit RGUKT Website: <https://www.rgukt.in> Sd/- REGISTRAR (lc)

Fuel prices unlikely to go down for now

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel prices will be going down only if the current drop in international oil prices is sustained for a few more days, as domestic retail prices are fixed on a 15-day rolling average, official sources said.

Global benchmark Brent crude oil prices remained largely range-bound at around \$80 to \$82 per barrel during November (till November 25).

In India, the state-owned fuel retailers Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (HPCL) revise petrol and diesel prices on a daily basis. But this revision is based on the average benchmark international fuel rate in the previous fortnight. So, the price on Sunday is decided by the average in the previous 15 days.

Visa complains to U.S. Govt. on India's backing for RuPay

Company worried about lack of 'level playing field'

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

Visa Inc has complained to the U.S. government that India's "informal and formal" promotion of domestic payments rival RuPay hurts the U.S. giant in a key market, memos seen by Reuters show.

In public, Visa has downplayed concerns about the rise of RuPay, which has been supported by lobbying from Prime Minister Narendra Modi that has included likening the use of local cards to national service.

But U.S. government memos show Visa raised concerns about a "level playing field" in India during an August 9 meeting between U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai and

Omicron puts spotlight back on safety

Experts say it is too early to determine variant's impact and urge people to take vaccines, precautions

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Omicron, which is the most mutated form of COVID-19 discovered thus far with 32 mutations to the spike protein, has scientists worried. They fear that the mutations may now allow it to evade existing vaccines and spread quickly.

Doctors and experts in India said that mutations are inevitable and the only protection the general public can take recourse to is vaccination, use of masks and avoiding crowds.

Saumitra Das, Director, National Institute of Biomedical Genomics and Professor, Indian Institute of Science, said, "It is too early to fully understand the extent of damage that this virus can cause. While vaccination doesn't cut transmission, it does reduce severity and number of deaths."

Vidya P. Taneja, senior consultant, paediatrics, Aarsh Clinishare, Delhi, said that the new variant, identi-



No time to relax: The importance of going full steam ahead with vaccination efforts cannot be emphasised enough, doctors say. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

fied now as B.1.1.529, has put the spotlight back on global efforts towards controlling the disease.

"This variant, first identified in Botswana, harbours a large number of mutations, including more than 30

changes to the original spike protein on which the COVID-19 vaccines were based.

Many of these changes have been found in the Delta and Alpha variants too and are linked to heightened infection rates and ability to

evade antibodies induced by vaccines," she said.

The doctor added that researchers the world over were closely tracking Omicron's spread to determine its impact.

"Since transmission is

through the same mode, that is airborne, preventive measures are the same. We need to, therefore, reinforce that all precautions should be taken as before. The importance of going full steam ahead with our vaccination efforts cannot be emphasised enough, especially seeing the situation in Europe where most cases are occurring in the non-vaccinated.

Mutations are inevitable and the way ahead remains close monitoring, surveillance, community partnership and vaccine equity," she said.

Testing at airports must be increased and every international traveller who had entered India in the last two weeks should be tested, said Vikas Maurya, director, pulmonology, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi. "If things go out of control, then it will involve huge economic costs and overburden the healthcare system with increase in mortality as well. A few cases will not affect us greatly," he said.

Follow rules to stave off lockdown, warns Uddhav

Maharashtra CM holds review meeting

STAFF REPORTER
PUNE

Remarking that the challenge posed by the Omicron variant was grave, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday directed the State administration to take measures without waiting for instructions from the Centre.

He urged the public to avoid unnecessary travel and strictly adhere to pandemic regulations in order to ward off a possible lockdown in the near future.

In a virtual emergency review meeting with Divisional Commissioners and District Collectors on Sunday, Mr. Thackeray instructed authorities to pay close attention to all passengers arriving at airports. Health Minister Rajesh Tope and members of the State COVID-19 task force were also present at the meeting.

"Once the contagion spreads rapidly, steps like lockdown are unavoidable



Uddhav Thackeray

and at this stage, unaffordable. So, to prevent this, people must regularly wear masks, avoid unnecessary crowds, avoid unnecessary travel and strictly adhere to pandemic regulations in order to ward off a possible lockdown in the near future.

In a virtual emergency review meeting with Divisional Commissioners and District Collectors on Sunday, Mr. Thackeray instructed authorities to pay close attention to all passengers arriving at airports. Health Minister Rajesh Tope and members of the State COVID-19 task force were also present at the meeting.

"Once the contagion spreads rapidly, steps like lockdown are unavoidable

Amazon, Future officials summoned

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned senior executives of Amazon India, including its country head Amit Agarwal, and that of the Future Group for questioning in a foreign exchange violation probe linked to the disputed deal between the two conglomerates, official sources said on Sunday.

The executives have been summoned along with documents for the coming week under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), they said.

An Amazon spokesperson said they were examining the ED summons.

Jio announces up to 21% hike in tariffs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

After Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on Sunday announced up to a 21% hike in prepaid tariffs from December. The hikes are for JioPhone Plan, unlimited plans, and data add-on, and range between 19.6% and 21.3%.

"These plans will provide the best value in the industry," Reliance Jio said in a statement.

Airtel and Vodafone Idea last week announced up to a 25% hike.

NGT levies ₹2 cr. fine on JSPL for altering course of water channel

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

The National Green Tribunal (NGT), Eastern Zone, has imposed a fine of ₹2 crore on the Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL) for changing the natural course of Kurabahali Nalla (water channel) in Odisha's Angul district.

The JSPL, which has a steel project in Angul district, is accused of filling up the original Kurabahali Nalla with earth and constructing its industrial complex thereon at a time when it had not received sanction from the Odisha Government for diversion of the Kurabahali Nalla through a diversion into the Parang Minor Irrigation Project.

Alekh Chandra Tripathy, a resident of Cuttack, had filed a complaint that the JSPL had unauthorisedly usurped the Nandira River in Angul in connivance with the State authorities and filled it up with earth thereby completely obliterating the river.

"We direct that out of the amount of ₹2 crore, ₹1.5 crore would be deposited with the State's Forest Department and ₹50,00,000 would be deposited with the Odisha State Pollution Control Board [OSPCB]," the NGT ordered.

Vaccine made by SII has not yet been approved in country of origin, it notes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

An expert panel of the Central Drug Authority, which recently reviewed the Serum Institute of India's application for emergency authorisation of the COVID-19 vaccine Covovax, has sought additional data from the firm, while noting the jab has not yet been approved in the country of origin, official sources said.

The SII put in an application to the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) in October for grant of market

authorisation of Covovax for restricted use in emergency situations.

The Pune-based firm had submitted interim safety and immunogenicity data of Phases 2 and 3 bridging clinical trials conducted in the country and interim clinical trial data of safety and efficacy from Phase 3 clinical trials conducted in the U.K. and the U.S. along with its application, official sources said.

After detailed deliberation, the committee recommended that the firm should submit additional data and information.

It has sought correct status of the Phase 3 clinical trials held in the U.S. and the U.K. along with latest data on the safety, efficacy and im-

munogenicity, comparative statement of immunogenicity parameters of the subjects from the U.S., the U.K. and other overseas Phase 3 studies, the source said.

The Government recently permitted the export of two crore doses of Covovax to Indonesia, produced in India by the SII, official sources said.

The DCGI office had granted SII permission to manufacture and stock Covovax on May 17. Based on the DCGI's approval, till now, the Pune-based firm has stockpiled doses, they said.

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13413

D	R	S	O	S	T	M		
F	I	V	E	G	E	N		
I	V	E	R	A	M			
A	E	R	E	X	A			
E	A	R	E	M				
P	O	R	P	N				
S	P	H	E	R				
P	O	R	P	N				
S	P	H	E	R				

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

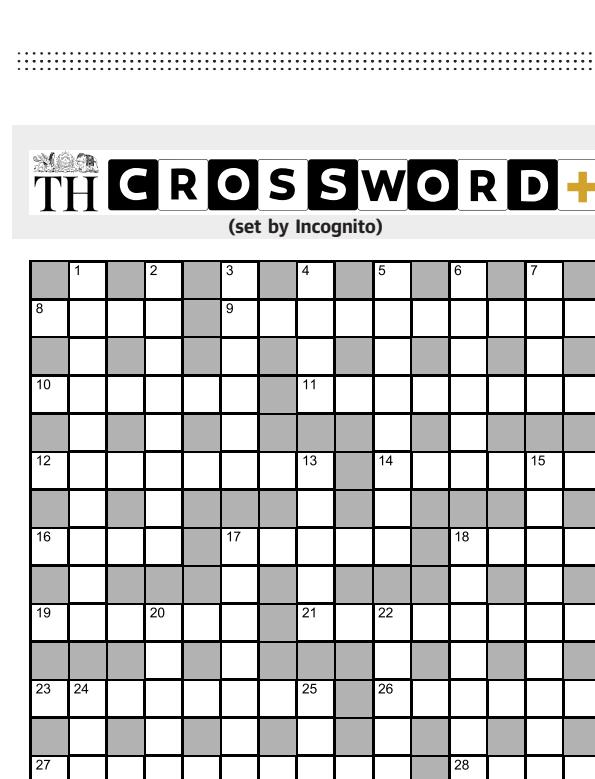
FAITH

The Lord's residence

Azhwar's hymns are known as 'Arulicheyal,' meaning hymns directly inspired by God's grace. All of them acknowledge that they are the medium through which God sings His own glories. His Supremacy is limitless and beyond human grasp. He is all-pervading and His omniscience and omnipotence are incomparable. All these are captured as personal experiences in their hymns. They can see His presence as the inner soul and total ruler of the entire creation. This jagat, His manifestation comprising the sentient and non-sentient, forms His body. They show that God has chosen to live in the archa form in the Divya Desams so that he can grace His devotees and help them get out of samsara, pointed out Sri A. K. Sundararajan in a discourse.

We can easily offer worship to the deity in temples and thereby cultivate bhakti towards Him by His grace. More special to the devotee is His Antaryami form, His choice to dwell in the hearts of His sincere devotees. This strengthens the bond between the Lord and the bhakta. Pey Azhwar asserts that the same God who resides in the Vedas also chooses to dwell in the hearts of those jnans who are self-controlled and are steeped in God alone. He entreats us to pray to God to enter our hearts for only with His help we can gain control over the senses that are our real enemy.

In a hymn, Azhwar conveys the qualities of exceptional God love through the eyes of a mother who is unable to console her daughter who is deeply in love with the Lord at Parkadal. The daughter says she would visit only Tiruvelangadam, and bathe only in the divine waters of Parkadal. She refuses flowers and prefers only Tulsi leaves for adorning her tresses. It is clear that the Lord is present in her entire self, her thought, word and deed.



ACROSS
8 Say wrongly after commencement of exam, "It's not difficult." (4)
9 Andhra Pradesh's circular letter on record having alien in charge is regretful (10)
10 Leg, including end of femur, became smaller (6)
11 A saint follows Republican president and Russia's controversial monk (8)
12 Asked editor to take initial newspaper lot of 25 sheets (8)

DOWN
1 In sett's parlance, Ram and Krishna's favourite food (6)
16 Eye problem during part of last year (4)
17 Grace! Sit for painter, around centre of swing (5)
18 Food returned in protectorate (4)
19 Before commencement of exercise, a high-ranking officer is tense (2,4)
21 Left old German in Indian state's site of crucifixion (8)
23 Hospital customers having enforceable rights around institution (8)
26 Slanderous hearsay, perhaps: "Turned spigots, releasing toxin at first" (6)
27 Marking completion and dressing down (7,3)
28 Tribal from Ahmednagar (4)

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



SCAN TO PLAY



No. SSS272 Date/Location: www.mgfeatures.com

Netherlands detects 13 Omicron cases

These were among 61 infections found in returnees from S. Africa; 2 cases each in Denmark, Australia

REUTERS
LONDON/AMSTERDAM

The new Omicron coronavirus variant kept spreading around the world on Sunday, with 13 cases found in the Netherlands and two each in Denmark and Australia, even as more countries tried to seal themselves off by imposing travel restrictions.

Dutch health authorities announced that the 13 cases of the variant were found among passengers who were on flights from South Africa that arrived in Amsterdam on Friday.

Authorities had tested all of the more than 600 passengers on those two flights and had found 61 coronavirus cases, going on to test those for the new variant.

'Tip of the iceberg'
"It is not unlikely more cases will appear in the Netherlands," Health Minister Hugo de Jonge told a news conference in Rotterdam. "This could possibly be the tip of



New worries: A plane that landed from Johannesburg is parked at the Schiphol Airport, The Netherlands. ■ AFP

the iceberg."

First discovered in South Africa, the variant has now been detected in Britain, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Botswana, Israel, Australia and Hong Kong.

The discovery of Omicron, dubbed a "variant of concern" by the World Health Organization, has

sparked worries around the world that it could resist vaccinations and prolong the pandemic.

Omicron is potentially highly contagious, although experts do not know yet if it will cause more or less severe COVID-19 compared to other strains.

Denmark's infectious disease authority said on Sun-

Suspected Omicron cases mild: South African doctor

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PRETORIA

A South African doctor said on Sunday dozens of her patients suspected of having Omicron had shown mild symptoms and recovered without hospitalisation.

Angelique Coetzee, chair of the South African Medical Association, said she had seen around 30 patients in

day it has registered two cases of the variant.

Austria was investigating a suspected case on Sunday.

In France, Health Minister Olivier Veran said the variant was probably already circulating there.

Countries have imposed a wave of travel bans or curbs on southern Africa to try to stem the spread. Financial

markets dived on Friday as investors worried that the variant could stall a global recovery. Oil prices tumbled by about \$10 a barrel.

In the most far-reaching effort, Israel announced it would ban the entry of all foreigners and reintroduce counter-terrorism phone-tracking technology to contain Omicron's spread.

10 days. "What brought them to the surgery was this extreme tiredness," she said. They also had "mild muscle aches, scratchy throat and dry cough," she said.

"We are not saying that there will not be severe disease coming forward," she said. But "for now, even the unvaccinated patients have mild symptoms".

U.K. seeks 'urgent' migrant talks with Europe after French snub

Home Secretary Patel was disinvented from Sunday's meeting

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Britain's government on Sunday announced plans for its own talks on the Channel migration crisis with European Ministers this week as it was frozen out of a crisis meeting in France.



Priti Patel

counterparts today to discuss this pressing issue," she wrote in the tabloid.

"We need to be creative about finding new solutions that will have the maximum possible impact, which is why the prime minister and I stand ready to discuss proposals with our French counterparts at any time," Ms. Patel said.

"And I know from my discussions with my European partners in recent days and weeks that there is more that can be done. Together, we can break up the people-smuggling gangs and save lives -- but we must act now."

Ministers from France, Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium met in the French port of Calais on Sunday, following the deaths of the 27 Iraqi Kurds and others as they attempted to cross from France to England in a fragile dinghy.

Iran nuclear talks set to resume after five months

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
VIENNA

The international talks in Vienna to revive the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA, will take place on Monday afternoon after a five-month hiatus, a diplomatic source said.

The talks between the remaining partners to the deal – Iran, China, Russia, Germany, France and the U.K. – will restart at around two pm local time (1300 GMT), the European diplomat said on Sunday.

The U.S. will also send a

Protests erupt in Austria over compulsory vaccination

Move set to bolster vaccination rate, says Chancellor

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
VIENNA

Tens of thousands of Austrians rallied this weekend to protest against the government's introduction of compulsory vaccination – the first EU country to do so – as the Chancellor insisted on Sunday that the move would represent "a minor interference" compared to the alternatives.

One of the largest demonstrations was held in the southern city of Graz, where

police said late Saturday that around 25,000 people had gathered in a rally that remained mostly peaceful.

But police said that three men in their early 20s were being investigated for allegedly making Nazi salutes and that there were dozens of infractions against virus-related rules on mask-wearing.

Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg said that the government had "sadly" been forced to turn to compulsory vaccination to bol-

ster the current rate of full vaccination – which currently stands at just under 67% and is one of the lowest in Western Europe.

"Every lockdown is a heavy interference in fundamental rights. Compared to that, compulsory vaccination is a minor interference," he said.

Faced with rising infections, the government introduced a partial lockdown on Monday, although schools have remained open.

Magnitude 7.5 quake strikes northern Peru

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LIMA

An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.5 struck northern Peru early on Sunday, damaging some buildings and blocking several roads with rubble.

While the quake was extremely strong, it was relatively deep – measured at 112km – which usually reduces the possibility of damage and casualties.

The quake occurred at 5:52 a.m. (1052 GMT) and its epicenter was in the Amazon region.

It had a magnitude of 7.5, according to the U.S. Geologi-

cal Survey.

Part of a 16th century church in La Jalca district in the Amazon region collapsed and three people were lightly injured, Mayor Walter Culqui told Peru's RPP radio.

Falling stones blocked several highways in the Amazonas and Cajamarca regions in Peru, and the tremor was felt nearly 800 km away in the capital of Lima, where some people rushed out of their homes in alarm.

A church in the Loja municipality in neighboring Ecuador was also partly damaged.

ELSEWHERE



Petr Fiala named new Czech Prime Minister

PRAGUE

Czech President Milos Zeman appointed the leader of a centre-right alliance Petr Fiala as Prime Minister on Sunday in a ceremony he performed from a plexiglass cubicle after being tested positive for COVID-19. Mr. Fiala leads a bloc of five centre and centre-right Opposition parties that won an election in October, ousting the incumbent premier Andrej Babis and his allies. AFP

+ 27 Chinese jets enter Taiwan ADIZ

Taipei scrambles combat aircraft to warn away planes; Xi meets military officers

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TAIPEI

Taiwan said 27 Chinese aircraft entered its air defence buffer zone on Sunday, the latest in a long series of incursions as part of Beijing's pressure on the self-ruled island.

The Defence Ministry said Taiwan scrambled combat aircraft to "warn" the Chinese planes to leave. It also

deployed missile systems to monitor them.

Sunday's incursion included 18 fighter jets and five H-6 bombers, as well as a Y-20 aerial refueling aircraft, according to Taiwan's Defence Ministry.

The Chinese aircraft flew into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ) near the southern part of the island and out into the Pacific



ocean before returning to China, according to a map by Taiwan authorities.

Over the past year, the frequency of Chinese incursions has increased, with about 150 aircraft over a period of four days.

China's latest mission came as Chinese President Xi Jinping met with top officers at a military conference,

where he called for military talent cultivation to support and strengthen the armed forces, according to state-owned news agency Xinhua.

Iceland's ruling coalition agrees on another term

Katrin Jakobsdottir to remain PM

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
REYKJAVIK

Iceland's outgoing left-right coalition government said Sunday it had reached a deal to continue together in power for four more years, more than two months after winning a majority in a general election.

Prime Minister Katrin Jakobsdottir of the Left Green Movement will continue to head the government, the parties said.

The Left-Green Movement, the conservative Independence Party and the centre-right Progressive Party together won 38 of the 63 seats in Parliament in the September vote, up from the 33 they had held since the previous election in 2017.

The unusual alliance – which has earned Ms. Jakobsdottir some criticism and saw her party emerge weakened from the election – has brought Iceland four years of stability after a decade of political crises.

This is the first time since 2003 that an outgoing government has held on to its majority in an election.

"It has been complicated for the past four years and it will continue to be complicated. But maybe it is also healthy having to work with

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By: General Manager (HR)

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ASK US

N. SREE KANTH

Q. I have lost my parents who were government servants; I received a lump sum amount as their pension emoluments where the interest per annum may exceed ₹2 lakh. I am unemployed. Should I pay tax on the FDs and will this interest amount be added up in my income certificate for various purposes?

JOHN ABRAHAM

A. The interest accrued on the fixed deposits (FD) invested by you from the receipts of your parent's pension emoluments will be included in your taxable income as the FDs are invested in your name. If you do not have any other source of income, the interest accrued from these FDs are within the basic exemption limits and thereby no incidence of tax on the same. Further, you may submit Form 15G as your income is within the taxable limits to your banker so that TDS is not deducted on the interest payable to you as the bankers are required to deduct TDS on interest if the interest payable in a year exceeds ₹40,000 to a non-senior citizen.

Q. I retired from a public sector bank in August 2020. At the time of my retirement, I had encashed eight months' privilege leave equivalent to nearly ₹10 lakh and TDS was exempted up to ₹3 lakh only. It is said that TDS is exempted for the entire leave encashment amount for bank employees. If so, can I claim a refund for the tax paid amount in excess of ₹3 lakh?

GANJI NARSAIAH

A. Employees of Public Sector Undertakings cannot be treated on par with Government Employees for the purposes of Section 10(10AA) of the Income Tax Act, 1961. In your case, the leave salary that was paid to you at the time of your retirement is not be completely exempt. The exemption that is available to you at the time of receipt of leave salary at your retirement will be the least of ₹3,00,000, leave salary actually received, 10 months' salary (basic plus DA), cash equivalent of leave to the credit of the employee at the time of retirement. The cash equivalent of leave to the credit of the employee at the time of retirement is calculated in the following manner ((AxB)-CxD) where,

A - Number of completed years of service
B - Number of leave days credited each year (maximum 30 per year)

C - Number of days of leave taken or encashed during the period of employment

D - Average salary of the past 10 months
You may enquire with the HR department with respect to the break-up of the leave encashment and the corresponding TDS.

(The adviser is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Q. I have started working in a company at a mid-managerial level. Every month a portion of my salary is left unused in my bank. This is after my investments in RD, SIP and LIC Jeevan Anand. I was contemplating putting this money in FDs, say ₹25-35,000 in different FDs whenever I have a significant portion of my salary unused for the month. Do you think investing in multiple FDs is a smart option? I know that the interest rates for FDs are very low but it's some amount of money that's safely secured for future usage. Please advise.

ARJUN RAM

Bhavana Acharya answers: There is nothing wrong in investing in multiple fixed deposits. But in your case, it will get cumbersome to track a large and varying set of FDs and maturities, if you are going to open a new one almost every month. If the surplus of ₹25,000 is only rare and you typically have far smaller amounts left each month, bunch this up for a few months and then open an FD. But also note that FDs are tax-inefficient if interest income is taxed at your slab rate.

Investing very heavily in FDs during your earning years can result in lower returns. If you are certain that you will be left with such surplus every month, do the following: first, set up an emergency portfolio (at least six months' expenses, including any EMIs) if you do not have one already. Use a combination of bank FD and liquid funds for this portfolio.

After this is done, increase your monthly SIP investments. If you're steadily sitting on such high surpluses each month, increasing SIPs will go a long way in wealth building. Adjust the amounts you are investing in each fund based on this higher amount.

If you have not done so already, work out a suitable allocation between equity and debt funds based on your risk and time frame. If your SIP has only been in equity funds so far, start investing in low-risk debt funds – this will also meet your intention to invest in low-risk options. Debt funds are more tax efficient than FDs as you will be taxed only at the time of redemption, along with indexation benefits.

Q. I have a home loan of ₹15 lakh with a tenure of 20 years. Should I close it by borrowing interest-free money or continue with it for tax saving purpose? Also, what are the avenues of tax saving if I close this loan?

ABHISHEK BALLANEY

A. It's hard to understand where you may be able to borrow interest-free money. Even assuming that you do, it's not a simple answer. It requires calculations on how much tax you are saving, how much your EMI reduces, how much you may theoretically increase your savings and working out which option leaves you with the best return.

You can consider availing the services of an investment adviser as a one-time exercise in order to do so correctly. If you close the loan, you have the normal deductions available under Section 80 C of the I-T Act, an additional ₹50,000 a year for investments in NPS, besides other expense-based deductions such as medical insurance.

However, depending on your loan, these may not completely compensate for tax-saving on home loan payments. The option of moving to the new tax regime is also there. Here again, you will need to work out whether it is beneficial for you.

(The adviser is co-founder, Primeinvestor.in)

Bonds go deeper and wider with digital tech



App or web-based facilities are coming up to simplify and facilitate transactions

JOYDEEP SEN

Technology is improving almost all aspects of our life, be it searching for information, transacting with money, investing, medical treatment, travelling and so on. One interesting development in this context is about a market that has hitherto not developed or rather, has not been deep enough for retail investors.

For investing in corporate bonds in India, the preferred and predominant route is mutual funds. Having said that, direct investment in bonds should be a feasible option. While there is a secondary market for corporate bonds in India, the market is wholesale or institutional. Trading lots are of a big quantum, beyond the reach of common investors.

These are customised transactions, unlike trading in equity stocks on a trading screen. In this hitherto not-so-liquid market of corporate bonds for individual investors, how can technology help?

There are certain app-based or web-based facilities coming up to simplify and facilitate transactions. One needs to open an account with the service provider, but the execution can be done without human intervention, at a preferred time.

Moreover, what one sees on the exchange screen is the price of the bond. While price is relevant, bonds trade on the basis of yield-to-maturity (YTM), which is the effective annualised return, provided you hold the bond till maturity. For information on YTM, professional guidance is required.

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) opened a website-based

platform called Retail Direct Account Scheme, where retail investors can open an account directly with the central bank of the country. On this platform, people can trade in government securities (G-Secs) in retail lots, which otherwise is a wholesale market.

However, the Retail Direct Account does not house corporate bonds. In the context of corporate bonds, individual investors, particularly high net-worth individuals (HNIs), can trade through certain houses that are brokers or NBFCs, offering this as a product.

These are customised transactions, unlike trading in equity stocks on a trading screen. In this hitherto not-so-liquid market of corporate bonds for individual investors, how can technology help?

There are certain app-based or web-based facilities coming up to simplify and facilitate transactions. One needs to open an account with the service provider, but the execution can be done without human intervention, at a preferred time.

These platforms provide efficiency similar to app-based trading in equity stocks, the difference being the number of bonds on offer would be less than the number of equity stocks due to the nature of the market.

To get a hang of it, visiting

websites of service providers may be a good idea. Goldenpi.com displays 'bonds in spotlight'; India-bonds.com showcases multiple categories of bonds. Indmoney.com has a bonds section on their website, where they list various bonds from their inventory.

It shows the minimum

which you can pick and choose as per credit rating, issuer profile (PSU, private sector, etc.) maturity tenure, frequency of coupon (interest) payment for planning your cash flows, etc.

It also shows the YTM of the bond, which is not available on the Exchange screen. When you want to sell a bond, you can put in your details and request a quote. The knowledge

quantum so that you can pick one as per your lot size.

houses relevant updates for you to understand the context better.

It also shows the YTM of

the bond, which is not available on the Exchange screen. When you want to sell a bond, you can put in your details and request a quote. The knowledge

section

eggs in one basket. You have to buy multiple bonds, so that your risk on one bond is limited to the extent of your exposure. Since your portfolio construct is in your control, you can buy bonds as per your suitability of credit quality, issuer profile and the like. AAA is the highest credit rating for corporate bonds, followed by AA+, AA and so on.

You can pick up bonds of multiple maturities and various interest payment dates, so that you generate automatic cash flows without having to sell a bond in the secondary market.

Direct route advantage

What are the advantages of taking the direct bond route? Cost saving is one advantage. In a mutual fund, the charges are levied every year, whereas in a bond, the expenses you incur while purchasing it occur only once, however long as you hold it. Sometimes, there are certain bonds that offer a relatively higher YTM due to lack of liquidity in the secondary market without a commensurate increase in credit risk.

You can avail of those pockets of opportunity. Though liquidity can be an issue if you want to sell in the secondary market, as long as you have a view to hold till maturity, you can take a call.

To conclude, we have seen technology deepen the reach of the equity market. A similar journey has begun for the bond market.

(The writer is a corporate trainer and author)

COVER NOTE: INSURANCE FRAUD

Watch out for fake motor insurance policies

Besides fly-by-night operators, pollution testing centres had also been found selling fake policies to obtain other vehicle papers

K. NITYA KALYANI

Most known insurance frauds are usually about the insurance company being defrauded by customers. Saying a white lie about your high blood pressure in a health insurance proposal form, or allowing your garage to exaggerate the accident damage to your car in the claim form are common unethical practices. The insurance industry has suffered because of it and it comes back to roost as higher premium rates for everybody in the long run.

Fraudulent documentation, misrepresentation of material facts, inflated claims, fake claims and moral hazard – the act of buying insurance under false pretences in order to make a claim – are well-known insurance frauds. More complicated frauds involve buying multiple policies on the same property, which is then destroyed for making a claim, policies being taken on non-existent properties or over-valuation of a prop-

erty for enabling a higher cover and hence a higher claim.

In this column, let us see examples of a different type of fraud. How you, the insured, can be defrauded, or used to perpetrate fraud on an insurance company.

Recently a State police de-

partment exposed a fake motor

insurance racket. Members of the public are contacted by a call centre claiming to be, or to be representing prominent insurers, and offered motor and health insurance. Premium is collected and fake policies are issued, leading to a double whammy for the 'insured' who has lost his money to a fraud-

ster and is saddled with a worthless policy.

Even more interesting is a case where mobile pollution testing centres were selling fake insurance policies to customers who approached them for a 'Pollution Under Control' certificate. A valid vehicle insurance policy is required for getting a



The fake insurance is foisted easily on the customer in a moment of expediency. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

PUC certificate, which is a must-have. So, the fake insurance is foisted easily on the customer in a moment of expediency, when he is unlikely to verify the genuineness of the transaction.

Another kind of fraud that came to light was online insurance policy documents issued for motor third-party liability cover for a commercial vehicle, but at much lower rates by misrepresenting the category of vehicle.

Misrepresenting category

This 'policy', which has correct vehicle details like registration number, except for the category of vehicle, is issued in connivance with the customer, who can use it to show he has complied with the Motor Vehicles Act and has a TP cover. This will help him/her obtain a fitness certificate as the Road Transport Authority (RTA) systems are not linked to insurance and hence the policy cannot be authenticated.

A routine check by the traffic police can easily be handled with this document, but would be useless if one tries to make a claim on it. The repercussions are terrible here as the actual victim would be somebody else who was hit by this 'insured' vehicle. Claims can be made only by or on behalf of the third party, who is affected (by way of injury, death or property damage) by the vehicle and there would be no linked insurance documents to make a claim on.

We have seen just a few types of frauds involving motor insurance that you have to watch out for. There are vulnerabilities in health insurance and even life insurance that border on identity theft. We will see them in subsequent columns, including how to keep yourself safe from them and to avoid aiding and abetting criminals even if used unwittingly.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Bank fixed deposit rates

Bank Name	Highest Slab	Interest Rates (%)
	1-year tenure	3-year tenure
	5-year tenure	
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.25
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.50
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	6.50	6.00
Jana Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.25
Equitas Small Finance Bank	6.00	5.85
Finacle Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	6.25	5.75
AU Small Finance Bank	6.00	4.85
Capital Small Finance Bank	6.25	6.00
DCB Bank	5.95	5.55
RBL Bank	6.30	6.00
SBM Bank India	7.05	6.50
IndusInd Bank	6.00	6.00
Nainital Bank	5.35	5.10
IDFC First Bank	6.00	5.25
Karur Vysya Bank	5.60	5.15
CSB Bank	5.50	5.00
Axis Bank	5.75	5.10
South Indian Bank	5.65	5.20
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	5.35	5.25
Karnataka Bank	5.50	5.10
PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS		
Deutsche Bank	6.25	3.85
HSBC Bank	4.00	3.10
Citibank	3.50	2.75
	5.10	5.40
FOREIGN BANKS		
Deutsche Bank	6.25	4.50
HSBC Bank	4.00	4.00
Citibank	3.50	3.50

Bank Name	Highest Slab	Interest Rates (%)
	1-year tenure	3-year tenure
	5-year tenure	
Dhanlaxmi Bank	5.50	5.15
Bandhan Bank	5.50	5.25
ICICI Bank	5.50	4.90
DBS Bank	5.50	4.25
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	5.30	5.10
Union Bank of India	5.50	5.00
Canara Bank	5.35	5.10
State Bank of India	5.40	5.00
Punjab & Sind Bank	5.30	5.05
Indian Bank	5.25	4.95
Bank of Baroda	5.25	4.90
IDBI Bank	5.40</	

Shreyas, Ashwin and Saha help India turn the tables on the Kiwis

From 51 for five, the hosts fight back to declare at 234 for seven; chasing a target of 284, the visitors lose Young early to finish the penultimate day at four for one

NZ IN INDIA

RAKESH RAO
KANPUR

In a remarkable display of resilience, India eluded New Zealand's grip and moved into a position from where it has a day to tighten the noose and win the first Test.

On Sunday, when India's fortunes swung from a desperate fight for survival at 51 for five to the luxury of declaring the innings at 234 for seven, New Zealand found itself in a serious spot of bother.

At four for one, New Zealand needs another 280 with nine wickets in hand. With run-making looking increasingly challenging on the Green Park pitch, it is 'Advantage India'.

Paying the price

As though the task of chasing 284 was not tough enough, New Zealand opener Will Young paid the price for the delay in asking for review of a dubious leg-before verdict by Virender Sharma. Replays revealed the delivery from R. Ashwin would have missed the leg-stump by some distance.

Although one could sympathise with Young for the delay in decision-making, the episode stretched the sequence of poor judgements seen from the on-field umpires, Nitin Menon and Virender Sharma, in this match.

QUICK SINGLES



I've been colour discriminated all life: LS KANPUR

Former India leg-spinner L. Sivaramakrishnan (LS) has alleged that he has been "colour discriminated" all his life, including in his own country. "I have been criticised and colour discriminated all my life, so it doesn't bother me any more," Sivaramakrishnan wrote on his Twitter handle. PTI

Tajul, Abid and Shaheen shine

CHITTAGONG Bangladesh's Tajul Islam claimed his ninth five-for while Pakistan's Abid Ali hit a century as the first Test was delicately poised on Sunday. Shaheen Afridi reduced the hosts to 39 for four.

The scores: Bangladesh 330 & 39/4 in 19 overs (Shaheen Afridi 3/6) vs Pakistan 286 in 115.4 overs (Abid Ali 133, Abdullah Shafique 52, Faheem Ashraf 38; Tajul Islam 7/116). AFP

Significantly, nothing could take away from India's resolve that led to an amazing resurrection. In the process, Shreyas Iyer became the first Indian debutant to follow up a century with a half-century.

No less important was the role of R. Ashwin who walked in at 51 for five and straightaway met fire with fire. After Ashwin's exit, Wriddhiman Saha made light of his sprained neck to stand tall. Once Shreyas fell at the stroke of tea, Axar Patel came good with the bat.

In fact, the Shreyas-Ashwin pair provided more than mere first aid to a bleeding India. Ashwin batted with the confidence of a man determined to take the battle to the enemy camp. He did not let a single loose ball go unpunished and sent the ball past the boundary five times. In this association of 52 runs, Ashwin's 32 stood out!

Healthy cover

Thereafter, the 64-run Shreyas-Saha partnership was not only instrumental in providing the team a healthy cover but also in dampening New Zealand's spirits. Thereafter, the unbroken 67-run association between Saha and Axar forced the Kiwis into a defensive mode and, with it, brightened India's prospects of coming out triumphant.

Much before this gallant fightback, New Zealand had



Plucky knock: Saha made light of a sprained neck to score an unbeaten 61. ■ SPORTZPICS/BCCI

SCOREBOARD

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS

345 in 111.1 overs

NEW ZEALAND – 1ST INNINGS

296 in 142.3 overs

INDIA – 2ND INNINGS

Mayank Agarwal c Latham b Southee 17 (53b, 3x4), Shubman Gill b Jamieson 1 (3b), Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane failed again, the duo of Mayank Agarwal and Ravinder Jadeja departed in a Tim Southee over to make it four dismissals in the space of 19 runs spread over 8.3 overs.

What followed was a tale of India's resolute fightback.

- Shreyas Iyer became the first Indian to score a century and a half-century on Test debut
- The unbroken 67-run association between Saha and Axar forced the Kiwis into a defensive mode

After Cheteshwar Pujara and Ajinkya Rahane failed again, the duo of Mayank Agarwal and Ravinder Jadeja departed in a Tim Southee over to make it four dismissals in the space of 19 runs spread over 8.3 overs. What followed was a tale of India's resolute fightback.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-2 (Gill, 1.1 overs), 2-32 (Pujara, 11.1), 3-41 (Rahane, 14.5), 4-51 (Agarwal, 19.2), 5-51 (Jadeja 19.4), 6-103 (Ashwin, 39.2), 7-167 (Shreyas, 60.2).

NEW ZEALAND BOWLING

Southee 22-2-75-3, Jamieson 17-6-40-3, Ajaz 17-3-60-1, Ravindra 9-3-17-0, Somerville 16-2-38-0.

NEW ZEALAND – 2ND INNINGS

Tom Latham (batting) 2 (73b), Will Young lbw b Ashwin 2 (6b), William Somerville (batting) 0 (5b); Total (for one wkt. in 4 overs): 4.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-3 (Young, 2.6).

INDIA BOWLING

Ashwin 2-0-3-1, Axar 2-1-1-0.

'Happy where we are now'

Have real spin power, we can get the job done: Shreyas

RAKESH RAO
KANPUR

For a second time this week, Shreyas Iyer played the saviour.

After scoring 105 in the first innings to keep India in the hunt for a challenging first innings score, Shreyas was up to the task of lifting India from the depths of 51 for five with two retrieving stands with R. Ashwin and Wriddhiman Saha. In the process, the Mumbai batter scored 65, a knock that kept India ahead of New Zealand.

David's instruction

"I had been in this situation before, with my Ranji (Mumbai) team. The mindset was to play session by session. Rahul (David) sir told me to bat as many balls as possible and I was determined to do that," Shreyas said, reflected on the day's play.

Was he aware that he became the first Indian batter to score a century and a half-century on debut?

"Yeah, I knew about it. When I came back, one of my teammates told me about it. Many others have done it from other teams but I was told, I'm the first from India. It feels good but the most important thing is to win the match."



Battling it out: Shreyas came to India's rescue for the second time in the Test. ■ AP

where we are now.

"Actually, not a lot was happening with the wicket today, the ball was keeping a bit low.

"We have real spin power, so hopefully we can get the job done tomorrow."

Sneh, Taniya, Shikha and Pooja to lead squads

CHALLENGER

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The BCCI has announced the squads for the senior women's Challenger Trophy to be played at Vijayawada from December 4 to 9.

The squads:

India-A: Sneh Rana (Capt.), Shivali Shinde (Vice-capt. & wk), Lakshmi Yadav (wk), Vrinda Dinesh, Jhanvi Lakshmi, Yastika Bhatia, Sushree Dibyadarshani, Mehek Kesar, B. Anusha, Sonal Kalat, Ganga, W. Disha Kasat, Renuka Singh,

India-B: Priyanka Punia, and Aishwarya. **India-D:** Pooja Vastrakar (Capt.), Amanjot Kaur (Vice-capt.), Indrani Roy (wk), K. Prathyusha (wk), S. Meghana, Divya, G. Ayushi Soni, Kanika Ahuja, Keerthi James, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Sanjula Naik, Monica Patel, Ashwini Kumari, Pooja Raj, and Saika Ishaque.

The schedule: League: Dec. 4:

India-A vs India-B; India-C vs India-D.

Dec. 5:

India-A vs India-C; India-B vs India-D.

Dec. 7:

India-A vs India-D; India-B vs India-C.

Final: Dec. 9.

India-C: Shikha Pandey (Capt.), Muskan Malik (Vice-capt.), Sweta Verma (wk), Shipra Giri, Tarannum Pathan, Arti Devi, Radha Yadav, C. Prathyusha, Anusha Sharma, Kashvee Gautam, Priyanka Garkhede, Rizvi Saha, Dhara Gujjar, Final: Dec. 9.

Final: India-A vs India-B; India-C vs India-D.

Dec. 5: India-A vs India-C; India-B vs India-D.

Dec. 7: India-A vs India-D; India-B vs India-C.

Final: Dec. 9.

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Final: Dec. 9.

Final: India-A vs India-B; India-C vs India-D.

Dec. 5: India-A vs India-C; India-B vs India-D.

Dec. 7: India-A vs India-D; India-B vs India-C.

Final: Dec. 9.

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Dec. 5: India-A vs India-C; India-B vs India-D.

Dec. 7: India-A vs India-D; India-B vs India-C.

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TV PICKS

India vs New Zealand: 1st Test, day 5, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
Sri Lanka vs West Indies: 2nd Test, day 1, Sony Six (SD & HD), 10 a.m.
ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.
Ballon d'Or Ceremony: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 1 a.m. (Tuesday)

IN BRIEF

Booker shines as Suns extend win streak to 16

LOS ANGELES

Devin Booker scored 30 points and Phoenix Suns led wire-to-wire to easily beat Brooklyn Nets 113-107 and extend its NBA winning streak to 16 games on Saturday. **The results:** 76ers 120 lost to Timberwolves 121 (OT); Hawks 90 lost to Knicks 99; Suns 113 bt Nets 107; Bulls 104 lost to Heat 107; Cavaliers 105 bt Magic 92; Rockets 146 bt Hornets 143 (OT); Mavericks 114 lost to Wizards 120; Jazz 127 bt Pelicans 105. AFP

Olympic champ Axelsen wins Indonesia Open

DENPASAR Olympic gold medallist Viktor Axelsen clinched the Indonesia Open men's singles title beating Singapore's Loh Kean Yew 21-13, 9-21, 21-13 in the final on Sunday. **Other results: Women:** An Se-young (Kor) bt Ratchanok Intanon (Tha) 21-17, 22-20 AFP

Frank Williams passes away

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON

Frank Williams, the founder of Formula One outfit Williams Racing, has died at the age of 79, the team announced on Sunday.

Williams built his team into a dominant Formula One force in the 1980s and 1990s, winning nine Constructors' World Championships and seven drivers' titles, although the most recent triumphs came in 1997. He stepped down from the board of Williams Formula One in 2012.

Kiran clinches gold

Aishwary wins junior section of 50m rifle 3-position

SHOOTING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI



Good show: Suma with Niraj, Kiran and Aishwary in Bhopal on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kiran Jadhav shot 10.9, 10.9, 10.8 and 10.7 to clinch the gold with a 0.4-point margin over Navy teammate Niraj Kumar in the 50m rifle 3-position event in the 64th National shooting championships in Bhopal on Sunday.

World junior champion Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar was pushed to the bronze after he topped qualification with 1183. Interestingly, all the three rifle shooters are trained by coach Suma Shirur.

Aishwary won the junior gold by outclassing the field.

In the skeet event in Patiala, Rajveer Singh Gill won both the men's and junior gold medals. He beat qualification topper Anish Bhanwala managed to win the junior gold four points ahead of Adarsh Singh.

The results:

25m rapid fire pistol: Men: 1. Bhavesh Shekawat 33 (579); 2. Gurpreet Singh 29 (579); 3. Anish Bhanwala 22 (581). **Junior:** 1. Anish Bhanwala 34 (581); 2. Adarsh Singh 30 (572); 3. Vijay-

veer Sidhu 24 (579).

50m rifle 3-position: Men: 1. Kiran Jadhav 455.7 (1172); 2. Niraj Kumar 455.3 (1166); 3. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar 444.4 (1183). **Junior:** 1. Aishwary 459.6 (1183); 2. Avinash Yadav 455.2 (1158); 3. Surya Pratap Singh Banshi 440.4 (1164).

Skeet: Men: 1. Rajveer Singh Gill 56 (119); 2. Anantjeet Singh Naruka 52 (121); 3. Mairaj Ahmad Khan 45 (119). **Junior:** 1. Rajveer Singh Gill 55 (119); 2. Abhay Singh Sekhon 53 (109); 3. Munek Battula 46 (120).

Egypt has to invest more in the future: coach Maggid

Says this is a promising team and this is the first-ever foreign exposure for it

JUNIOR WC

Y. B. SARANGI BHUBANESWAR



Enthusiastic bunch: The Egyptian boys are on a learning trip. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Egypt has made nine appearances in the men's hockey Junior World Cup – with a best of ninth at Milton Keynes in 1997 – but has never played in a senior World Cup.

Abu Talib Maggid, the Egypt head coach at the ongoing JWC at the Kalinga Stadium here, shared his ideas on why the African nation always struggled to make an impact in the sport.

"We miss the process. It cannot happen overnight. You have to invest and wait for the result. We have played in two Olympics (1992, 2004) but no senior World Cups," Maggid said during an interac-

tion with *The Hindu*. "Africa has one place in the senior World Cup and two places in the junior. This could be one of the reasons (for several JWC appearances).

"We have to be the strongest in Africa to get into the senior World Cup," he said.

Egypt had the ignominy of

suffering one of the biggest defeats at the current JWC when it lost its Pool D match to Argentina 14-0.

However, Maggid took lessons from the crushing defeat and guided his team to a better performance, a 3-1 loss, against Pakistan. "This is the first-ever foreign exposure for

them. This is a promising team," said Maggid.

"Owing to the pandemic, we could barely manage 14 practice sessions. In two years this will prove to be a very good build-up for (producing) more senior players for the national team," he said.

Combat learning loss

The pandemic has led to a number of issues related to learning and retention. How can these be dealt with?

West Bengal and Devarshika and Gurumathy of Hindustan Deemed-to-be-University mentioned that many students struggled with lack of attention and interest in what was being taught.

Kaustuv from West Bengal's Burdwan University agreed: "Students find learning to be tedious and find it difficult to focus on studies." Ritesh Dandapat, from Symbiosis Law School Noida, pointed out that students being able to do other things while attending online classes led to a lack of focus and discipline. Souparno Bhattacharya, who studies in Chennai, sums this up: "A

change of dynamics in the course of learning will lead to a situation where the primary and fundamental knowledge previously possessed by students will be forgotten."

Causes and consequences

According to Manjur, Presidency College, Kolkata, ineffective teaching in physical and online classes has been a causative agent. Many other students across the country have identified a

lack of physical interaction with friends and teachers, increased screen time, poor network connectivity, more concentration on tech over studies, eye and muscle fatigue due to constant screen time, closed spaces and regular disciplining by parents, and a lethargic attitude as factors which further intensified learning disability.

While Justin Joseph from Hindustan Deemed-to-be-University sees lack of

professionalism, increase in unethical activities and no idea about one's future as consequences, Rajdeep points to a herd mentality in learning outcomes.

Others like Ritesh fear the prospects of lower productivity, unemployment, low self-esteem among other issues. A slowdown in learning, inability to connect the dots, and lag in conceptual understanding across subjects will create a lasting problem, says Mohammed Manjur from Kolkata.

What can be done
First, the learning process

Mizoram beats Kerala in injury time

FOOTBALL

P.K. AJITH KUMAR KOZHIKODE

There was heartbreak for Kerala in injury time against Mizoram on the opening day of the National senior women's football championship here on Sunday.

The host went down 2-3, courtesy a late strike from

Lalnunsiami. **Select results (preliminary league): Group A:** Manipur 4 (Asem Roja Devi 45+2, Moirangthem Mandakini Devi 45+3, Yangojam Kiranba Chanu 54, Thingbajam Babysana Dev 81) bt Meghalaya 0.

Daman & Diu 2 (Diksha Bansod 17, B. Bonimida 48+og) bt Puducherry 0.

Group B: Chattisgarh 9 (Shubhangi Subba 13 & 72, Kiran Pisada 46, 80 & 90+5, Masipogu

44, Femina Rag 45).

Puspa 48, Hina Nirmalkar 82, Priyanka Futan 88 & 90) bt Darda & Nagar Haveli 0.

Group F: Odisha 9 (Jabamani Tudu 9 & 14, Sonia Behra 30, Deepa Nayak 49, Satyabati Khadia 52, Subhadra Sahu 84 & 86, Karishma Oram 85, Jasoda Munda 90+4) bt Andhra 0.

Group G: Mizoram 3 (Grace Lamrampari Haunhar 39, Elizabeth Vanlalmaiwal 79, Lalnunsiami 90+3) bt Kerala 2 (K.V. Athulya 44, Femina Rag 45).

Indian campaign ends

WORLD TT

SPORTS BUREAU HOUSTON

India's hopes of securing a historic medal at the World table tennis championships went up in smoke as its mixed doubles pairs lost in the quarterfinals here on Saturday.

G. Sathyan and Manika Batra, seeded nine, lost to Japan's unseeded pair of Harimoto Tomakazu and Hina Hayata 5-11, 2-11, 11-7, 9-11. Later, Manika and Archana Kamath were outclassed by Luxembourg's unseeded Sarah De Nutte and Xia Lian Ni 1-11, 6-11, 8-11.

The results: Mixed doubles: G. Sathyan & Manika Batra lost to Harimoto Tomakazu & Hina Hayata 5-11, 2-11, 11-7, 9-11.

Women's doubles: Manika & Archana Kamath lost to Sarah De Nutte & Xia Lian Ni 1-11, 6-11, 8-11.

Velcz wins his first pro singles title

Dispatches Dusty Boyer in straight sets

ITF MEN

KAMESH SRINIVASAN GURUGRAM

Zsombor Velcz of Hungary beat third seed Dusty Boyer of the US 6-3, 6-2 in the final of the \$15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament at the Tennis Project, Baliawas, on Sunday.

It was a maiden singles title

on the professional circuit for the 19-year-old Velcz who

converted five of 12 break-points to cruise home in an hour and 30 minutes.

Only the champion of the Indore event, Manish Sureshkumar, had managed to stretch Velcz to three sets in this tournament.

The left-handed Velcz had lost in the second round to eventual champion Valentin Vacherot of France in the last tournament in Delhi.

Velcz had made the doubles semifinal with Julian

Cash of Britain here but lost to Saketh Myneni and Yuki Bhambhani.

In the doubles final last week, Velcz and Cash had lost to Saketh and Vishnu Vardhan.

For the 28-year-old Dusty Boyer, the pursuit of a singles title on the professional tour continues.

The results (final):

Zsombor Velcz (Hung) bt Dusty Boyer (USA) 6-3, 6-2.

Ramkumar wins maiden Challenger title

Dispatches Evgeny Karlovskiy in straight sets

TENNIS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MANAMA

India's Ramkumar Ramachandran won his maiden Challenger level singles title on Sunday, 12 years after turning pro, when he outplayed Evgeny Karlovskiy in the final of the Bahrain Ministry Of Interior Tennis Challenger here on Sunday.

The 27-year-old Ramkumar, who had lost six Challenger finals, beat his Russian rival 6-1, 6-4 in 68 minutes. The Indian, who served extremely well and was sharp with his net game, earned 80 ATP points and went home richer by \$7,200. Ramkumar, seeded sixth

and ranked 222 in the world, sealed the first set when the Russian's backhand return sailed over the baseline.

This was after Ramkumar had saved a breakpoint against Karlovskiy, ranked 302

The ranking points earned will push Ramkumar back into top-200 and also make him the highest-ranked Indian on the ATP singles ranking chart.

Final result: Ramkumar bt Jay Clarke (Gbr) 5-7, 6-3, 6-2.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Auxilo's Edevate Scholarship Programme

Auxilo Finserve's scholarship helps ensure continuity of education.

ELIGIBILITY: Open to Indian students who are in Classes 9 to 12, graduation and post-graduation courses who have lost their parent(s)/earning family members or whose earning family members have lost their employment during COVID-19 pandemic. The annual family income must not be more than ₹6,00,000 from all sources.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Up to ₹30,000

DEADLINE: December 15

APPLICATION: Online

b4s.in/edge/AUESI

ISI Kolkata Research Associateship

A research opportunity for a project on "National Science Chair".

ELIGIBILITY: Open to candidates below 35 years as of November 01, 2021 who hold a Ph.D. degree (with first-class throughout) in Computer Science/Engineering, Electronics/Electrical Engineering, Information Technology, or related areas, with good publications and good knowledge in Computer programming.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹47,000 per month

DEADLINE: December 06

APPLICATION: Online

b4s.in/edge/KRA2

DRDO Defence Laboratory Junior Research Fellowship in Physics

ELIGIBILITY: Open to candidates below 28 years on the date of the interview and hold a Postgraduate degree (M.Sc. or equivalent) in Physics with first division and National Eligibility Test (NET) qualification, MHRD (GATE) or JEST, OR Graduate degree in professional course (B.E./B.Tech.) in Material Science/Nanotechnology in first division with NET/GATE qualification, OR Postgraduate (M.E./M.Tech.) degree in professional courses in Material Science/Nanotechnology in the first division both at the Graduate and postgraduate level.

PRIZES AND REWARDS: ₹31,000 per month plus HRA and medical facilities

DEADLINE: December 06

APPLICATION: Walk-in-Interview at: Defence Laboratory, Ratanada Palace, Jodhpur-342011 (Rajasthan)</p

Text & Context

NEWS IN NUMBERS



Rising count

127 The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases attributed to the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2. The Netherlands confirmed 13 cases and Australia found two on Sunday. Several European countries including Belgium, Denmark and Italy have confirmed at least one case of the newly designated variant of concern. Many countries have restricted or banned travel from various southern African countries. This goes against the advice of the WHO which has warned against any overreaction before the variant is thoroughly studied. AP, REUTERS

Near sweep

217 The number of seats won by the BJP in the Tripura civic polls out of the 222 for which elections were held on November 25. The party won all the seats of the 51-member Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC). The opposition Trinamool Congress (TMC) and CPI(M) failed to open their account in the AMC. The CPI(M) won one seat each in the Ambassa Municipal Council, Kailashahar Municipal Council and the Panisagar Nagar Panchayat. The TMC managed to get one seat in the Ambassa Municipal Council. PTI

Modern-day great

417 The number of international Test wickets to Ravichandran Ashwin's name after he picked up Will Young's wicket at the end of the fourth day's play in the first Test between India and New Zealand on Sunday. He is now tied with Harbhajan Singh for the most wickets for India in the longest format of the game. Only Kapil Dev (434) and Anil Kumble (619) have more wickets than Ashwin. Currently, Ashwin is the second-highest ranked Test bowler. In the last four years, he has picked 113 wickets for India in Tests.

Quake alert

7.5 Magnitude of the earthquake which struck Peru on Sunday. The strong quake hit at a depth of 131 kilometers (81 miles), according to the Geophysical Institute of Peru. Its epicenter was 98 kilometers east of the town of Santa Maria de Nieva in the Peruvian Amazon - a sparsely populated area inhabited by Amazonian indigenous people. The deep quake affected almost half of the country. The Peruvian capital had been shaken hours before by a 5.2 magnitude earthquake. No casualties have been yet reported. AFP

New IPOs

7,868 The amount in ₹ crore to be raised by Star Health and Allied Insurance Company and Tega Industries as they are set to float their initial public offerings (IPOs) next week. The three-day initial share-sale of Star Health will open on November 30 and conclude on December 2, while that of Tega Industries will be open for public subscription during December 1-3. So far in 2021, as many as 51 companies have launched their IPOs to raise over ₹ 1 lakh crore, according to analysis of data with exchanges. PTI

COMPILATION BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

Understanding the new variant of the virus

What is Omicron? How is it different from the other variants? Where all has the B.1.1.529 coronavirus variant been detected?

THE GIST

The Omicron variant has a large number of mutations compared to other prevalent variants circulating across the world. This includes 32 mutations in the spike protein.

From a diagnostic point of view, some of the mutations in the spike protein cause primers used in some of the RT-PCR kits to not function as expected. This is known as a spike gene dropout or spike gene target failure.

According to the recent release of INSACOG Bulletin, none of the sequenced samples in India have the Omicron variant until date.

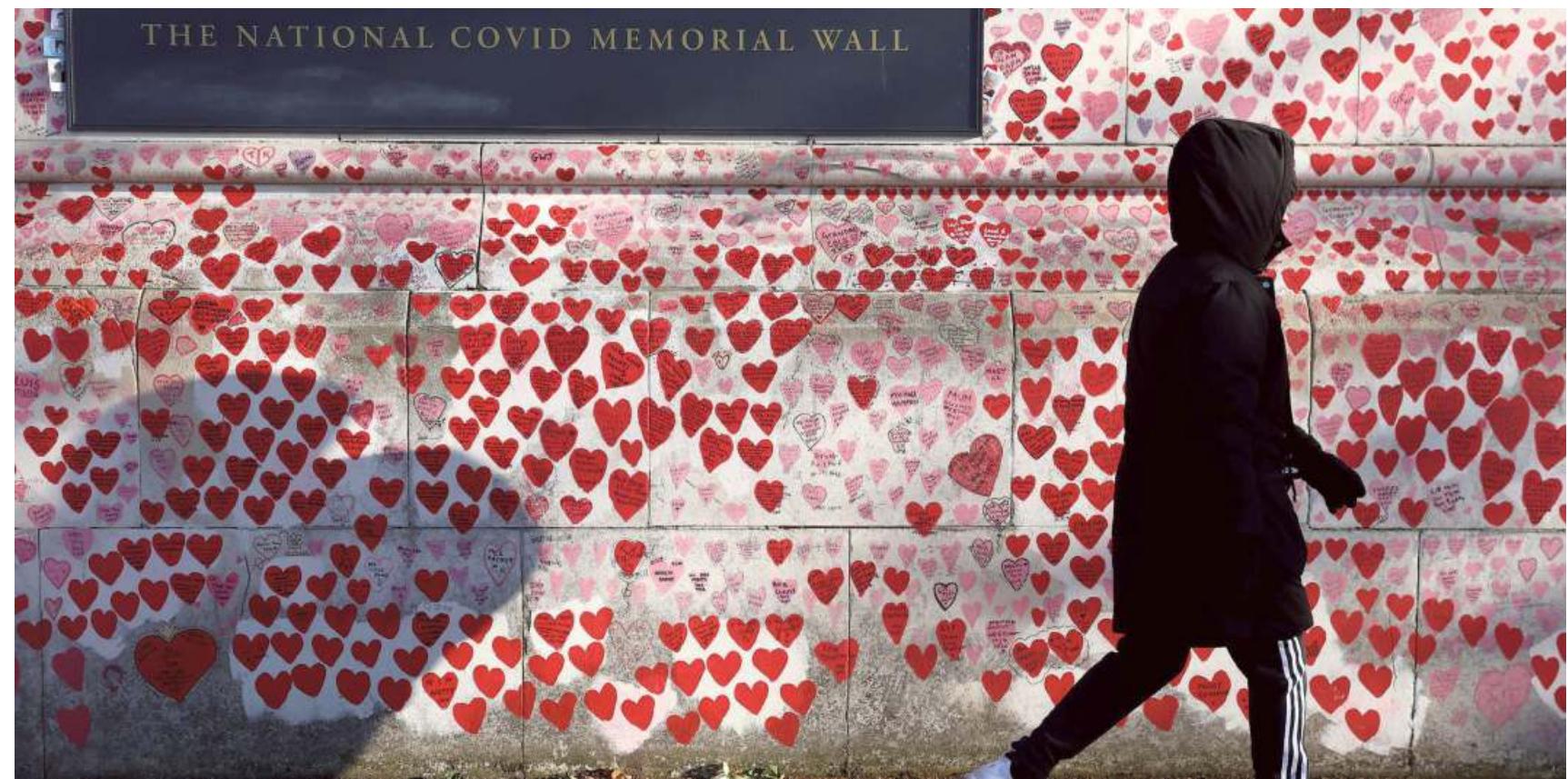
BANI JOLLY
VINOD SCARIA

The story so far: A new lineage of SARS-CoV-2 has been identified in samples sequenced and deposited in public domain from Botswana, South Africa and Hong Kong and was assigned as B.1.1.529. The variant has been designated as a Variant of Concern (VoC) by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and has been named Omicron.

Why is the Omicron variant interesting?

The Omicron variant is interesting due to the fact that it has a large number of mutations compared to other prevalent variants circulating across the world. This includes 32 mutations in the spike protein. Many of these mutations lie in the receptor-binding domain of the spike protein, a key part of the protein required for binding to the human receptor proteins for entry into the cell, and thus may play an important role in recognition by antibodies generated due to a previous infection or by vaccines.

The variant was reported in South Africa



Many of the mutations in the spike protein have been previously suggested to cause resistance to antibodies as well as increased transmission.

and epidemiologically linked to a recent rise in cases in the Gauteng province of South Africa and has been identified among travellers from South Africa apart from other countries in the region.

What do spike mutations do?

Many of the mutations in the spike protein have been previously suggested to cause resistance to antibodies as well as increased transmission. Thus, there is a possibility that this variant could be more likely to reinfect people who have developed immunity against previous variants of the virus. While the behaviour of the virus is not accurately predictable based on the evidence on individual mutations, as the effect of the combination of mutations is not the sum total of individual mutations, such analysis can provide useful insights and directions to explore even further. Further in-depth analysis on the effect of these mutations on transmissibility and vaccine escape is

underway. From a diagnostic point of view, some of the mutations in the spike protein cause primers used in some of the RT-PCR kits to not function as expected. This is otherwise known as a spike gene dropout or spike gene target failure (SGTF). While most kits use multiple primer sets targeting different genes in SARS-CoV-2 RNA for diagnosis, this should not adversely affect the diagnosis, but can be used as a surrogate for quick identification of the variant. Nevertheless this approach is not specific to Omicron, as other variants could also have similar mutations which can cause a spike in gene dropout.

Does the variant result in vaccine breakthrough infections?

Some of the initial individuals identified to be infected with the variant have been vaccinated for COVID-19 and therefore the variant can indeed cause vaccine breakthrough infections. This should not be of concern, since the prevalent variants of

concern including Delta have been shown to cause breakthrough infections. Whether the variant causes more breakthrough infections than Delta is not currently known.

How many countries have reported Omicron?

As of date, nine countries have confirmed the presence of Omicron. This includes South Africa, Botswana, England, Hong Kong, Australia, Italy, Israel, Czech Republic, and Belgium.

Suspected cases are being followed up in a number of other countries. Countries have identified the variant through genomic surveillance programmes. The initial reports of the variant has been made possible through the tireless efforts of researchers in Botswana and South Africa as well as countries which reported infections in incoming travellers.

India has a national programme on genomic surveillance (INSACOG) as well as focussed surveillance programmes in Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi and Karnataka, apart

from independent research programmes. In INSACOG's latest Bulletin, none of the sequenced samples in India have the Omicron variant until date. Heightened surveillance of the variant is ongoing.

In remembrance: How can we be prepared for the variant?

Enhanced surveillance and genome sequencing efforts are essential to detect and track the prevalence of the Omicron variant. Rapid sharing of genome sequences of the virus and the epidemiological data linked with it to publicly available databases will help in developing a better understanding of the variant. Existing public health and social measures need to be strengthened to control and prevent transmission.

Enhancing vaccination coverage across different regions along with access to testing, therapeutics and support will be essential for combating the new variant. Equitable access to vaccines would be key to controlling the Omicron variant, and slowing down the emergence of any future variants.

EXPLAINER

Gerrymandering, a challenge to U.S. democracy?

What is redistricting? How is it becoming a decisive factor in U.S. electoral politics?

NARAYAN LAKSHMAN

The story so far: Redistricting, the process of redrawn electoral boundaries, is conducted across U.S. Congressional and State legislative districts every decade, following the publication of the results of the population census. The principle behind redistricting is to ensure that the election of public officials embodies the ideal of genuine democratic representation, by factoring in changes in the geographic distribution of population. At the present juncture, the 2020 census results came in late, in August 2021, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Following this, in several 'swing states', or states that could potentially vote for members of either major political party, including Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio and Texas, Republican State legislators have successfully gerrymandered their respective electoral districts to build up "supermajorities" that could potentially overrule the dictats of a Democratic Governor. This process leaves worrying questions on democratic representation unanswered, because in such cases, Democratic Party supporters in these states have virtually no constitutional means to change the leadership of their



A protest sign at a rally in opposition to the proposed Congressional district maps at the Capitol in Salt Lake City on November 10, 2021. AP

legislatures, a hallmark of substantive democracy. The gerrymandering issue becomes even more salient given that the U.S. Congress is virtually gridlocked on most major policy issues, leaving vital questions in areas such as reproductive rights, gun control and healthcare reform in the hands of State authorities to implement or not as they choose.

Why should Democrats be worried about gerrymandering? During the redistricting cycle that kicked off a decade ago, Republicans in battleground states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin Michigan

redrew State legislative district boundaries to favour their party's candidates. In the wake of that action, since 2011, Republicans have successfully held on to both houses of the State government in all three States for the best part of ten years. That this happened despite Democrats winning other key public posts including the office of Governor, demonstrates the considerable potential of gerrymandering to tip the scales towards one party in the long run. Yet this apparent loophole in democratic politics is not cast in stone, and even in the case of these three States, independent or bipartisan State

legislature commissions are now taking up the cause of righting past wrongs and addressing the question of electoral map-making in a non-partisan manner.

An important point to note here is that it is by no means, in the longer arc of U.S. political history, that only the Republican Party is guilty of gerrymandering. Indeed, among the swing states of the 2020 election, one State, Nevada, offered control of the redistricting process to the Democratic Party, and in Nevada, reports suggest that Democrats have nearly finalised an electoral districts map that would "give them supermajorities in both chambers of the Legislature, despite President Biden's winning just 51% of the State's vote last year."

What trends are driving redistricting?

A specific long-term demographic trend is the movement of Democratic supporters into relatively urban areas, and the movement of Republicans to rural areas with far lower population density. With such an ever-more skewed geographic distribution of voters, Republican Party lawmakers have found it convenient to include or exclude cities in a district with a large swathe of rural voters depending on the density of

Democratic supporters living there.

In the years prior to the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, redistricting was also driven by what is known as 'packing,' which is the attempt to redraw maps to ensure that a relatively larger proportion of a specific demographic group, such as African American voters, is 'packed' into a single or a few districts, blunting their capability to decisively determine an electoral outcome. In the first half of the 20th century and before, Southern States especially controlled the impact of the African American voter through such means. The flip side of packing is 'cracking,' which implies lawmakers seeking to break down a bunching together of certain voters who would support their opponents' party, and spreading them across several districts, thus diluting their vote.

Where does the solution lie?

It is only through bipartisan or independent commissions exercising total control over redistricting that the process will be cleansed of political bias and represent genuine changes in population distribution. Presently, a majority of U.S. States - 39 out of 50 - do not have any such independent bodies.

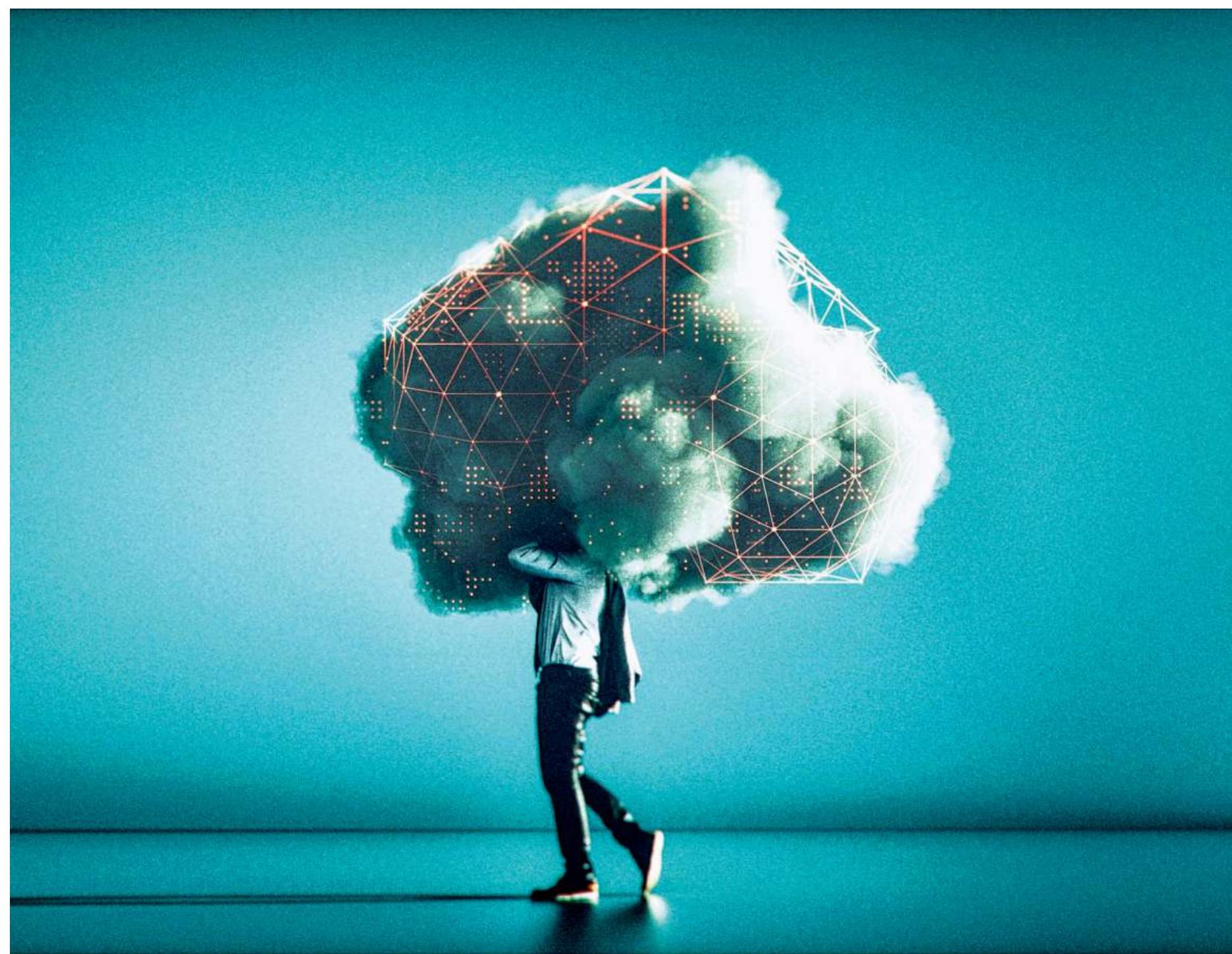
THE GIST

Redistricting is the process of redrawing electoral boundaries following the publication of the results of the population census. It is done to ensure that the election of public officials factors in changes in the geographic distribution of population.

Following this, legislators have successfully gerrymandered their respective electoral districts to build up "supermajorities" in favour of their own parties.

It is only through bipartisan or independent commissions exercising consistent and total control over redistricting that the process will be cleansed of political bias.

CM YK NND



CACHE

Running business on Cloud

From SaaS to IaaS to PaaS, the application of cloud computing has now become universal

S. VARAHASIMHAN

THE GIST

- With Cloud Computing, you only have to subscribe to a service provider to obtain the hardware and operating system that your software needs. The cost for this mix of hardware product depends on how long the computers are used, the type of hardware and how much data is stored etc.

- Cloud computing has two vital technologies: "virtualisation" which lets computer resources be shared through multiple virtual machines; and "network" that lets data requests flow to and from the datacentre or the Cloud through the Internet.

- There are public Clouds, private Clouds and hybrid Clouds.

If you want to sell something, the most important thing to focus on is the business model. And if you want to sell your products or services online, then you need a web portal that supports a business process that goes from taking the request, delivering the product and collecting the payment. Twenty years ago one would have to set up a technical team to manage all the computer infrastructure. However, that is no longer the case.

With Cloud Computing, you only have to subscribe to a service provider to obtain the hardware and operating system that your software needs. This lets you focus on the core business problem and not worry about computer infrastructure which will reside in a datacentre in your country or somewhere else. And the pricing for this mix of hardware product and service is based on how long the computers are used, the type of hardware and how much data is stored etc.. In other words, Cloud Computing brings the utility model to computer infrastructure: like electricity, we only pay for how much we use.

This model of utility computing is called pay-as-you-go and it is the same principle behind Software as a Service (SaaS). With SaaS, a software user is charged based on how many transactions a customer makes and the volume of those transactions, instead of a flat fee. An example is Google Photos where a customer pays based on the giga-bytes that is required to store photos. Other popular examples are Zoho applications and Google Applications. SaaS model is now present in various complex businesses. Even Cloud Computing services like Amazon Web Services or Microsoft Azure, work on the principle of SaaS but because they offer Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) if we order hardware with minimal software, or Platform as a Service (PaaS) if we order hardware with more than minimal software installed on it.

The evolution of Cloud Computing

When software is built and run on the "Cloud", depending on where the servers (ie, the computer infrastructure) are located, the response time will differ. To provide quick responses especially when customers are present in multiple geographies (think Google or Amazon or IRCTC), it is prudent to host the Cloud in multiple locations. This is called Edge computing. By "Cloud" we refer to the same datacentre and network circuits that are used by multiple customers including possibly our business competitors. It is also called "public Cloud". In contrast to this is the "private Cloud" where geographically distributed hardware are cordoned off virtually such that the computing resources are allotted only to one customer. A recent trend is to manage data security issues by using hybrid Cloud: the extremely vital, private information is stored in the private Cloud while the less critical data is stored in the public Cloud.

Cloud Computing brings the utility model to computer infrastructure: like electricity, we only pay for how much we use.

In order to automate launching new servers, managing them, running software in them, scaling them down etc. automation software like Terraform is used. These are called Infrastructure-as-a-service software. There are many solutions built around infrastructure - failing over to a back-up, spawn new virtual machines called containers and ensure High Availability etc.. These solutions all come under the umbrella called Devops (Development and Operations).

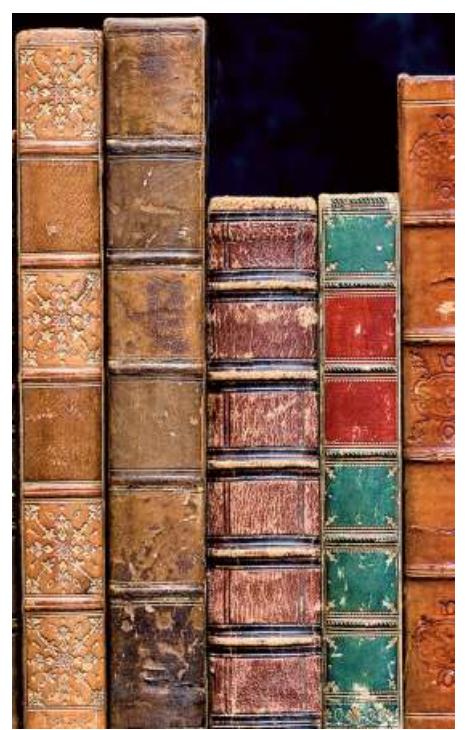
When Cloud Computing's potential is used well, one can launch rich features faster and put customers on cloud nine.

The recent trends

Cloud Computing unleashes unlimited computing resources and to use these resources to the fullest, new software development paradigms need to be adopted. For example, the recent trend known as "Cloud native development" is developing software that runs on multiple parallel threads or can automatically request for extra servers when demand is high and turn off servers when demand is low.

In order to automate launching new servers, managing them, running software in them, scaling them down etc. automation software like Terraform is used. These are called Infrastructure-as-a-service software. There are many solutions built around infrastructure - failing over to a back-up, spawn new virtual machines called containers and ensure High Availability etc.. These solutions all come under the umbrella called Devops (Development and Operations).

When Cloud Computing's potential is used well, one can launch rich features faster and put customers on cloud nine.



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Helpless or hapless in our pursuit to master English?

S. UPENDRAN

What is the difference between 'hapless' and 'helpless'? (S Krishnan, Chennai)

The 'a' in 'hapless' sounds like the 'a' in 'cat', 'bat' and 'sat'; the word comes from the Old Norse 'happ' which meant 'good luck' or 'fortune'. A 'hapless' person, therefore, is someone who doesn't have much of either; he is someone who experiences misfortune most of the time. He is a luckless individual who does not get the breaks he deserves. One usually feels sorry or pity for such an individual for many of the unfortunate things that happen to him are not always his fault. By the way, the word 'happy' is related to 'happ'. 'The hapless victims of the flood went without food for several days.' 'During dinner, he gave a detailed account of his constipation problem to his hapless guests.' When you refer to someone as being 'helpless', what you are suggesting is that the individual is defenceless - should danger come his way, he will not know what to do, and will be unable to protect himself. A baby is usually helpless; someone has to take care of it. Even adults can be helpless at times; they may not know what to do in a given situation. 'When I see all this poverty around me, I feel completely helpless.' 'When I saw the eagle swoop down and take the kitten, I felt helpless and depressed.'

Is it correct to say, 'I was scared, and was constantly looking over my shoulders'? (Brijesh, Mysore)

No, it is not. People generally talk about looking over one's 'shoulder' and not 'shoulders'. Makes sense, I suppose; it is very difficult to look over both the right and the left shoulder at the same time. You can look over one, but not both simultaneously. The idiom 'look over one's shoulder' is mostly used in informal contexts. When do we keep looking over our shoulder? When we are extremely anxious or nervous about something; when we have the feeling that someone may be following us and that we may be in some sort of danger - that something unpleasant is going to happen. 'Raj sensed he was being followed. But being a detective, he never once looked over his shoulder.' 'Whenever I walk these streets after dark, I keep looking over my shoulder.'

How is the word 'vase' pronounced? (CV Karthik, Kanchipuram)

There are two very different ways of pronouncing the word; which one you choose to use depends on which side of the Atlantic you are from. The British tend to pronounce the first vowel like the 'a' in 'art', 'part' and 'dart', and the final 'se' like the 'z' in 'zip', 'zoo' and 'zero'. They pronounce the word 'VAAZ'. The Americans, on the other hand, rhyme the word with 'face', 'race' and 'case' - the final 'se' sounds like the 's' in 'sip' and 'sit'. A container usually used to hold cut flowers is referred to as a vase. 'Dilip presented the couple an expensive vase on their anniversary.' 'Some of the vases in this museum are priceless.'

"Trust is like a vase...once it's broken, though you can fix it, the vase will never be the same again."

-Walter Anderson
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◀ This is the statue of a legend who was voted the club's best player of the 20th century. Name him and his nationality. ■ FCB ARCHIVES

Please send in your answers to the

dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Answers to the daily quiz from 26th November:

- Jaipal Singh Munda (representing Bihar), 2. Dakshayani Velayudhan (representing the Madras Presidency), 3. Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer (representing the Madras Presidency), 4. Begum Aizaz Rasul (representing the United Provinces), 5. SH Prater (representing the Madras Presidency), 6. Eamon De Valera, three-time Taoiseach (Prime Minister/head of State) of Ireland and later President. He was also instrumental in the writing of the Irish Constitution whose "Directive Principles of Social Policy" influenced the Indian Constitution's Directive Principles of State Policy.

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