



## Uttar Pradesh soars high on India's Aviation Map World's Fourth Largest International Airport in Jewar, Noida



Historic step in line with Prime Minister's vision to create a future-ready aviation sector

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The only state in India to have five international airports

Uttar Pradesh to emerge as 'logistics gateway of northern India' on global logistics map

Investment of more than ₹ 5730 crores, construction on 3300 acres of land in the first phase

Creation of more than 1 lakh employment opportunities for youth

Film City, Medical Device Park, Apparel Park and Construction of Aligarh Node of Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor will boost investment prospects and provide special benefits to western Uttar Pradesh

Plan to construct aerocity along with airport

Boost to hospitality and tourism sector

Operations with net-zero emission

Digital technology-based operations

Development of airport along with surface transport centre for seamless connectivity integrated with road, rail and metro

Target to complete the project by 2024

## Foundation Stone Laying

of

## Noida International Airport

by

**Narendra Modi**

Prime Minister

In august presence of

**Yogi Adityanath**  
Chief Minister  
Uttar Pradesh

**Jyotiraditya M. Scindia**  
Minister, Civil Aviation  
Govt. of India

**Keshav Prasad Maurya**  
Deputy Chief Minister  
Uttar Pradesh

**Nand Gopal Gupta 'Nandi'**  
Minister, Civil Aviation, Political Pension,  
Minority Welfare, Muslim Waqf and Haj,  
Uttar Pradesh

**Dr. Mahesh Sharma**  
MP  
Gautam Buddha Nagar

**Surendra Singh Nagar**  
MP  
Rajya Sabha

**Dhirendra Singh**  
MLA  
Jewar

Date : 25 November, 2021

Time : 12:00 PM

Venue : Noida International  
Airport Site, Jewar,  
Gautam Buddha Nagar

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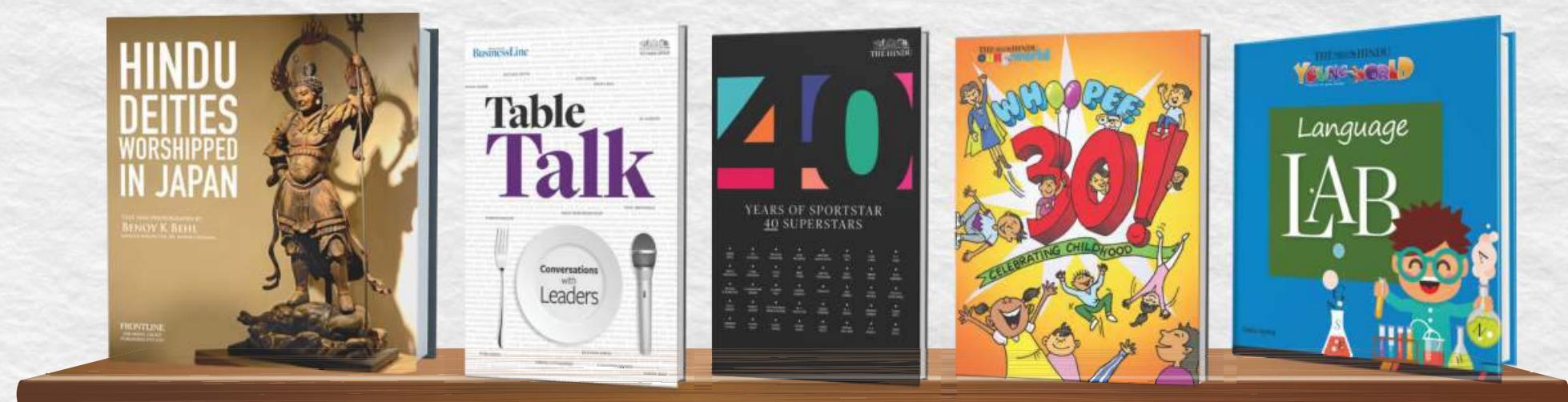
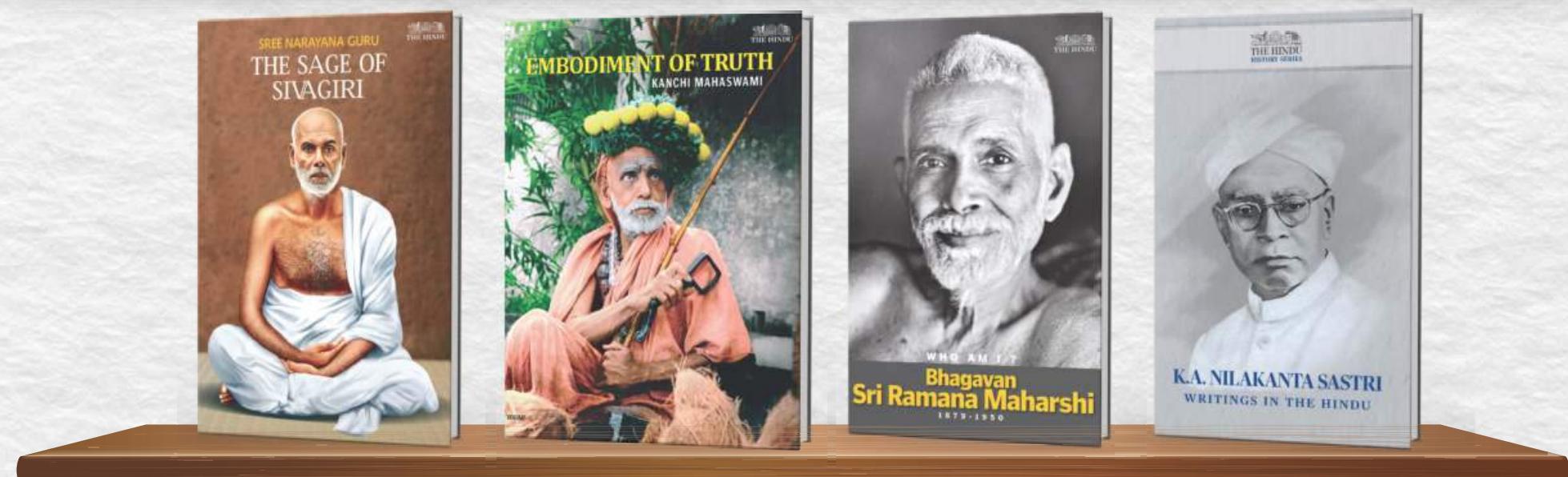
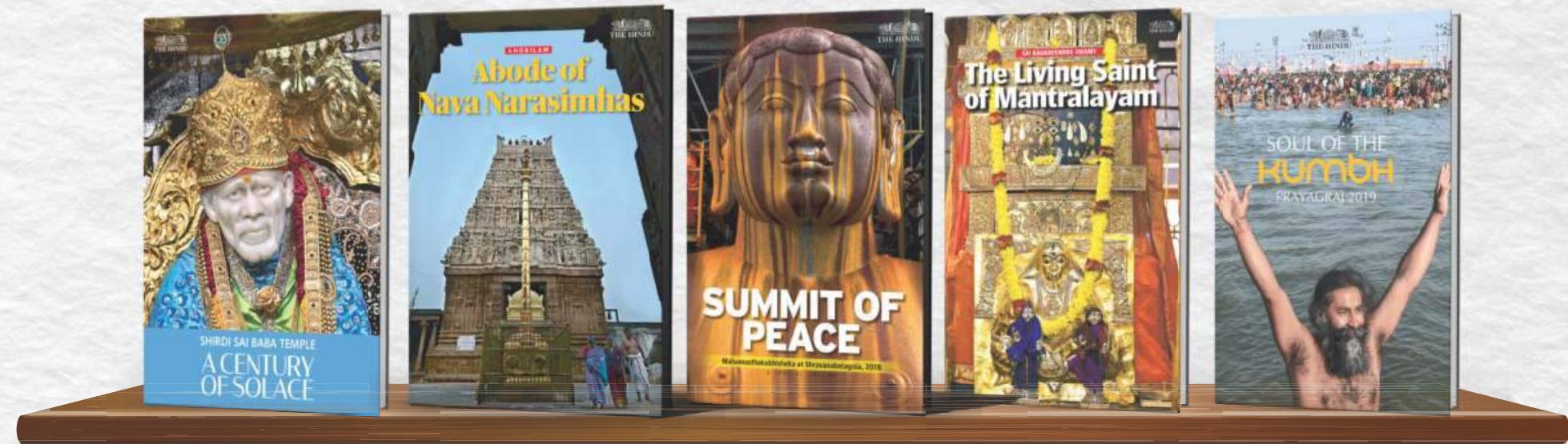
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Cong. leader Mukul Sangma, 11 Meghalaya MLAs join Trinamool

page 9



Do not disturb federal structure, West Bengal CM Mamata urges Modi

page 9



31 migrants dead as boat capsizes in English Channel

page 11



India takes on NZ in first Test at Kanpur from today

page 13

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## IN BRIEF



City schools, Govt. offices to reopen from Monday

NEW DELHI Schools, colleges, libraries, and Government offices in Delhi, which were closed from November 13 due to high levels of air pollution, will restart from Monday, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Wednesday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Jewar town struggles to protect new-found fame

GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR The nondescript town of Jewar, 100 km from Delhi, is set to find a place on the world map as Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday will lay the foundation stone of an international airport that would be the largest in Asia and the fourth largest in the world. The first phase is expected to be completed by 2024 when one runway would become operational.

STATES ▶ PAGE 5

Vasundhara's trip creates a desert storm for BJP

JAIPUR The tour of former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje of six districts in southern Rajasthan has created ripples in the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party in the aftermath of the recent State Assembly byelection, in which the party suffered a humiliating defeat.

STATES ▶ PAGE 4

## Centre's free foodgrain scheme on till March

Union Cabinet also approves repeal of farm reform laws

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



As the economy is getting back on track, the figures are looking much better. At the same time, Prime Minister wants to help those poor families who have gone through this COVID-19 pandemic, so that for the next four months, they should be helped and foodgrains given to them

ANURAG THAKUR  
Information and Broadcasting Minister

crop patterns and promote zero-budget agriculture.

In its other major decision, the Cabinet approved the extension of the PMGKAY which provides more than 80 crore ration card holders with five kg each of rice or wheat a month free of cost, in addition to the five kg which they are eligible for on a subsidised basis under the National Food Security Act.

Initially introduced in the first COVID-19 relief package from April 2020, the scheme has been extended thrice, but was scheduled to end in November.

Earlier this month, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey had told presspersons that there was no proposal for extension as the economy was reviving.

"In the last more than 20 months, we have seen that

the poor, even the middle class families have suffered, not here but globally as well. One of the ways to help the poor families was to give them foodgrains," Mr. Thakur said.

"We still feel as the economy is getting back on track, the figures are looking much better. At the same time, Prime Minister wants to help those poor families who have gone through this COVID-19 pandemic, so that for the next four months, they should be helped and foodgrains should be given to them," the Minister added.

In the run-up to the Uttar Pradesh Assembly election, the State Government had announced a unilateral extension of the PMGKAY until March 2022.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## More hospital births, but limited gains in childhood nutrition: NFHS

Total Fertility Rate has dropped to 2.0, indicating just replacement level

JACOB KOSHY  
JAGRITI CHANDRA  
NEW DELHI



Births in institutional facilities, such as a hospital, improved by nearly eight percentage points but children who were either stunted or displayed signs of wasting only dropped by a maximum of three percentage points, shows a comparison of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 5 and 4.

The complete results of the NFHS-5 were made public on Wednesday. The

NFHS-4 was released in 2014-15 and the latest, which captured population health indicators in 2017-19, was delayed due to the pandemic.

India has also officially hit a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of

2.0 that indicates a decrease from the 2.2 in the NFHS-4. According to the UN Population Division, a TFR of about 2.1 children per woman is called replacement-level fertility. If replacement level

fertility is sustained over a sufficiently long period, each generation will exactly replace itself. The urban TFR is 1.6 and rural 2.1.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Hunger watch

The nutritional status of children in India barely improved in 2019-20 from the levels in 2015-16, the National Family Health Survey-5 data show



Indicator	2019-20	2015-16	2005-06
Children under five who are stunted	35.5	38.4	48
Children under five who are wasted	19.3	21	19.8
Children under five who are underweight	32.1	35.8	42.5
Children aged six months to 59 months who are anaemic	67.1	58.6	69.4

and interest of the nation," the Ministry had argued.

The Centre attempted to buttress its case last year by citing a Constitution Bench decision in the Public Interest Foundation case of 2019 which said "though criminalisation of politics is a bitter manifest truth, which is a terrible to the citadel of democracy, be that as it may, the court cannot make the law".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Will you ban convicts from polls, SC asks Govt.

Law Ministry rejected the idea in 2020

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

cially in Uttar Pradesh.

"Are you willing to ban people who have been convicted of offences from contesting elections," Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana, heading a Special Bench, orally asked Additional Solicitor-General S.V. Raju, appearing for the Centre. Mr. Raju said he had just been assigned the case and would need time to consult and formulate a response.

But the Government, in an

affidavit filed by the Law Ministry in the court in December 2020, had rejected the idea of a lifetime ban on convicted persons contesting elections or forming or becoming an office-bearer of a political party. The Ministry had reasoned that MPs and MLAs were not bound by specific "service conditions".

"They are bound by their oath to serve citizens and country... They are bound by propriety, good conscience

and interest of the nation," the Ministry had argued.

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CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Trade unions want labour codes repealed

DAMINI NATH  
NEW DELHI

Over a year since Parliament passed four labour codes, the Centre is still in the process of notifying the rules to implement them and has not set a date for the roll-out. Trade unions, however, have planned to intensify

their agitation this week against the codes in the wake of the Government's decision to repeal the three farm laws.

A senior functionary of the Union Labour and Employment Ministry Bhupender Yadav is likely to make a statement in Parliament.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

es, social security, occupational safety and industrial relations were passed in 2019 and 2020.

Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav is likely to make a statement in Parliament.

## Battle won



**A reunion:** Anupama S. Chandran and her partner Ajith Kumar leaving with their son from the family court in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday, a day after DNA test results confirmed that they are the biological parents of the baby. ■ MAHINSHA (REPORT ON PAGE 5)

## Local militants feeling the heat in Valley

**Persisting unrest** | Of the 199 terrorists active in the Kashmir Valley, 110 are locals and 89 foreigners, as of November 2021



- In 2021, 97 terrorists were newly recruited
- In entire 2020, 178 persons joined terror ranks
- Till Nov. 23 of 2021, 148 militants were killed. Of them, 127 were locals and 21 foreigners
- A total of 195 militants were killed in 2020

Of 148 killed till November 23 this year, 127 were residents of Kashmir: CRPF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

More than 80% of the militants killed this year in Kashmir hailed from the Valley, according to Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) data.

The CRPF is one of the largest Central forces deployed in the Valley for counter-terrorism operations, along with the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Army.

According to a CRPF official, till November 23, as many as 148 militants had been killed, of which 127 were residents and 21 foreigners. In 2020, the number of militants killed in the Valley stood at 195.

This compensation is provided from the risk fund and central welfare fund of the CRPF. While all CRPF personnel contribute ₹500 each to the risk fund, the contribution to the central welfare fund depends on the rank of the official.

CRPF has a strength of around 3 lakh personnel. This year, 11 CRPF personnel have been killed in action – three in J&K and eight in areas affected by Left Wing Extremism.

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# Educational institutions, Govt. offices to reopen on Monday

Decision taken following improvement in Delhi's air quality, says Minister

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Schools, colleges, libraries and other educational institutions in the city, which have been closed since November 13 due to high levels of air pollution, will reopen on Monday, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Wednesday.

## Truck entry ban on

Government offices, which were closed, will also reopen on Monday, he said. However, the ban on entry of trucks into the city will continue till December 3.

"Schools, colleges, and institutes will reopen on November 29. All Government offices will also reopen and the work-from-home directive will be lifted. But for this, it is advisable for all Govern-



**Quick fix:** Anti-smog gun being used to curb pollution at Delhi University on a smoggy Wednesday morning. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ment employees to use public transport to a great extent for the purpose of commuting," Mr. Rai said.

The Minister said that for the last three days, there have been improvements in Delhi's pollution levels and the decision was taken after a review meeting on Wednesday.

"Until now, trucks and other commercial vehicles, except essential service trucks, were banned from entering Delhi. But today, we decided that starting November 27, CNG and electric trucks will be allowed to enter. Other trucks will remain banned till December 3," he said.

Mr. Rai said that there are colonies and areas such as Nirmal Colony, Gulabi Bagh, Timarpur where a majority of Delhi Government employees live and the Government has decided to start special - private CNG - buses for these people to come to work.

"If we look at the average air quality index from before Deepavali, Delhi has reached those levels again. The pollution levels had been steadily rising after Deepavali. Considering that, multiple restrictions were put in place, apart from the routine processes," the Minister said.

The Minister said that so far, 1,221 construction sites have been inspected and work was stopped at 105 places due to violations of rules.

# 'Special booths at dark spots to prevent crimes against women'

Each station to have 3 inspectors to probe such cases: Asthana

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana on Wednesday said that in a bid to step up women's security in the Capital, the force will set up special booths at dark spots and vulnerable areas in consultation with beat officers, traffic police and people. He also said that for the first time, each police station will have three inspectors exclusively to investigate crimes against women.

Addressing a press conference at the Indian Women's Press Corps office, Mr. Asthana said expeditious attention will be given if a woman or a child is in distress. "We have a crime against women cell in every police station and there is also the special unit for women and children that is working throughout the day."



Delhi Police Commissioner Rakesh Asthana addressing a press conference in Delhi on Wednesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

cases".

The police, he said, have identified the dark spots where there is no mobile network and the areas that are vulnerable, and integrated facilitation booths will come up there. "It is an issue as sometimes there is no last-mile connectivity in some areas."

"You [authorities] start the recruitment process and appoint them. Show some speed. This is required," said a Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh while hearing a plea which claimed that there is an acute shortage of doctors and paramedics in Government-run hospitals in the city. "It is not necessary that all vacancies should be filled [if] you are not getting suitable candidates. Start the process. You can't say that you will never start the process," the Bench said.

Fill vacancies in Govt. hospitals, HC asks Centre

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Centre and the State Government to begin the process of recruitment of doctors and paramedical staff in Government-run hospitals in the Capital.

"You [authorities] start the recruitment process and appoint them. Show some speed. This is required," said a Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh while hearing a plea which claimed that there is an acute shortage of doctors and paramedics in Government-run hospitals in the city. "It is not necessary that all vacancies should be filled [if] you are not getting suitable candidates. Start the process. You can't say that you will never start the process," the Bench said.

# Street vendors protest outside CM's residence

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) organised a protest outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's house on Monday over the "poor implementation" of the Street Vendors Act 2014.

NASVI president Arbind Singh said that vendors demanded proper functioning of the grievance redressal committees (GRC), which are autonomous bodies constituted to look into the grievances of street vendors.

He added that the town vending committees, which oversee the survey of street vendors, "should be given complete powers under the 2014 Act".

# Court discharges 5 accused in riots case for lack of evidence

It comes down heavily on IO, orders inquiry into police probe

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has discharged five accused in a case related to vandalism during the north-east Delhi riots while noting that there was no sufficient evidence that has been presented by the police on the basis of which charges can be framed against them.

Additional Sessions Judge Virender Bhat, in his order dated November 22, stated that the material on record clearly indicates that a riotous incident in question has taken place wherein the shop as well as the house of the complainant was vandalised and looted.

"This court is not insensitive towards the mental agony and financial loss suffered by the complainant due to this incident. However, the sensitivity or the emotions alone are not the factors to be taken into consideration by the court while deciding the fate of any accused," the court stated.



Riot-hit Shiv Vihar in north-east Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

While discharging the five accused for lack of sufficient evidence, the court also directed the DCP (North-East) to conduct an inquiry into the manner in which the investigation was conducted by the IO in the case to find out whether or not there had been any deliberate attempt to shield the offenders. It asked the DCP to submit a report on the next date of hearing.

According to the case records, the FIR pertains to an incident of rioting and vandalism of a medical shop on February 25 around 11.30 p.m. when a mob of around 100 people, who were armed with rods, pipes and petrol bottles, raised slogans, came towards complainant Firoz Khan's shop in Sudamapuri and broke its shutter and the main gate and looted it. Mr. Khan was watching the incident from his roof all the while.

The court stated that there was only one witness, Mr. Khan, in the whole case.

# 15,000 flats up for grabs in DDA scheme

It has approved fixation of predetermined rates for allotment of land to traders

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has launched a special housing scheme for close to 15,000 flats across locations, including Dwarka, Narela, Rohini and Jasola. The flats are those which remained unsold in the DDA's previous housing schemes, a press note said on Wednesday.

The flats are being offered at the old rates and the cost in relaxation of the costing policy of the DDA, which is updated every financial year based on the appreciation and depreciation of land price and building as the case may be.

The allottees will be eligible for subsidy under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana if they avail of home loan from a bank or a financial institution," the



Low income group flats offered by the DDA at Narela in Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

statement said.

Apart from this, the DDA has approved the fixation of predetermined rates for the allotment of land to transport traders.

Each eligible transport trader will get a plot of 50

square metres with a floor area ratio of 250.

"As per the provision of the Master Plan of Delhi 2021, godowns of transport traders in the walled city and special areas are required to be shifted to the integrated

freight complex at Holambi Kalan, Narela, where booking of goods and transport agencies offices are permitted activity," the release said.

The DDA has also made provisions to expedite the process of its upcoming "in-situ" slum rehabilitation projects.

"The provisions include a condition in which the slum dwellers, who are eligible for rehabilitation, will lose their right to transit accommodation if they refuse to vacate the premises which are being redeveloped. If the eligible dwellers refuse to vacate the premises even after the sanctioning of the building plan, for the areas being redeveloped, then they will not be given the alternative accommodation after the redevelopment project is completed," a DDA official said.

# Gambhir receives death threat from 'ISIS Kashmir'

Police increase security at his residence

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

BJP's East Delhi MP Gautam Gambhir has written to Delhi Police after he and his family allegedly received a death threat through email from "ISIS Kashmir" on Tuesday.

In the letter, the MP said that he received the email on his official email ID at 9.32 p.m. on Tuesday. "This email states a death threat to me and my family. I therefore request you to look into the matter and make adequate security arrangements and lodge an FIR," it said.

DCP (Central) Shweta Chauhan said a complaint was received at Rajinder Nagar police station. "Mr. Gambhir alleged that an unknown person sent an email on November 23 on his



MP Gautam Gambhir

email ID regarding a threat to kill him and his family members," she said.

The DCP said that the district police have increased his personal security and security at his residence in Rajinder Nagar. "The police are currently inquiring into the source of the complaint," she said.

# HC stays summons to Vijender Gupta in defamation case

BJP leader had defamed me to gain political mileage: Gahlot

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday stayed a trial court order issuing summons to BJP MLA Vijender Gupta in a criminal defamation complaint filed by Delhi Cabinet Minister Kailash Gahlot.

Justice Manoj Kumar Ohri gave the direction on Mr. Gupta's plea challenging the summons issued to him for allegedly making defamatory statements on purported irregularities in the procurement of 1,000 low-floor buses by the Delhi Transport Corporation.

The High Court will hear the case again on March 4 next year.

Mr. Gupta was summoned as an accused by the trial

court on October 11 on the Delhi Transport Minister's complaint. The trial court had said there was prima facie enough evidence to summon Mr. Gupta as an accused for the alleged offence of defamation.

Senior lawyer Ajay Burman, appearing for Mr. Gupta, argued that his client was covered under the exceptions to defamation under

the Indian Penal Code as the statements were made in discharge of public service as a Leader of the Opposition.

Senior advocate Manish Vashisth, appearing for Mr. Gahlot, stated that Mr. Gupta's tweets were "absolutely scandalous" and made in the absence of any "conclusive finding by any judicial body".

In his complaint before the trial court, Mr. Gahlot has alleged that Mr. Gupta "intentionally and for malafide purposes" defamed him and tarnished his reputation to gain political mileage. He claimed that Mr. Gupta levelled "defamatory, scandalous, mischievous, false and scurrilous allegations" verbally as well as in writing.

# First train with Ayodhya pilgrims to leave city on Dec. 3

Velankanni Church included in Delhi Government's free pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens: CM

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The first train carrying citizens on a Delhi Government-sponsored pilgrimage to Ayodhya will depart from the Capital on December 3, bookings for which are now open, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced here on Wednesday.

He also said that the Government had decided to include Velankanni Church in Tamil Nadu in the list of pilgrimage sites so that Christian devotees can also avail of free pilgrimage as per their wish.

"There used to be 12 listed routes to where the people could avail of the free pilgrimage under the scheme. The shrines included Puri, Dwarka, Haridwar, Rishi-

kesh, Rameshwaram, Shirdi and Ajmer Sharif among other holy sites. Now, Ayodhya has been added to the list as well," Mr. Kejriwal told a digital briefing.

## Facilities for pilgrims

The scheme aims at helping the elderly go on a pilgrimage once in a lifetime. The entire expense of leaving from home until return, which includes travelling by air-conditioned trains, property AC hotel stays, meals, local

travel and more, is borne by the Delhi Government. An insurance cover of ₹1 lakh is also provided.

Any citizen from the Capital who is aged 60 years or more can avail of the scheme after acquiring a certificate from their local MLA. Now, the 13th route of the four-day long Delhi-Ayodhya-Delhi tirth yatra is on offer. Eligible people willing to visit Ayodhya can register by visiting the Delhi Government e-district portal.

## Accommodating all

The Chief Minister sought to assure citizens that they must not worry that they would be left out if there were too many applications. If there were more people than the capacity of the train, then the Go-

vernment would put another train on the route.

"If there are still more applicants, then we will put in a third train. The train may leave after a week, but will take everyone. Therefore, everyone should apply for the darshan of Shri Ram Lalaji. I genuinely want as many people as possible to visit Ayodhya," he said.

"Christian brothers demanded that a place of their pilgrimage be included in this list. Today, I want to give some good news to them also. Many Christians wish to go to Velankanni Church. We are going to include Velankanni Church in the list of pilgrimage sites very soon and you will also be able to go on pilgrimage as per your wish," he added.

Arvind Kejriwal ■

Velankanni Church included in Delhi Government's free pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens: CM

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**Timings**

DELHI			
THURSDAY, NOV. 25			
RISE 06:52	SET 17:25		
RISE 22:18	SET 11:41		
FRIDAY, NOV. 26			
RISE 06:53	SET 17:25		
RISE 23:17	SET 12:20		
SATURDAY, NOV. 27			
RISE 06:53	SET 17:25		
RISE 00:00	SET 12:56		

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	29	09
Safdarjung	29	09
Palam	28	12

**Delhi Palm Today**  
27°C A dry weather continues. Morning will be slight cold with shallow fog. Day will be comfortable. Pollution level will be severe.

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

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**Tomato prices soar; officials to act against hoarders**

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Food and Civil Supplies Minister Imran Hussain on Wednesday expressed concern over the sudden surge in the prices of tomatoes in Delhi and directed that teams from the market intelligence unit be deputed to ascertain the reason.

Over the past few days, the price of tomatoes has reached ₹100 per kg in many markets of the city, with traders attributing the rise to heavy unseasonal rains across the country and a surge in fuel prices.

Mr. Hussain asked officials to take action against any instances of hoarding or black marketing. "The Delhi Government is keeping a close watch on the price trends of essential commodities," he said.

## While spotlight's on Delhi, smaller northern towns often fare worse

Agra, Firozabad, Vrindavan had higher pollution levels than national capital after Deepavali; experts call for focus on areas beyond NCR too

**NIKHIL M BABU**  
NEW DELHI

An analysis of air quality data by *The Hindu* shows that Agra, Firozabad, and Vrindavan were more polluted than Delhi during the week after Deepavali. However, during this period, the media attention and actions were concentrated more on Delhi and the NCR.

While Delhi was among the top 10 most polluted cities for three out of seven days, Agra, Firozabad, and Vrindavan were part of the list for four days, as per the air quality index (AQI) data of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Also, the average daily AQI of these three places is more than that of the national Capital.

On some days, other non-NCR districts such as Kaithal and Kanpur made it to the top 10 list and were more polluted than Delhi. Interestingly, Delhi was never among the top five polluted cities in the country during this week.

The Supreme Court ordered actions have also been mainly for the Delhi-NCR, which is monitored by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in NCR and Adjoining Areas. For instance, despite the high pollution, schools were not closed or construction activities were not banned in Agra, Firozabad or Vrindavan after Deepavali, officials said.

However, on November 13, these actions were taken in Delhi after the Supreme Court pulled up the State and Central Governments earlier that day. Also, Delhi and the NCR have a Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), according to which,

### Keep your promises made to Delhiites first, BJP tells CM

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The BJP State Mahila Morcha on Wednesday staged a demonstration outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence, accusing him of making false promises during his tours to poll-bound States when he has not fulfilled even a single promise made to Delhiites.

The demonstration was led by Pradesh Morcha president Yogita Singh.

"While Mr. Kejriwal is talking about giving ₹1,000 each month to women of

Punjab and Uttarakhand, he should fulfil this in Delhi first. He had earlier talked about giving unemployment allowance to the youth but thousands of them are still waiting for that," Ms. Singh said.

"The CM, who talked about women's safety and welfare, had promised CCTV cameras in DTC buses, but the fact is these buses are in a bad shape. If he talks about honour and respect for women, why is there not a single woman minister in his cabinet?" she asked.

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Referring to the North Delhi civic body Standing Committee meeting agenda of November 24, AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bha-

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Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said the North Delhi civic body was passing through an "extreme financial crisis" and was forced to long lease its properties to raise funds.

Civic body forced to lease land at low price: AAP

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

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## Gehlot asks Ministers to visit districts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot instructed his Cabinet colleagues to visit the districts, whose charge they are holding, for at least two days every month to review the progress of schemes and redress people's grievances. Mr. Gehlot said this would be a significant step towards providing good governance at the grassroots.

He said the Ministers should hold public hearings at the district headquarters, get feedback on implementation of schemes and interact with the elected representatives.

## Vasundhara trip creates a desert storm for BJP

Divide between rival factions set to deepen in Rajasthan

MOHAMMED IQBAL

Former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje's tour of six districts in southern Rajasthan, mainly in the Mewar region, has created ripples in the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party in the aftermath of the recent State Assembly by-election, in which the party suffered a humiliating defeat. The visit is set to deepen the divide between rival factions in the State unit.

Ms. Raje, also party national vice-president, is paying obeisance at some prominent temples in the region



**Paying respects:** Vasundhara Raje paying obeisance at the Sanwalia Seth temple in Chittorgarh. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

and visiting the families of the departed party leaders to offer her condolences during the four-day visit. Though she has declared that her tour is "religious" in nature, it is being seen here as a strategy to assert her dominance in the BJP.

This is the third occasion of Ms. Raje going on a show

of strength this year in the shape of a religious or personal visit. Upset on being sidelined within the party, Ms. Raje went on a two-day "pilgrimage" to the Lord Krishna Circuit in Bharatpur in March and made a high-profile visit to Jodhpur in October to offer condolences to Union Minister Gajendra

Singh Shekhawat on his mother's death and to the family of the departed Congress leader Mahipal Maderna.

On Wednesday, she arrived in Udaipur to a tumultuous welcome by the party workers and leaders opposed to Mewar region's seniormost leader Gulab Chand Kataria, including former Speaker Shantilal Chaplot and former Vallabh-nagar MLA Randhir Singh Bhindar, who fought the recent bypolls as a rebel. Ms. Raje inaugurated a "Suhani Sardi" (pleasant winter) campaign of a voluntary group.

The BJP leadership is yet to come to terms with the rout faced in the by-elections at Udaipur.

### SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one female **Name: Sushma, W/o: Deepak, R/o: RZ-257, Partap Vihar, Part-1, Street No. 4, Delhi** has been missing / kidnapped (with her son **Gautam Singh, Age-3 yrs. 6 months**)

since 05.11.2021 at 1:00 pm. from her house from the area of P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide **DD No. 72A, dated 07.11.2021** has been registered at P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi. The description of the missing/kidnapped female is as under: **Age: 25 years, Height: 5'2", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Medium, Wearing: Green colour suit, black colour salwar and sandal in feet.** The description of the Gautam Singh is as under: **Age: 3 years 6 months, Height: 2', Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Thin, Wearing: Blue colour T-shirt.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing female and her son but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing female and her son kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

E-mail Id - [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax No. 011-24368639

P.S. Aman Vihar, Delhi

DP/1181/RD/2021 Ph.: 011-27581812, 8750870321

### Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department

#### E-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer HP PWD Kasauli/Dist.Solan HP on behalf of Governor of HP invites the online bids on item rate in electronic tendering system, in 2 cover system for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors. Firms registered with HP PWD Department.

Job No.	Name of Work	Tentative Cost	Earnest Money	Time Allowed	Cost of Form
1.	Annual Maintenance Plan for the year 2021-22 for Old NH-22 to Parwanoo road in Km. 62/00 to 67/200. (SH:- Providing and laying renewal coat by providing 30mm thick Bituminous Concrete, thermoplastic edge line in Km. 62/00 to 67/00)	2,08,43,166/-	2,41,000/-	Three Month	5000/-
2.	Repair of Chandi to Ghyan road in Km. 0/00 to 6/00. (SH:- Providing and laying renewal coat by providing 30mm thick Bituminous Concrete, thermoplastic edge line in Km. 1/500 to 3/500)	26,13,673/-	46,700/-	Three Month	1500/-
3.	R/R Damages on Johari/Mallah road in Km. 0/00 to 27/465. (SH:- Repair to Pot Holes and Maintenance of WBM by Patch work in Km. 0/00 to 9/00)	18,25,555/-	27400/-	Three Month	500/-
4.	C/O Health Sub-Centre building at Nabon Dist/Solan (HP) (SH:- C/O building portion including water supply & Sanitary etc.)	23,85000/-	47,700/-	Six Month	500/-
5.	C/O Link road from JamaraKanjirayaButayala to Johari road Km. 0/00 to 6/00. (SH:- P/L soling work G-I in Km. 0/00 to 2/00)Under SCSP.	6,66,654/-	13,000/-	Two Month	350/-
6.	C/O Link road Jafli to Rajpur 0/00 to 2/300. (SH:- C/O 900mm dia HPC with both side Wall at Rds. 0/630, 1/165, 1/345, and 1/570)Under MNP.	7,22,760/-	14,500/-	Two Month	350/-

**Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:-** The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://hpptenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized certifying authorities (CA) Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HP PWD may obtain the same from the website <https://hpptenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

**Key dates.**

1. Date of Online Publication	29.11.2021 10.00 AM
2. Document Download Start Date	29.11.2021 11.00 AM
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	29.11.2021 11.00 AM to 06.12.2021 at 4.00PM
4. Physical Submission of receipt of EMD and cost of tender Document	07.12.2021 at 10.30 AM
5. Date of Opening of Bid	07.12.2021 at 11.00 AM

#### 1. TENDER DETAILS:

(i) The tender Document shall be uploaded online in 2 cover : Cover1: shall contain Scanned copies of all Technical Document/Eligibility Information".  
(ii) Cover 2: shall contain BOQ/Financial Bid", where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

#### 2. SUBMISSION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS:

Submit the receipt of online payment towards the cost of bid document and (b) Receipt of online payment bid security/Earnest Money and other Technical Document in O/o Executive Engineer HP PWD Kasauli HP as specified in Key.

Date Sr.No.2 on tender opening date, failing which the bid will be declared Non-responsive

3. Bid Opening Details:-The bid shall be opened on dated 07.12.2021 at 11.00 AM in the office Executive Engineer, HP PWD Division Kasauli HP, by the authorised officer. In their interest the tender are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

(i) The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 90/120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

(ii) Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Executive Engineer,  
Kasauli Division,  
HPPWD Kasauli  
On behalf of the Governor of HP.

HP /5148/21-22

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#### TENDERS

### KERALA STATE CENTRE FOR ADVANCED PRINTING AND TRAINING

Head Office Complex, Vattiyoorkavu, Thiruvananthapuram, Ph: 2365678, 23656415

### E-TENDER NOTICE

No. Cap/561/2021/M2/MTL] Dated: 24.11.2021

2 Cover System e-Tender No.

098/21-22/Md

are invited from

reputed paper dealers / suppliers / mills for the supply of 70 gsm 86

cm Reel Paper through online

e-tender id 2021\_CAPF\_455905.1.

Due date and time of tender / bid

submission (online): 27.11.2021 upto 11.00 AM.

For detailed information log on the website:

<https://etenders.kerala.gov.in>

& www.caaptkerala.com

Sd/- MD, C-ept

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, Rajender Kumar Jain S/o Kharai Lal Jain R/o: Flat No. 1428, Sector-C, Pocket - 1, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110070, allotted of Flat No. 1428, Third Floor, Sector-C, Pocket - 1, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110070 vide File No. 125/316983/CS/FS/VK/ Dated: 26/10/89, have applied for the lease of the aforesaid flat from the concerned authority to free him from the aforesaid documents i.e. DDA Demand Letter and NOC for Water & Electricity of the aforesaid flat have been lost. An FIR has been lodged to this effect. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found possession of original documents may file a complaint before the concerned authority. Please file a complaint before the concerned authority.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court, 10th day of November 2021.

Addl. District & Sessional Judge-01 Central Delhi

Case No-CS/267/2019

Suman Garg

Vs.

Jain Traders

To,

(1) M/S Jain Trader (Through its proprietors : Sh. Mahavir Prasad Jain)

Off: 4003-A, NAYA BAZAR,

DELHI-110006,

R/O: B-76, NAYA GUPTA COLONY,

IN BRIEF



KCR returns from Delhi without meeting PM

**HYDERABAD**  
Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao returned to Hyderabad on Wednesday after his four-day visit to New Delhi to find a solution to the stalemate in procurement of paddy by the Centre. He, however, could not meet the Prime Minister.

**Kerala fishermen families to get aid of ₹3,000**

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**  
The Kerala Cabinet on Wednesday ordered ex gratia assistance of ₹3,000 each to 1,59,481 seafaring fishermen families who lost 26 working days in inclement weather. The Cabinet allocated ₹47.84 crore from the Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund. Heavy rain, strong wind, thunder and rough seas had impeded fishermen from venturing out during October-November.

**BBMP employees are also under the scanner**

## Anupama reunited with child

Family court in Thiruvananthapuram dismisses adoption proceedings

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCCHI

The baby who was given in pre-adoption foster care to a couple in Andhra Pradesh was reunited with its biological mother here on Wednesday following a court order.

On a day marked by high drama, the Family Court, Thiruvananthapuram, ordered the release of the baby to its biological mother after "dropping and summarily dismissing" the adoption proceedings. Family Court judge K. Biju Menon had advanced the proceedings in the case and passed the order by evening considering the plea of the State.

The case was originally scheduled to be considered on November 30.

The infant boy, who was brought to the chamber of the judge, was handed over to Anupama S. Chandran after her identification records were verified. The judge is-



Happy ending: Anupama and her partner Ajith with their child leaving the family court on Wednesday. ■ S. MAHINSHA

sued the order, considering a suggestion from public prosecutor P.P. Hakim that the child shall be handed over to its mother through the court.

In its order, the judge noted that the adoption proceedings were initiated in the case on the premise that the "child was abandoned and his biological parents could not be found".

The judge sidestepped the various allegations raised by the biological mother as he felt that those aspects were not necessary for the proceedings at hand.

The court noted that the issue whether the Kerala State Council for Child Welfare, which gave the baby in foster care, has a valid licence for adoption does not "linger any more" as the

council had produced a copy of the Certificate of Recognition for Adoption issued under Rule 23 (2) of the Adoption Regulations, 2017.

The certificate is valid from March 12, 2019 to March 11, 2024, the court noted.

Earlier, the Child Welfare Committee had recalled and cancelled the Legally Free for Adoption certificate it had issued for the baby.

The "finding was arrived at on the basis of the DNA test, which confirmed that Anupama S. Chandran and B. Ajith Kumar are the biological mother and father of the child," the court noted.

The mother contended that the child was entrusted to her parents for temporary custody.

However, it was later found that they handed over the baby to the Child Welfare Committee for adoption, the court noted.

## Jagan urges Centre to provide ₹1,000 crore as interim relief

Amit Shah urged to send Central team to assess flood losses

STAFF REPORTER  
GUNTUR

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has urged Union Home Minister Amit Shah to immediately release ₹1,000 crore as interim relief to provide assistance to the affected families in the flood-battered Rayalaseema region.

Mr. Jagan requested Mr. Shah to depute an inter-Ministerial Central team to assess the damage and loss caused by heavy rains. Forty persons, including an SDRF constable died, and 25 persons were still missing.

In a letter to Mr. Shah, Mr. Jagan said heavy rains triggered by depression formed on November 18 over Bay of Bengal caused extensive damage to the four Rayalaseema districts. In a single day, 20 cm rain was recorded at Peddaman-dyam mandal in Chittoor district, followed by 19.3 cm rain at Galiveedu mandal of YSR Kadapa district. Heavy rains lashed Tirupati, Tirumala, Nellore, Madanapalli and Rajampet, causing inundation in many areas.

Seventeen NDRF/SDRF



teams were pressed into service. About 1,402 villages in 196 mandals and four towns were affected.

As part of relief operations, 324 relief camps accommodating 69,616 persons were set up.

Stating that many reservoirs were filled to the brim, the Chief Minister said that Annamaya reservoir in Kadapa district breached and a railway track between Nandaleru and Hastavaram was damaged.

In Nellore district, river Swarnamukhi was in spate causing inundation of many villages in Kovvur and Nelore mandals.

The loss to crops and damage to infrastructure was estimated at ₹6,054.29 crore, said the Chief Minister, giving a detailed break up of losses caused to crops.

## ACB searches houses, offices of 15 Karnataka Govt. officials



A video grab showing cash found in a pipeline in a Government official's house.

offices of the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) in Bengaluru.

Both the houses and offices of 15 Government officials

and their relatives in Mangaluru, Bengaluru and Mandya, among other districts, were searched by teams led by eight SPs, 100 officers and 300 ACB personnel.

This is the culmination of investigations into officers' assets over many months.

In Bengaluru, the ACB was searching the offices and residential properties of Rajashekhar, a physiotherapist at the Government Hospital in Yelahanka; Mayanna M., first division assistant in Major Roads and Infrastructure Department of BBMP; L.C. Nagaraj, KAS officer in Sakala Mission; and G.V. Giridhar, employee, Yeshwantpur, BBMP.

PM Modi to lay foundation stone of airport today

ANUJ KUMAR  
GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR

The nondescript town of Jewar, 100 km from Delhi, is set to find a place on the world map as Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday will lay the foundation stone of an international airport that would be the largest in Asia and the fourth largest in the world. The first phase, built on 1,334 hectares, is expected to be completed by 2024 when one runway would become operational.

However, for Hansraj, a resident of Rohi village, the immediate concern is what will he do with his eight cows if he decides to settle in Jewar Bangar, a township being developed by the Uttar Pradesh Government for around 3,000 families of six villages whose land has been acquired under the Land Acquisition Act. "How will I tend to them in the 50 square metre plot that I would get," asked Hansraj who tills one bigha of land. He is among around 500 of 9,000 farmers yet to accept the compensation deposited in the treasury by the Government.

There are others. Like Pramod Kumar from Dayanapur village, who has 20 bighas of land and feels that farmers were cheated by the Government when the land use was changed from rural to urban to cut down on the compensation. "The officials



Map of Rohi village.  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ly twice the circle rate. Our petition is pending in the Allahabad High Court and we expect the PM to take note of our demand," he said.

He argued that they have been given compensation at the rate of ₹2,300 per square metre while the circle rate at Pari Chowk in Greater Noida is ₹50,000 per square metre. "If we have been declared urban, we should get the rates prevailing in the neighbouring urban areas. That's why we approached the court," he added.

Ravinder Kumar from Rohi agreed with Pramod but he has taken the compensation and the plot. "I have received ₹2.5 crore for 12 bighas. I am building a three-storey house in the township but I could have got

more," he said.

Neeraj Kumar from Rohera village has also chosen to wait. "I have heard officials are targeting those who didn't accept the offer earlier. They ask for a cut in our money lying with the tribunal," he alleged.

A senior official said as per the Act, the permission of 70% of farmers was necessary. "In the beginning, only four farmers agreed but when the CM agreed to give ₹500 per sq. m. over the rate the farmers were entitled to, more than 72% agreed," he said.

Jewar MLA Dhirendra Singh said the BJP was known for "ushering in development" and on Thursday the region would "celebrate the PM's visit as a festival."

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DY. CE(C) BZU/02 of 2021  
Dy. Chief Engineer (C), Central Railway, Betul @ Ajni, Chhunabatti Road, Ajni / Nagpur invites e-tenders from reputed contractors. **Name of Work:** Earthwork in Formation, Construction of Minor Bridges, 1/12.2m PSC Slab Bridge for LHS, Retaining / Toe Wall, Side Drains, etc. between Km.932.9 to Km. 939.4 & Km. 948.9 to Km. 950.3 in connection with Itarsi-Nagpur 3rd Line. Approx. Cost : ₹ 11.96 Crore. Completion Period : 12 Months including monsoon. Validity of Offer : 60 days from date of opening of tender. Earnest Money, Tender should be submitted along with Bid Security Declaration in lieu of Bid Security. Cost of Tender : Nil. Date & Time of Submission & Opening of Tender : Up to 15.00 hrs. on 14/12/2021 and will be opened after 15.15 hrs. Details on Railway website [www.iamps.gov.in](http://www.iamps.gov.in) For any additional information / clarification contact on above address on any working day between 10.00 hrs. to 18.00 hrs. Contact No. 7219612253, 7219612266(M).  
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## Jewar town struggles to process new-found fame

he decides to settle in Jewar Bangar, a township being developed by the Uttar Pradesh Government for around 3,000 families of six villages whose land has been acquired under the Land Acquisition Act. "How will I tend to them in the 50 square metre plot that I would get," asked Hansraj who tills one bigha of land. He is among around 500 of 9,000 farmers yet to accept the compensation deposited in the treasury by the Government.

There are others. Like Pramod Kumar from Dayanapur village, who has 20 bighas of land and feels that farmers were cheated by the Government when the land use was changed from rural to urban to cut down on the compensation. "The officials

haven't followed the provisions of the Act properly. Being in a rural area, we deserve compensation four times the circle rate, but by changing the land use, the Government has given us on

the position is pending in the Allahabad High Court and we expect the PM to take note of our demand," he said.

He argued that they have been given compensation at the rate of ₹2,300 per square metre while the circle rate at Pari Chowk in Greater Noida is ₹50,000 per square metre. "If we have been declared urban, we should get the rates prevailing in the neighbouring urban areas. That's why we approached the court," he added.

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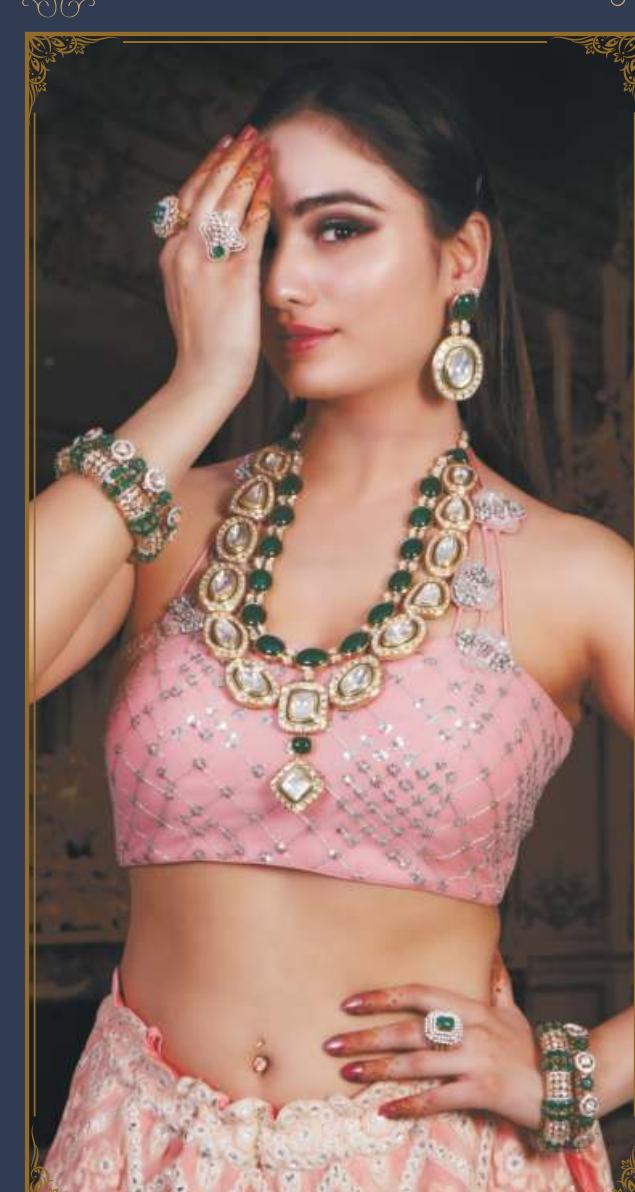
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**Jal Shakti, Public Health Engineering,Department.**  
Standard Bidding Document  
For  
Empanelment of eligible contractors at Provincial level and fixing of item rates for Shopian district  
for Execution of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) works.

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
1e- NIT No:-CE/PHE/KMR/JSO/18 of 2021-22, Dated: 06-11-2021  
For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of UT of J&K, Chief Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Kashmir invites e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Contractors/ Firms/Companies/Joint Venture of all classes registered in JKPWD/CPWD/Railways or any other state Government for "Empanelment of eligible contractors at Provincial level and fixing of item rates for Shopian district for execution of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) works", details of which are given below. The bidding process shall be completed online in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre-Qualification Bidding, tender fee, earnest money, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications. Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BOQ.

S. No	Particulars of the work	Estimated Cost (Lacs)	Cost of document/ tender fee (In Rs)	Earnest money (Lacs)	Bid Validity	Time of Completion of work (days)
1	Empanelment of eligible contractors at Provincial level and fixing of item rates for Shopian District for execution of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) works. These works are broadly consisting of:- a. Construction of water supply schemes by way of, filtration, plants, pump houses, service reservoir, Overhead tanks, laying of distribution mains. b. Drilling of production tube well. c. Siting of pumping units along with associated electro-mechanical works for harnessing of tube well. d. Retrofitting of electro- mechanical equipment's at various Water Supply Schemes	5	6	7	8	90
2	Work/ scheme wise details given in Section II of tender document	1000/-			180 Days	

**Position of funds:** Approved Under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)  
The tender inviting authority is Chief Engineer, Kashmir Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, the awarding authority is District Jal Jeevan Mission (DJJM).

**Note :-** In view of the fact, that this NIT for item rate contract has been framed for the first time in the Department, a helpline shall be established at the Direction office level as well as district level for encouraging and facilitating the intending bidders for participation in the instant NIT to ensure wide participation across all the districts.

**Key/critical Dates:**

i	Publication Date	08.11.2021
ii	Document Download/sale start Date	08.11.2021
iii	Clarification start date	08.11.2021
iv	Bid submission start date	12.11.2021
v	Clarification end date	26.11.2021
vi	Pre-bid Meeting date	22.11.2021
vii	Document Download/sale end Date	26.11.2021
viii	Bid submission end date	26.11.2021
ix	Date and time of Bid opening	29.11.2021

1. Bid documents can be assessed at and downloaded from the websites <http://jktdenders.gov.in>  
2. The pre-bid meeting will be held in the office chamber of the Chief Engineer, Kashmir, PHE Department, through virtual/online mode.  
3. The bids shall be deposited on the website <http://jktdenders.gov.in>  
4. The complete bidding process will be online <http://jktdenders.gov.in>  
5. The financial bids of the bidders shall be opened online in the office of the Chief Engineer, Kashmir, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department.  
6. Bids must be accompanied by bid security and cost of Tender Document as specified in column 6 & 7 of the table and shall be payable at Srinagar.  
a. Bid Security to be pledged in favour of FA/CAO, Kashmir, Jal Shakti PHE Department. Bid Security will have to be in form of CDR/DR/BG and other relevant documents shall be obtained from the bidder who is declared as L1 and others after opening of financial cover.  
b. The cost of downloaded tender documents should be in form of DD/TR/e-challan in favour of FA/CAO, Kashmir, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department.  
7. The hard copies of cost of tender document in shape of DD/TR/e-challan, Earnest money in shape of CDR/DR/BG and other relevant documents shall be obtained from the bidder who is declared as L1 and others after opening of financial cover.  
8. The bid shall remain open for acceptance for a period of 180 days from the date of opening of price bids. If any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender before the said period or makes any modification in the terms and conditions of the bid, the said earnest money shall stand forfeited and the bid shall be declared non-responsive.  
9. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents from the website <http://jktdenders.gov.in>.  
10. Queries by email if any should be made at [kmrphd@gmail.com](mailto:kmrphd@gmail.com)/[pheccmu@gmail.com](mailto:pheccmu@gmail.com)</p



## POCSO shocker

HC ruling ignores specific provision defining aggravated form of sexual offence

The recent Allahabad High Court verdict that a penetrative sexual assault on a 10-year-old boy by an offender did not amount to an aggravated form of the crime appears to be *per incuriam*, that is, a ruling handed down without due regard to the law and facts. The offence that was proven in the trial, and endorsed without demur by the High Court, involved the child being made to perform an oral sexual act. The Court agrees that it was a "penetrative sexual assault" as defined by the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, as the accused had put his member into the victim's mouth. However, it did not amount to "aggravated penetrative sexual assault", a crime punishable with a minimum prison term of 10 years that can go up to life, Justice Anil Kumar Ojha has said. Instead, it was punishable under Section 4 of POCSO, which prescribes a minimum seven years. Accordingly, he reduced the trial court sentence of 10 years in jail to seven years. The High Court is palpably in error, as it failed to note that a sexual offence takes the character of an aggravated form of the same offence in certain circumstances under POCSO. The main circumstances involving aggravation given in Section 5 are where the offender is a police officer, a member of the armed forces, a public servant or someone on the staff of a jail, remand home, hospital, educational or religious institution, or any place of custody or care and protection.

However, these are not the only circumstances. Where the crime involves a group of offenders, or is done repeatedly, or when it pertains to the use of deadly weapons or causes grievous harm or injury, or leads to physical or mental incapacitation, pregnancy, or disease, it is also an aggravated form of the offence. Significantly, Section 5(m) adds "whoever commits penetrative sexual assault on a child below 12 years" to this list. The High Court seems to have missed either this legal provision while reducing the sentence, or the fact that the child was about 10 years old when the offence took place. The fact that the convicted person will stay in jail for seven years will not obviate the deleterious effect of the ruling – that a particular act, amounting to a penetrative sexual act, does not attract the punishment prescribed for its aggravated form – will have on lower courts trying similar cases. It is a matter of coincidence that this ruling came from the Allahabad High Court on the same day as the Supreme Court's judgment underscoring the importance of not diluting the gravity of an offence against a child by ignoring the plain meaning of POCSO's provisions. The verdict in *Sonu Kushwaha vs State of U.P.* is a fit case for review, as it seems to be based on an error of law.

## Virus rages in Europe

Vaccines alone will not be able to break the transmission chain and end the pandemic

With the staggering increase in daily fresh coronavirus cases and deaths in much of Europe, the continent has for the second time since last March, become the pandemic epicentre. The resurgence in daily new cases which began in early October and restricted to three countries has since spread and is driven by the Delta variant. The continent reported nearly two million new cases last week, the highest since the pandemic began; more than half of the global COVID-19 deaths this month were in Europe. In Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, and Norway, the daily cases are the highest since the pandemic began; Romania and Ukraine reported record high numbers a few weeks ago. With hospitals fast filling up, WHO predicts that there would be extreme stress on hospital beds and intensive care units in many European countries between now and March next year. While the vaccination rates in most countries in western Europe are higher – Ireland leads the table with over 90% adults being fully vaccinated in early September – the vaccination levels are relatively lower in eastern Europe. With France setting an example, many countries are now making it difficult for the unvaccinated to freely travel or enter certain public or even workplaces, in an attempt to increase vaccine uptake. And in a first, Austria made vaccination mandatory starting February next year and went into a national lockdown for three weeks from November 22. Austria has managed to fully vaccinate about 65% of its eligible population, which is one of the lowest rates in western Europe.

While most of the new daily cases reported are among the unvaccinated, breakthrough infections and hospitalisations are being reported in the fully vaccinated too. However, the deaths have predominantly been among the unvaccinated. Even while WHO has called for a moratorium on booster doses till this year-end so vaccines become available to developing countries, its Europe office has endorsed administering booster doses as a "priority" to the most vulnerable populations – based on growing evidence of a decline in protection against infection and mild disease among the fully vaccinated. As evidence has shown, vaccines alone will be insufficient to break the transmission chain. Unfortunately, most western countries focused primarily on increasing vaccination coverage while foregoing simple yet highly effective non-pharmaceutical interventions such as universal mask wearing, physical distancing and improved ventilation in confined spaces. A study, which is yet to be peer-reviewed, predicts 0.9 million more hospitalisations and 0.3 million additional deaths in 19 European countries where people have been neither infected nor vaccinated. WHO predicts 0.7 million more deaths by March 2022 in Europe and central Asia. Compliance with public health measures can indeed avoid needless infections and deaths.

# Battered and bruised, repealed and withdrawn

The shaping of the different trajectories of the farm laws and Andhra's 'three capitals' plan is revealing



K. CHANDRU

The announcement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 19, on the withdrawal of the three farm laws and his urging "all agitating farmers to go back to their families and villages and let's make a new beginning", did not raise eyebrows in the country. There were compulsions, both internal and external, for the Bharatiya Janata Party to do so notwithstanding the fact that the laws were under legal scrutiny by the Supreme Court of India. The forthcoming elections to the Uttar Pradesh and Punjab Assemblies may have also been a factor in shaping the Prime Minister's decision.

### A long battle

After Parliament hurriedly passed the three enactments, to bring in 'reforms' in the agriculture sector, the volley of protests began. Swarms of farmers along with their tractors converged along the borders of Delhi marking the beginning of an over year long battle. Surprisingly, many State legislatures have passed resolutions opposing the three farm laws. When someone questioned the authority of the legislatures to pass such resolutions, it was correctly negated by the Supreme Court.

When cases were filed in the Supreme Court, it not only granted a limited stay of the implementation of the laws but also appointed an expert committee to submit a report on these pieces of legislation. The Court also raised the question whether it was proper for the protesters to continue with their agitation even when the Court was seized of the matter. Another question was also raised over how long the agitating farmers would occupy the roads and that there must be a limit for such sit-ins.

The Modi Government did not wait for any verdict from the Court but took the pragmatic position to withdraw the farm laws in view of the "large-scale misconceptions" among the people. However, the

farmers have indicated that they will still continue to protest until the repeal law is passed in the winter session of Parliament. In a democracy, ultimately, sovereignty vests with the people and elected Parliamentarians have only a limited brief of legislating on the subjects allotted to Parliament. On the other hand, there is nothing in the law to prevent those aggrieved from lobbying against such laws which according to them is harmful, even though, significantly, the higher courts have the power to scrutinise any law made and to determine whether they are inconsistent with the fundamental rights enshrined in Part III of the Constitution. Many a time the delay in determination also makes the aggrieved impatient by taking the matter to the streets.

### Plan for a capital

But the announcement of the withdrawal of the Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020 and the A.P. Capital Region Development Authority Repeal Act, 2020 by the Y.S. Congress Party (YSRCP) Government led by its Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. After the election of his party, the YSRCP, to form the government, he decided to dismantle the only capital of Andhra Pradesh at Amaravathi; he also decided on its trifurcation: Amaravathi (legislative), Kurnool (judicial) and Visakhapatnam (executive). This new law was passed when the YSRCP won 151 seats in the 175-member Andhra Pradesh Assembly in 2019. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) which became the first ruling party of the newly formed Andhra Pradesh State was reduced to 23 seats.

N. Chandrababu Naidu who led the TDP after the bifurcation of the undivided Andhra Pradesh State into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh decided to locate the new capital at Amaravathi which is situated between Vijayawada and Guntur and inaugurated the interim secretariat there. To locate and develop the infrastructure of the capital, the TDP Government acquired an estimated 33,000 acres from farmers while also proposing to acquire another 50,000



SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

acres, leading to large-scale protests from the farmers of the region. Notwithstanding this, the TDP Government proceeded with the construction of the capital, allotting plots to judges of the High Court for their residences. The High Court also approved the plan submitted to create judicial infrastructure for locating the new High Court and other subordinate courts at Amaravathi.

### The twists and turns

Taking advantage of the farmers' unrest, the successor Y.S. Jagannath Reddy Government began a campaign to have three different capitals, even enacting a law. An inquiry into the land purchase and allotments was ordered. Controversy arose when a case was registered against a former Andhra Pradesh Advocate General and the family members of a Supreme Court judge alleging that there had been insider trading. On a petition filed by the former Advocate General, the Andhra Pradesh High Court issued a gag order on the press from reporting on the first information report filed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau. The gag order was stayed by the Supreme Court of India on a petition filed by the Andhra Pradesh Government.

Subsequently, several developments took place in the Andhra Pradesh High Court. Justice D.V.S.S. Somayajulu stayed the SIT probe ordered against the land scam pursuant to a decision taken by a cabinet sub-committee. There were several shocking developments subsequent to the probe being ordered against the Amaravathi land deal. A Division Bench of Justice M. Satyanarayana Murthy and Justice Lalitha Kannganti J.J. ordered an inquiry into a telephonic conversation allegedly about a plot against the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh and another sitting judge of the Supreme Court. The inquiry was to be headed by a retired Supreme Court Judge, Justice R.V. Raveendran, to

verify the authenticity of the conversation. It is interesting that Justice Raveendran has been appointed by the Chief Justice of India, Justice N.V. Ramana, to supervise the three-member expert committee that will go into the Pegasus snooping case.

It was more shocking when a division Bench of Justices Rakesh Kumar and J. Umadevi while hearing a *habeas corpus* petition (on a request on behalf of the Advocate General for a short adjournment, passed an order dated October 1, 2020) which said: "On the next date, learned senior counsel appearing on behalf of the State may come prepared to assist the Court as to whether in the circumstances, which are prevailing in the state of Andhra Pradesh, the Court can record a finding that there is Constitutional breakdown in the State or not". It is unheard of for a court to make a mention about bringing President's Rule in a case between the state and an individual.

It was under these circumstances that the Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, wrote a letter dated October 11, 2020 to the then Chief Justice of India for an inquiry into the role of the Supreme Court judge, who, according to him, was involved in a scam. However, no such in-house enquiry was ordered. However, the letter by the Chief Minister was released to the press by the personal adviser to the Chief Minister.

Things did not end with a complaint made to the highest judicial authority. The next day, the same division Bench while entertaining another case observed: "Even some occupying high positions and Constitutional posts are not restraining themselves in committing the same mistake... due to the result of [a] larger conspiracy, the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] is required to take appropriate action against such culprits irrespective of the post and position. It goes without saying that the CBI immediately after taking up investigation may take steps so that all the defamatory posts available on social media, i.e., private respondents, may [be] struck down and may also take steps to block such users in accordance with law."

The Chief Minister's woes contin-

ued. The new Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh, Prashant Kumar Mishra, and Justices Satyanarayana Murthy and Somayajulu, constituting the full Bench, held a fresh hearing of the batch of writ petitions that challenged the Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act, 2020 and Capital Region Development Authority Repeal Act, 2020. The Government of Andhra Pradesh filed a recusal petition asking Justices Satyanarayana Murthy and Somayajulu to withdraw from the full Bench hearing as they were admittedly recipients of a housing plot at Amaravathi allotted to them. When this issue was raised before the court, the Chief Justice presiding over the Bench refused the recusal, and when asked for an order on this issue, said that orders would be passed along with the main case. In normal course, when even allegations of apparent bias on the part of the presiding officers are raised, appropriate orders will be pronounced then and there as such matters go to the root of the issue.

### A 'strategy'

Even while the arguments are in progress, the Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy Government came up with the withdrawal of the two pieces of legislation with a reservation to introduce an appropriate Bill at a later date. It is not clear whether the Government was giving in to the pressure mounted by the Opposition TDP or that it did not want to face litigation at this juncture becoming adverse. In any event, the withdrawal proposal followed from the developments the Government faced *vis-à-vis* the judiciary. The Government had not given up the proposed trifurcation of the capital and locating them in three regions. This may be a litigation strategy normally adopted by litigants expecting changes in the judicial spectrum.

The withdrawal of the legislations by two governments has a different background but what is worrisome is the circumstances surrounding the State government's decision that has no parallel in the judicial history of India.

*Justice K. Chandru is a retired judge of the Madras High Court*

## Pointers that India is witnessing a K-shaped recovery

The economic ravages of the pandemic have had an uneven impact and taxation policies continue to be regressive



ANAND SRINIVASAN &  
SASHWATH SWAMINATHAN

There has been great chatter about a V-shaped recovery for quite a while, ever since the first lockdown following the novel coronavirus pandemic. A V-shaped recovery is characterised by quick and effective recovery in measures of economic performance after an acute decline in the economy. There is undeniably some type of recovery, but one can hardly label it V-shaped. The economic ravages of the pandemic have had an uneven impact on different socio-economic groups. The recovery we see today is more K-shaped than V-shaped, with various groups and industries recovering much more rapidly than their counterparts.

### Signs from industry

Government taxation policies continue to be regressive, with increased indirect taxes and lower direct taxes placing greater tax incidence on the destitute. The effects of this K-shaped recovery can be observed through the growth and consumption in specific industries.

Two-wheelers represent the

economic situation of the lower and middle-class groups and India's small businesses. A report by analytical company CRISIL indicates that in the year 2021, two-wheeler sales are set to decline by 3%-6% year-over-year. This is on top of a lower base in the year 2020 already affected by the pandemic. The actual decline of two-wheeler sales from pre-pandemic times on account of the base effect must be much more significant. The sales of two-wheelers are the second-lowest it has been in seven years. It is imperative to note that entry-level models are the ones most affected under the category of two-wheelers. The festival season was said to rectify this phenomenon, but it had been unable to. On the other hand, premium cars and premium motorcycles have been resistant to the pandemic slowdown.

### Impact of taxation

Moreover, the usurous taxation policy of the Government, which insists on maintaining indirect taxes on fuel and consumer products while lowering corporate taxes, paints a picture explaining these figures. The Government had recently raised taxes on textile products from 5% to 12%. While inflation soars, the incomes of the middle and lower-middle-class have at best remained constant. There is tremendous pressure on the financial stability of these households, which seemingly face a



AFP

sustained loss in disposable income. Besides, the figures representing those who are employed only partially explain this phenomenon.

### On jobs, NREGA

Over five million or 50 lakh people lost their jobs in October, according to a Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) report. Many of those who lost their jobs during this period are likely economically insecure and abstain from non-essential purchases. This, paired with the astronomically high food and fuel prices, delivers a deadly blow pushing families to poverty.

Additionally, it is prudent to look at Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) figures as it acts as a proxy for the informal sector, which employs a large portion of Indians. In the year 2021-2022, the Government of India had cut its budget allocation towards MGNREGA by 34%. There is a greater demand now for MGNREGA

jobs than in the pre-COVID-19 era. The lower Budget allocation accounts for the inability to compensate workers in time and fairly. A portion of the Budget this year is spent on paying the liabilities for the previous financial year. Those looking for MGNREGA work cannot afford to be unpaid for such long durations. This again ties back to placing upward pressure on unemployment figures.

### Stimulus and growth

Therefore, there seems to be no surprise that the consumption of two-wheelers and other such products has taken a significant hit. The U.S. and European economies have stimulated the economy bottom-up through unemployment cheques and social welfare schemes. The economist, John Maynard Keynes, popularised the concept of the money multiplier and the relationship between government stimulus and economic growth. It fundamentally makes great sense to prioritise those who are more likely to spend (the middle and lower-middle-class) rather than those who have a greater propensity to save. The velocity of money which sustained a significant shock from pandemic lockdowns needs to be kickstarted. Furthermore, the inflation of asset prices over the recovery period helps determine the nature of this recovery.

The recovery in the stock market and other such financial assets

over the past year has been phenomenal. However, it is essential to understand that this does not necessarily reflect the economy's condition as observed previously. Less than 5% of India invest in equities, which means that less than 5% of India directly benefited from said recovery. The lower middle class, which does not invest in such assets for many reasons, has no guard against inflation. Their only hedge against inflation is their income which makes for a poor one.

### Think welfare schemes

Therefore, as discussed before, their financial situation is worsened due to the rising prices of essential goods. Moreover, the disproportional benefit of the asset price inflation favouring the upper-middle-class further displays the inherent K-shape of the recovery. It is crucial that the Government addresses this phenomenon and works towards aiding the middle and lower-middle class. Social welfare schemes must be given greater importance to assist households to get through this period. A seemingly viable solution is for the Government to increase progressive (direct) taxes and reduce regressive (indirect) taxes to ease the financial pressure on lower-income households.

Anand Srinivasan is a consultant.  
Sashwat Swaminathan is a research associate at Aionion Investment Services

## 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.

### A mother's fight

The case of Anupama S. Chandran of Kerala and her son has been riveting (Inside pages, "DNA tests confirm Kerala woman's claims on baby", November 24). It is also a commentary on the adoption system in India. What shattered me the most is the plight of the foster parents who legally followed every procedure only to have the baby taken back. Though this case has a political angle, which may

make it a special one, it could discourage people from adopting children. We need to have better standard operating procedures and checks that ultimately encourage adoption without trauma.

VINEESH BADAGHANI,  
Guntur, Andhra Pradesh

■ The case has shaken the foundations of the political, social and cultural spectrum that Kerala is. The valiant fight by the young mother

will have an impact on Kerala's society.

N. RAJASEKHARAN,  
Ariyannur, Thrissur, Kerala

**Parliamentary steps**  
The article, "Go back to committees" is the farm laws lesson" (Editorial page, November 22), implying that the Centre has wantonly swerved from its stand, either referring the Farm Bills to the Standing Committee or a Joint Selection Committee, as

ought to have happened, should be viewed in the proper perspective it deserves. Two pertinent questions which need

plausible answers from the Centre are: the reason for not referring the contentious farm Bills in question to the Standing Committee, which has been the regular practice, in existence so far. Is this not shrouded in mystery?

The second is why the farmers were not taken into

confidence prior to the ordinance.

MANI NATARAJAN,  
Chennai

**Kodaikanal besieged**  
The hordes of tourists flooding Kodaikanal is nothing short of wanton destruction of this fragile ecosystem. Local people are bewildered and ask if this is revenge tourism! It is truly debilitating anyway you look at it. Driving is impossible with traffic snarls, road rage

and gridlock for the most part. This is not in the interest of tourists,

# A food crisis of the government's own making

Sri Lanka's decision to ban imports on chemical fertilizers was not backed by scientific evidence



R.S. DHARMAKEERTHI

There is consensus in the scientific community that organic agriculture could reduce crop yield. Quoting three global meta-data analysis, Meemkem and Qaim (2018) pointed out that on average, the yield reduction in organic agricultural systems could be 19-25%, depending on the crop and agro-climatic region. To switch to 100% organic agriculture, a country must have robust scientific evidence and a meticulously planned methodology along with targeted actions. Otherwise, it will plunge into a food crisis, if food security cannot be achieved by other means.

#### Organic mania

In May, Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa ordered a halt to importing chemical fertilizers to turn the island nation's agriculture sector fully organic. By that time, the Yala cropping season (May to August) had already started and farmers were using the agro-chemicals available in the market. However, no additional agro-chemicals were to be released in the market. The government stated that if there is any yield loss as a consequence of this decision, the affected farmers would be compensated for it. It is unclear how the government was planning to separate yield loss related to lack of agro-chemicals from yield loss due to natural causes, farmers' attitudes, and so on.

It is apparent now that when the Sri Lankan government took this policy decision, it had neither solid scientific information nor a clear action plan. It had taken half-baked advice from some opportunists who regularly state in public that only organic and traditional agriculture is safe to the environment and human beings. Not only did the government seem to believe that there would be little or no yield loss from agriculture that is only organic; it also seemed to think that all plant nutrients could be organically produced in the country by October 2021. If the organic agricultural production system is that simple and straightforward, why is



A farmer works at a paddy field in Dekatana, Sri Lanka. ■ REUTERS

that globally, only 1.5% of farmland is organic? Sri Lanka has been almost entirely reliant on its own rice production since the mid-2000s. Could it not have maintained this?

Unsurprisingly, even when the Maha season officially started on October 15, the country was well short of the required quantities of organic fertilizers. As the most critical plant nutrient for higher yields in Sri Lanka is nitrogen (N), the authorities have estimated that for this Maha season, about 0.1 million tonnes of N is required for some major crops including paddy and tea. This is equivalent to about 15 million tonnes of compost. The country produced only around 3 million tonnes of compost by the end of August 2021.

Realising that the required quantities of organic fertilizers cannot be produced within five months, the government attempted in September to import solid organic fertilizers. According to the Plant Protection Act, No. 35 of 1999, no organic substance that has harmful organisms can be imported into the country. Moreover, Sri Lanka Standards (SLSI 1704) require all imported solid organic fertilizer to be devoid of any microorganism. A tender to supply about 0.1 million tonnes of solid organic fertilizer was offered to a Chinese fertilizer company. It was later revealed that two samples provided by this company did not pass the quality standards. This message was conveyed by the authorities to the company. However, due to reasons unknown, the first load of that solid organic fertilizer is said to have come

to Sri Lankan waters and is sailing around still looking for an opportunity to reach the shores of Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile, farmers started getting angry as there were no fertilizers to start cultivation. They began to protest, demanding fertilizers to be provided in all major agricultural areas and setting aside preliminary land preparation practices. They did not want to start commercial cultivation without any assurance from the government on the availability of the required fertilizers.

Then, the government was advised to purchase a liquid nano-N fertilizer from the Indian Farmer Fertilizer Corporate Limited (IFFCO), which, some said, is organic and 100% efficient. However, according to the IFFCO website, this liquid fertilizer is actually nano-urea and hence cannot be used in organic agriculture as it is chemical in nature. Given the urgency of the situation, the government ordered 3.1 million litres of nano-urea, which has only 4% N, from IFFCO. The first quantity was air-lifted into Sri Lanka and distributed as Nano-Raja among paddy farmers. Farmers were advised to apply 2.5 L of Nano-Raja as a foliar spray.

Scientists are sceptical about the efficacy of this fertilizer as there has been heavy rainfall in Sri Lanka over the last few weeks. Nonetheless, even in India, there is limited large-scale evidence on the effectiveness of this product. Not much is known about the health concerns that might arise on long-term exposure to nanoparticles. Moreover, 2.5 L of Nano-Raja provides only 100g of N when at

least 50kg of N is needed for the paddy crop. The farmers will at most get an additional 5-10kg of N through locally available compost. The quality of these composts, mostly produced using municipal solid wastes, cannot be guaranteed either, as there is no quality control mechanism in place.

#### Crop decline

Now, even over a month after the season started, only about 25-40% of farmers have started paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka. The distributed quantities of N fertilizers have not been adequate to achieve the expected yield target of the farmers (4-6 tonnes per hectare). Therefore, reduction in national paddy production is an inevitability. The same would be true for other crop sectors as well. Therefore, the government must do something within a very short period of time to provide sufficient quantities of N fertilizer, at least to paddy farmers and tea-growers. Failure to do so will reduce foreign exchange earnings from tea, increase food prices, create food shortage and lead to food imports. The government will have to import food from other countries – food that is produced using agro-chemicals because of the higher price of organic food. This would be ironical as food without agro-chemicals was one of the major policy objectives of the ban on the import of agro-chemicals.

The overarching policy document of the government titled 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor' promises to provide the nation with safe food and food security. However, the ill-advised policy of banning agro-chemicals, which was based on inadequate scientific evidence and false belief, hit the Sri Lankan agriculture and plantation crop sectors like a cyclone. With a crippling economy thanks to COVID-19, this was uncalled for. On November 24, the Sri Lankan government announced that it would partially lift the ban on chemical fertilizers and permit the private sector to import these fertilizers. However, considerable damage has already been done, with farmers claiming that their crop production has declined, food prices rising, and a food crisis looming.

R.S. Dharmakeerthi is Professor in Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

# A unified regulatory framework

As there is competition between telcos and Internet companies, regulatory parity between them is required



ROHIT PRASAD & V. SRIDHAR

tional nature of operation and technology used. However, the asymmetry partly reflects a certain world view with regard to the regulation of competition across telcos and Internet firms.

#### Net neutrality regulation

An example is net neutrality regulation. When net neutrality was conceptualised in the early 2000s, it was meant to stem the significant market power of telcos, which provide an essential service. A dominant telco can hinder competition in a downstream market by a vertical merger with content and application providers. Net neutrality regulation that prohibits discriminatory treatment of Internet companies – either with respect to pricing or traffic management – in a sense eliminates any incentive for vertical integration. Net neutrality regulation can also be explained as a way of preventing telcos from extracting all their revenues from Internet companies. This possibility arises because such firms have no choice but to make themselves available via all telecom service providers. On the other hand, subscribers restrict themselves to one service provider.

However, over the past decade, the Internet has evolved to a point where many Internet companies also provide an essential service and enjoy significant market power. For instance, web search, a market dominated by Google, is often the starting point for navigating the World Wide Web. Without search neutrality, search results may be manipulated to favour certain firms. This concern becomes heightened in the presence of vertical integration between the search engine company and downstream companies. Hence, net neutrality principles need to be applied to Internet companies as well.

Beyond net neutrality, just as it is mandatory for telcos to provide "equal access" for interconnecting with other telcos' networks, social media networks, instant messengers, and indeed any Internet service that exhibits critical mass dynamics needs to be governed by interconnection regulation.

In sum, there is an element of competition between telcos and Internet companies in the context of overlapping services and walled gardens. Hence, there is a need for a measure of regulatory parity between the two. In the U.S. and in India, while the sector regulator makes rules for telcos, the competition regulator oversees the behaviour of the Internet firms. It is time for a unified regulatory framework. A semblance of this convergence is visible in the European Union. India too needs an integrated perspective.

Rohit Prasad and V. Sridhar are Professors at MDI Gurgaon and IIIT Bangalore, respectively

#### STATE OF PLAY

## Task cut out for Congress in Kerala

The reorganisation process may offer no silver bullet, but it can give the party a sense of direction

#### S. ANANDAN

Some members of the Congress's old guard in Kerala are up in arms against the ongoing reorganisation of the party in the State. The drubbing the party received in the Assembly elections this year forced a leadership change which did not go down well with senior leaders such as former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and former Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Ramesh Chennithala. The new Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president, K. Sudhakaran, and the Leader of the Opposition, V.D. Satheesan, came under fire from leader V.M. Sudheeran for not consulting veteran leaders 'adequately' while finalising the list of district Congress presidents. During this turbulence, disciplinary action was initiated against leaders who made disparaging public statements against the selection.



and democratic outlook". Also on the cards is a 'political school', to be set up first in Thiruvananthapuram, to strengthen the ideological base and political vision of leaders.

#### Winning back support

The Congress's commitment to secularism was called into question when the party proposed to bring legislation criminalising women's entry into Sabarimala. A rethink in the party about that campaign is apparent considering the Congress's refusal to fall for a similar communally charged propaganda by the BJP against restaurants serving 'halal' food and citing 'halal' markings on a few parcels of jaggery purchased by Sabarimala temple authorities in 2019 to prepare aravana prasadam.

Another big task for the party's State leadership is to win back the communities that have drifted away. It was the rising prominence of the Muslim League in the 2011 Chandy government that created bad blood within the Congress-led UDF and gave heartburn to the strongest faction of the Kerala Congress, influential among the Catholic Christians. With the Kerala Congress (Mani) now aligned with the Left and sections of the church trying to curry favour with the BJP, it is an uphill task for the Congress to regain the trust of large sections of Christian voters.

Meanwhile, the most vexing question is whether the organisational reshuffle is just another desultory exercise considering that the organisational elections are set to take place in a year or so. Detractors of the reshuffle point to the ongoing membership drive, slated to end on March 31, 2022, if not extended. There would be a freeze on nomination of party officials once the drive is over and elections are declared. Should the party wait until then to set its house in order is a million-dollar question. The present reorganisation process may offer no silver bullet, but it can give the party a sense of direction.

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#### DATA POINT

## How learning patterns changed in the last one year

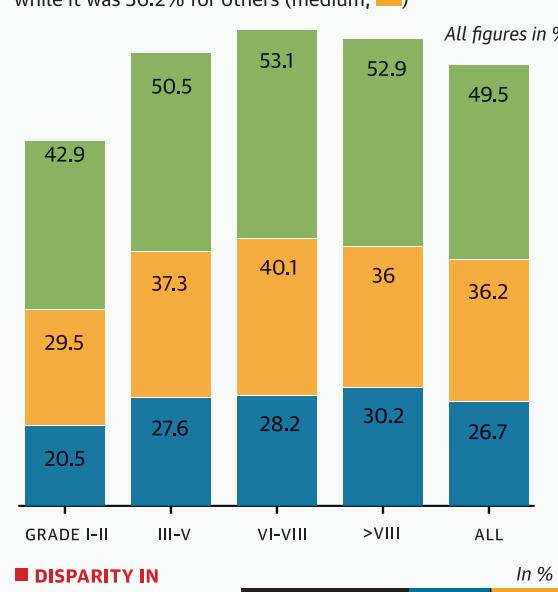
In September–October 2021, more than 18 months since India went into a COVID-19-induced lockdown for the first time, learning remained inaccessible to most schoolchildren. Among children whose schools had not yet reopened, about 60% had not received any learning materials, according to the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER). Even among those schoolchildren who did receive learning materials, the education level of their parents played a vital role in their own education. The lower the education level of the parents, the smaller the share of students who had received learning materials. In 2021, more students picked up online learning, while the usage of traditional and broadcast methods remained mostly unchanged. However, the significant rise in schoolchildren taking online classes was driven by those whose parents had high or medium education levels. By The Hindu Data Team

**■ STILL OUT OF REACH |** The table lists the % of children who had received learning materials or activities from schools that were yet to reopen. In 2020, only 35.6% of children received learning materials. In 2021, the share has only slightly improved to 39.8%  
All figures in %

Grade	2020			2021		
	Govt.	Pvt.	Total	Govt.	Pvt.	Total
I-II	27.9	35.8	30.8	31.5	39.4	33.5
III-V	33.7	40.4	35.8	39.2	46.9	41
VI-VIII	35.4	42.7	37.4	41.1	50.7	43
>VIII	34.8	43.4	37.3	36.4	53.9	40.6
All	33.5	40.6	35.6	37.6	46.9	39.8

The share of students of Grade >VIII in private schools who received learning materials increased by 10.5% points compared to students in government schools which saw a rise of 1.6%

**■ PARENTAL EDUCATION |** Among children whose parents were educated up to Grade V (low level, ■), only 26.7% had received materials. The share rose to 49.5% among children whose parents had completed at least Grade IX (high, ■) while it was 36.2% for others (medium, ■)



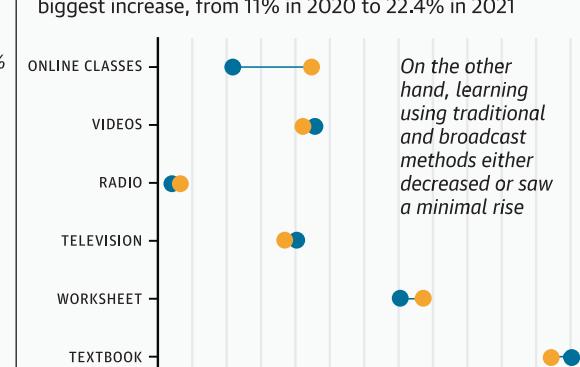
Parents' education	2020	2021
Low	4.7	9.3
Medium	8.9	16.8
High	20	35

The share rose to 35% among children whose parents had completed at least Grade IX (high) when the survey was conducted



**Learning challenge:** Joshna Kumar, 12, studies from the notes provided by her teachers on WhatsApp, at the Delhi-Noida border in New Delhi. ■ PTI

**■ SWITCHING TO ONLINE |** The chart plots the type of materials used for learning by children in 2020 (●) and 2021 (○). Learning through live online classes saw the biggest increase, from 11% in 2020 to 22.4% in 2021



**■ EASIER IN 2021 |** The table lists the share of children who were engaged in online activities such as listening to recorded classes or playing games

GRADE	% children who did online activities	Of those % who found it easier to do than 2020
I-II	16.7	49.3
III-V	22.6	49.3
VI-VIII	25.7	50.2
>VIII	30.5	53.1
All	24.2	50.7

About one-fourth of students did online activities and among them, half said they found it easier to do these activities in 2021 compared to 2020

**A HUNDRED YEARS AGO** NOV. 25, 1921  
Blacker than black-hole  
"Humanity" writes: The Press Communiqué issued to-day states that the Mopilla prisoners were sent "in a luggage van similar to that in which such prisoners have been regularly conveyed hitherto, without any ill effect whatsoever." It would be very interesting in this connection to consider the information conveyed to us by our Calicut correspondent under date 22nd November 1921. In the absence of any more precise details regarding the dimensions of the van, let me take the figures furnished by him. The cubic space that has been allowed according to this report, for 127 (the Government's figures is 100 only E.D.H.) stalwart, healthy, human beings is found to be 1215 cubic feet (18.9-7.2 feet), thus allowing each individual a space of about 9.2 cubic feet. The comparison of this space, as liberally allowed by

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Centre's free foodgrain scheme on till March

Several other State Governments and political parties demanded an extension by the Centre, although Food Ministry officials said no direct request had been received, and Mr. Pandey insisted that the decision had not been taken with U.P. alone in mind.

This fifth phase of the scheme, from December 2021 to March 2022 will entail an estimated subsidy of ₹53,345 crore, with a total outgo of 163 lakh tonnes of grain, according to an offi-

cial statement. The first four phases have already seen almost 600 lakh tonnes of grain allocated to States, at a subsidy cost of about ₹2.07 lakh crore. Mr. Pandey said that despite the higher outgo due to PMGKAY, the FCI's foodgrain reserves currently stand at a record 616 lakh tonnes and are expected to increase to 942 lakh tonnes by June 2022 following rabi season procurement, stretching FCI's storage capacities to their maximum limits.

## More hospital births, indicates NFHS-5

"This is a significant feat for the country's family-planning programme, which does not include coercive policies. These findings bust the population-explosion myth and show that India must steer away from coercive measures of population control. While the increase in the use of modern contraceptive methods is heartening, an increase in female sterilisation coupled with continued stagnation in male sterilisation uptake shows that the onus of family planning still lies with women," the Population Foundation of India, a non-governmental organisation, said in a statement.

An overall survey of the major differences between the NFHS-5 and NFHS-4 suggests that the use of contraceptives has improved from 53.5% to 66.7% and institutional births increased from 78.9% to 88.6%. The proportion of children (12-23 months) who were fully vac-

cinated improved from 62%-76% and children under six months who were exclusively breastfed also showed a sharp improvement from 54.9% to 63.7%.

Though the gains in childhood nutrition were minimal, women and men (15-49) who had a below normal body mass index (BMI) each dropped roughly four percentage points.

Those overweight (or had a higher BMI than ideal) increased by around 4 percentage points. Abnormal BMIs are linked to an increase in obesity and other non-communicable diseases.

India's battle with anaemia also appears to have faltered. The proportion of anaemic children (6-59 months) increased from 58% to 67%. Women aged 15-49 who were anaemic increased from 53% to 57% and men of the same age increased from 29% to 31% between both editions of the NFHS.

## India first responder in Indian Ocean Region'

Rajnath highlights unique position

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Time and again India has proved itself to be "first responder" in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday while stating that the COVID-19 pandemic has reaffirmed the "centrality of multilateralism" in our interconnected world not only for matters of international security but also disaster management.

"India's unique position in the IOR, complemented by a capability of our armed forces, enables us to contribute significantly in Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) situations," said Mr. Singh while virtually inaugurating the 5th World Congress on Disaster Management.

"India has been regularly conducting exercises to deepen the HADR co-operation and coordination among our neighbours and friendly countries with a focus on sharing expertise and building capabilities," he said.

In this context, he re-

ferred to some of the HADR missions in the IOR undertaken by India in recent years, including Operation Rahat in Yemen in 2015, cyclone in Sri Lanka in 2016; quake in Indonesia in 2019; Cyclone Idai in Mozambique and flooding and landslips in Madagascar in January 2020.

**Challenging landscape**  
Stating that we live in a challenging geo-political landscape where countries have to face, traditional and non-traditional threats including natural calamities which include pandemics like COVID-19, which has wreaked havoc in the last two years, Mr. Singh said, "We must look at cooperating more closely to strengthen international architecture for building structures to prevent and manage future disasters."

He said benefits of cutting-edge technologies emerging in the fields of space, communication, bio-engineering, bio-medics and Artificial Intelligence should be shared with all.

## Pragya Thakur appears before court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Pragya Singh Thakur, the BJP MP from Bhopal and accused in the 2008 Malegaon bomb blast that killed six and injured 101, appeared before the special National Investigation Agency (NIA) Court on Wednesday.

She told special judge P.R. Sitre that she had to be admitted to the Kokilaben Hospital. The court replied that she should be present when required. Ms. Thakur had also appeared before the same judge on January 4 after being given a "last chance" to come before the court.

Then too, Ms. Thakur had sought an exemption from physical appearance citing medical and security concerns.

On June 7, 2019, Ms. Thakur had told the court that she did not know anything about the blast.

She was granted bail by the Bombay High Court on April 25, 2017 after the court held "prima facie, no case was made out against her".

"He [Mr. Singh] has no

"A small team from the Srinagar police signalled a suspected Santro car to stop. However, the terrorists start-

ed firing indiscriminately, while trying to flee under the cover of fire. The fire was, however, effectively retaliated," Inspector-General of Police Vijay Kumar said.

He added that three militants were killed in the operation.

## Several cases

Prior to joining the terror ranks, several cases regarding involvement in stone-throwing incidents were also registered against Shalla, the police said.

Sheikh was involved in the killing of a non-local labourer in the Litter area of Pulwama, they added.

The police said they recovered incriminating material, including arms and ammunition, from them, but did not provide details.

## IN BRIEF



Pak. allows transportation of aid to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Wednesday said it has formally informed India about its decision to allow the transportation of an Indian humanitarian shipment of 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat and life saving drugs to Afghanistan through its territory on an "exceptional basis for humanitarian purposes". Prime Minister Imran Khan made the announcement on Monday. PTI

## HC rejects Tejpal's plea for in-camera hearing

MUMBAI  
The Bombay High Court in Goa on Wednesday rejected a plea filed by former journalist Tarun Tejpal seeking in-camera hearing of a petition filed by the Goa Government challenging his acquittal in the 2013 rape case. A Division Bench was hearing an application filed by Mr. Tejpal citing the CrPC and an order passed by the High Court giving guidelines to cover cases of sexual harassment.

## Retired SC judge must probe Amritavati riots: BJP

PUNE  
The rioting that erupted in Malegaon, Amritavati and Nanded earlier this month should be investigated by a retired Supreme Court judge, said BJP Maharashtra unit president Chandrakant Patil, while demanding that the State Government drop all charges against BJP activists arrested in connection with the violence.

## I-T Dept. detects ₹400 crore undisclosed income

NEW DELHI  
The Income-Tax Department has detected undisclosed income to the tune of about ₹400 crore during searches on two real estate groups based in and around Delhi. They are engaged in the construction of commercial and residential projects. On preliminary analysis of the data seized during the operation, the agency has found that these groups were receiving part of the consideration in cash against the sale of flats and the cash was not being recorded in the books of accounts.

## SC reimposes Delhi construction ban

Court slams Govt. for delayed response, says measures should be ready

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The credit for loosening the smog's choke on Delhi in the past few days largely goes to the wind, an "act of God", but the wind may die by the end of the day to leave the Capital again at the mercy of pollution, Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana told the Government on Wednesday.

"We are saved because of the wind," the Chief Justice Ramana addressed Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre. "It is what we call in law an 'act of God'." Justice D.Y. Chandrachud noted.

The Solicitor-General said the ban on construction and demolition activities had not been extended in the Capital.

The lawyer for the High Court said there were more than 1,300 criminal cases in Uttar Pradesh against legislators. Sixty-three Special Courts have been constituted to hear these cases.

"Are these Special Courts constituted for this purpose [the trial of criminal cases against former and sitting MPs/MLAs] exclusively?" the CJI asked the lawyer. Justice Surya Kant, on the Special Bench, said the total pendency of such cases in the State was 1,374. "You have not established a single court exclusively for this purpose," he said.

Justice Kant said existing courts have been "labelled" Special Courts. "Is it your intention to drag on these cases?" Chief Justice Ramana asked. Over 4,400 criminal trials involving MPs and MLAs have been pending stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

His comments come in the backdrop of continuing negotiations between India and China for disengagement and de-escalation towards ending the ongoing stand-off in eastern Ladakh.



Gasping for air: Anti-smog gun being used against air pollution in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

tal. But the ban would be reimposed if the situation worsened, he said.

The court reimposed the ban in Delhi-NCR as an interim measure. The court nevertheless allowed non-polluting activities related to

construction like plumbing and interior decoration to continue. The Bench directed that funds collected as labour cess for the welfare of construction workers should be paid for their subsistence.

"I think there is no sub-

stantial change. It appears to be getting serious again.. You will have to take measures for another three days," the Chief Justice told the Government.

The court clarified it had no intention to dispose of the case or stop monitoring the pollution graph. If necessary, it would hear the case "almost every day", the Bench underscored.

Justice Chandrachud criticised how the Government waited for pollution to take a turn for the worse before scurrying to kick in pollution control measures.

The court urged the Government to continue with anti-pollution measures for another three days. It listed the case on Monday.

## Webinar on career in business analytics

Series organised by The Hindu

STAFF REPORTER  
CHENNAI



A webinar on MBA/M.Sc. in analytics with work permit in U.S., Canada and Europe will be held as a part of The Hindu EducationPlus Study Abroad Series presented by INSOFE at 6.30 p.m. on November 27.

INSOFE is a Data Science Education institute with world class research and consulting experience. It offers global masters programmes in data science and business analytics to students from diverse education disciplines. The webinar series, organised by The Hindu, aims to help graduates find the right career pathway.

Venkatesh Sunkad, Dean, Business Programs, INSOFE; Suzy Siegle, Provost and Executive Vice President, Professor of Management, Walsh College, U.S.A.; Maud Le Bars, South Asia Area Manager, Rennes

School of Business, France; and Robin Ritchie, Associate Dean, Professional Graduate Programs and Associate Professor, Marketing, Carleton University, Canada will speak as a part of the webinar.

The discussion will be moderated by Yashasvini Rajeshwar, Founder and CEO, AuxoHub.

To register for the webinar, visit: <https://bit.ly/INSE-DIT> or scan QR Code



## Assam employees to get leave to meet parents

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Assam Government has decided to grant its employees leave for four days on New Year to meet their parents or in-laws.

Employees whose parents or in-laws are not alive will not be entitled for this "special headquarters leave" from January 6-9, 2022, the State Cabinet

headed by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma decided on Wednesday.

The Cabinet meeting was held for the first time in western Assam's Bongaon. Ministers, IAS and IPS officers posted in the State can also avail this leave but field workers, including police officers up to the rank of Superintendent of Police, cannot.

## Bangladesh pact example of mutual respect'

Certain' countries are trying to alter status quo by force, says Naravane

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI



General Manoj Naravane

ing was an "emotive issue" in Bangladesh and called for attention on resolving the outstanding issues.

"The historic land boundary agreement between India and Bangladesh has set a unique example on resolving border disputes through mutual negotiations at a time when certain countries are trying to alter the status quo by force," said Army chief General Manoj Naravane on Wednesday without naming anyone.

His comments come in the backdrop of continuing negotiations between India and China for disengagement and de-escalation towards ending the ongoing stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

Speaking at a seminar on India-Bangladesh: 50 years of friendship organised by the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, Bangladesh High Commissioner Muhammad Imran noted that water shar-

"Such agreements as that between ours epitomise the

three 'Ms' – Mutual respect, [mutual] trust and [mutual] commitment to the rules-based order."

India and Bangladesh have resolved both the land and maritime boundary issues by mutual agreement.

This year marks the diamond jubilee of the 1971 war and also 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Observing that there were issues in the bilateral relationship in the past, Mr. Imran said that under the present Government of Sheikh Hasina the relationship between the countries had made progress.

Meanwhile, in a separate

## Constitution Day: Morcha plans big

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The BJP's SC Morcha will organise 20 big programmes covering nearly 150 Assembly segments in Uttar Pradesh, apart from several programmes in other States, to mark 'Constitution Day' from November 26 to December 6 (considered the death anniversary or 'Maha Parinirvan Diwas' of Constitution framer Dr. B.R. Ambedkar).

Sharing the details of the programmes, Lal Singh Arya, BJP's SC Morcha president, said starting on November 26, the day the Constitution was adopted by India, 'Samvidhan Gaurav Yatras' will be organised by the party workers across the country in all districts. These programmes will conclude on December 6.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP's headquarters in New Delhi, Mr. Arya said all district units of the party would organise programmes on Constitution Day in their respective offices. All these programmes will start by bowing in front of Constitution and B.R. Ambedkar, who drafted the Constitution, he said.

Asked about programmes organised in Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Arya said 20 big programmes had been planned in the State. Many of these will be addressed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, and Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Dinesh Sharma. These programmes will span over 20 districts covering nearly 150 Assembly segments. Sources said special emphasis on these programmes will be on Dalit icon Ambedkar. His large-size portraits will be used in the public rallies.

# Don't disturb federalism: Mamata to PM

In meeting with Modi, West Bengal CM demands rollback of the expanded jurisdiction of BSF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre must not disturb the federal structure, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee reportedly told Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday at a meeting in Delhi, flagging the expansion of the BSF's jurisdiction in the border States. Ms. Banerjee has been demanding that the amendment to the BSF Act be withdrawn immediately.

The Union Home Ministry, in a notification on October 11, amended the BSF Act of 1968 expanding its jurisdiction from 15 km to 50 km in border States. Though the BSF does not have policing powers, it can apprehend a suspect and conduct "preliminary questioning". The seized consignment or suspect has to be handed over to the local police within 24 hours.

West Bengal has a 2,216-km border with Bangladesh, and the ruling Trinamool Congress contends that the extension of jurisdiction will



**State interests:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ PTI

effectively bring nearly one-third of the State's territory under BSF control. Of the 23 districts in the State, nearly 10 will be affected. This would have an impact on 21 of the 42 Lok Sabha constituencies, which can have larger political implications.

Ms. Banerjee said she told the PM that if the law and order was solely a State subject and if this equilibrium was changed, then it would lead

to an obvious confrontation. "Our country has an established federal structure. We are not against the BSF, I respect all agencies. But law and order is a State subject. Giving more powers will lead to a confrontation," Ms. Banerjee told presspersons. She referred to incidents of recent encounters that the BSF has had in the State. "If you need more power to man the borders, then you

should ask for the State Government's help. But do not unnecessarily disturb the federal structure. This issue must be debated and the law must be withdrawn," she said.

Ms. Banerjee said she had invited the PM to inaugurate the Global Business Summit in West Bengal next year. She urged him to clear ₹96,000 crore in dues that the Centre owed the State.

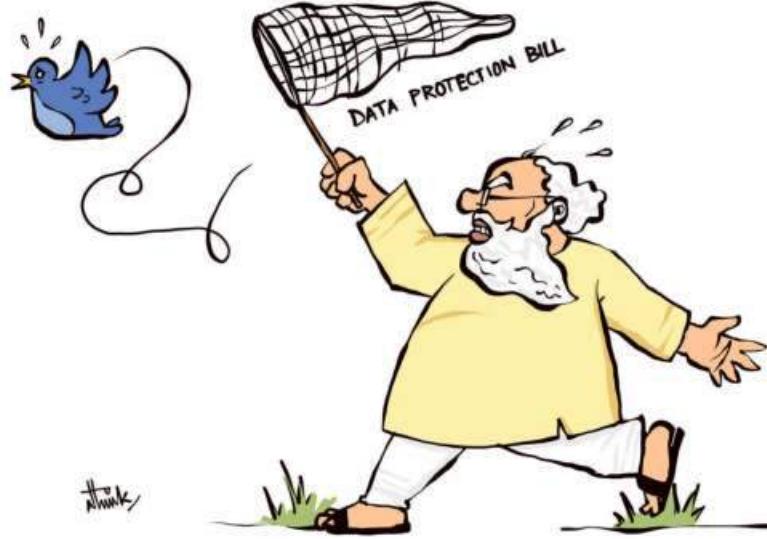
The Trinamool is trying to expand its footprint across the country and making a serious effort to dislodge the Congress from the position of the lead Opposition party. Asked if she will be meeting any other Opposition leaders, Ms. Banerjee said her Delhi visit was specifically to meet the Prime Minister.

### No meet with Sonia

She snapped at reporters when asked why she was not meeting Congress president Sonia Gandhi, whose 10 Janpath house used to be a regular stop for her during every Delhi visit. "Why should I meet Sonia every time? It is not constitutionally mandated."

She said she had raised the issue of violence in Tripura where Trinamool workers were allegedly assaulted by BJP workers. On the Uttar Pradesh election, she said: "If Trinamool can help defeat the BJP in U.P., we will go... If Akhilesh [Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav] wants our help we will give."

### On the draw



# SIT defends investigation into 2002 Godhra riots cases

It calls allegations of a larger conspiracy baseless

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Wednesday in the Supreme Court defended its investigation into the Godhra riots cases of 2002. Appearing before a Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said the SIT, which was appointed by the apex court, did a "thorough" job in probing the riots.

Mr. Rohatgi said the allegations of a "larger conspira-

cy" behind the riots was baseless. The role of every accused was looked into by the SIT.

Accusations of "collaboration" by it were recklessly submitted, Mr. Rohatgi submitted. "There is no material to conclude that there was any other conspiracy than the cases that are being tried," the senior advocate argued.

He said several cases had been re-opened and investigated again. Chargesheets were filed.

The senior lawyer said no

FIR had been registered on the basis of Ms. Jafri's complaint of a larger conspiracy.

In an earlier hearing, the apex court had observed that its September 12, 2011 order, had merely directed the SIT to "look into" the material brought forth by Ms. Jafri and file a final report before the magistrate concerned in Gujarat.

Following the apex court order in 2011, the SIT had gone on to file a closure report in February 2012.

# MSP law required to tide over farm crisis: AIKS

Middlemen benefit without Government procurement'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh's farmers face higher losses in comparison to their counterparts in Kerala, Punjab and even Jharkhand, due to the current regime of patchy procurement at minimum support prices which are not comprehensive, according to the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS).

### Problem remains

Farm unions are continuing their agitation calling for the ruling BJP to be voted out in Uttar Pradesh's upcoming Assembly election, arguing that while the repeal of farm laws will prevent future catastrophe, a new law guaranteeing comprehensive MSP rates for all farmers is needed.



A banner at the site of protest at Singhu.

ed to deal with the current agrarian crisis.

"This struggle was never just about the repeal of the three black laws. The main problem is yet to be solved," Ashok Dhawale, president of the Communist Party of In-

## Cong. notice to Amarinder wife Pneet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH

The Congress on Wednesday issued a show-cause notice to its Patiala MP Pneet Kaur, wife of the former Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, seeking an explanation for her "anti-party activities".

Issuing the notice to Ms. Kaur, Congress leader Harish Choudhary, in-charge of party's Punjab affairs, wrote, "For the last many days, we are continuously receiving reports from Congress workers, MLAs, leaders from Patiala and the media about your anti-party activities."

In the notice, the Congress asked Ms. Kaur to explain her stand on the issue within seven days "otherwise the party will be forced to take necessary disciplinary action".

Across the country, only 8.6% of agricultural households cultivating paddy were able to sell their crop to a Government agency at the set MSP rate, the AIKS noted.

Several other major Uttar Pradesh crops do not benefit from the MSP regime at all, including potatoes, pulses and sugar cane.

## 3 lakh COVID victims in Gujarat: Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the 2022 Assembly election in Gujarat, the Congress on Wednesday launched a campaign that challenges the "Gujarat Model". The party alleged that three lakh people died of COVID-19 in the State and demanded ₹4 lakh as compensation for kin of the victims.

Termed the "Congress Nyay Campaign", the short video has former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi assuring people that his party will make sure the kin of the victims receive compensation. He also urged people to register themselves on [www.4lakhdena-hoga.com](http://www.4lakhdena-hoga.com). He said the Government had acknowledged only 10,000 deaths.

# In Patna, Lalu tries to show who is in the driving seat

In nostalgia trip, RJD leader drives first vehicle he owned

AMARNATH TEWARY  
PATNA



**Down memory lane:** RJD chief Lalu Prasad driving a jeep, his first vehicle, in Patna on Wednesday. ■ PTI

taking everyone along," tweeted Mr. Prasad in Hindi along with the video of him driving the jeep.

Clad in a white vest and dhoti, Mr. Prasad, 73, looked composed while driving the vehicle.

"I used to drive this vehicle with the then Chief Minister Karpoori Thakur who while sitting beside me kept telling me that I drive fast and well. It was his way to tell me to drive slowly," Mr. Prasad recalled with a smile.

# 12 Congress MLAs join Trinamool in Meghalaya

Former CM Mukul Sangma among them

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

seat in the 2018 Assembly election in the State.

The Congress that so far had 17 legislators will now be reduced to only five MLAs.

Among those who are said to have joined the Trinamool, eight MLAs, including former Chief Minister Mr. Sangma, are from the Garo Hills, while the remaining four legislators are from the Khasi Jaintia Hills.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi had met Mr. Sangma and State Congress chief Vincent Pala in the first week of October in Delhi to resolve their differences. But the meeting clearly failed to prevent the former Chief Minister from switching over to the Trinamool.

In the 60-member Meghalaya Assembly, the National People's Party (NPP)-led coalition is in government. The NPP is a part of the National Democratic Alliance in the Centre as well as an ally of the BJP in Manipur.

# Congress, BSP MLAs join BJP in U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

Rebel Congress MLA from Rae Bareli Aditi Singh and BSP MLA from Azamgarh Vandana Singh joined the ruling BJP in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday.

UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi is the sitting MP from the Rae Bareli Lok Sabha constituency while SP president Akhilesh Yadav is the MP from Azamgarh.

Ms. Singh, after joining the BJP, said she was inspired by the work of Modi and CM Yogi Adityanath.

TAMIL NADU GENERATION AND DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LTD		Notice Inviting Tenders (E-Tendering Process)	
SL No	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No. and Description of work / Material	Due date & time for Submission of tender
1	CE / MECHANICAL COAL	COAL - 9 / 2021-22, dt. 15.11.2021 Movement and handling of coal by rail-cum-sea route from the various collieries of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd through the load port of Paradip for the Thermal Stations of TANGEDCO	2.00 PM on 18.01.2022
The Tender Specification can be downloaded from TANGEDCO website, <a href="http://www.tangedco.gov.in">www.tangedco.gov.in</a> , <a href="http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in">www.tenders.tn.gov.in</a> , <a href="https://intenders.nic.in/gicapp">https://intenders.nic.in/gicapp</a> at free of cost. Tender will be opened through the NC portal			

INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE	
Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao Road, Nagarabhavi P.O. Bengaluru-560 072, India.	Date: November 24, 2021
Applications are invited from eligible candidates for the post of Assistant Professor. Detailed advertisement, application form, API Score Excel Sheet can be downloaded from <a href="http://www.iseic.ac.in">www.iseic.ac.in</a> .	
The last date for receiving applications is December 24, 2021 by 5.00 p.m. Sd/- S. Ashok Rao, Registrar	

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA DEPARTMENT OF SPACE	
CMG, SDSC - SHAR SRIRAKHOTA - 524124	
<b>Brief E-TENDER NOTICE / CORRIGENDUM-B</b>	
No: SHAR-CMG-CIVIL:MAINT-E-PT-09(B)/21-22 Dt: 24.11.2021	
"Road work @ SPP area" (T/C-21-042, Est. cost ₹60.42 Lakhs); "Misc civil works @ SPROB" (T/C-21-043, Est. cost ₹24.20 Lakhs). Sale period extended up to 06.12.2021. Interested tenderers may visit <a href="http://www.isro.gov.in">www.isro.gov.in</a> or <a href="http://www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO">www.tenderwizard.com/ISRO</a> for details.	
Sd/ GROUP HEAD, CMG/ SDSC SHAR	

Kerala State Science & Technology Museum, VIKASBHAVAN P.O, Thiruvananthapuram-33.	
Tender No. KSSTM A2/1829/21	Date: 19/11/21
Tender ID No. 2021_KSSTM_A2/1829/21	E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders under single cover system are invited by the Director, Kerala State Science & Technology Museum from reputed Supply of actual working and cut section models in automobile industry. PAC - Rs. 15,00,000/- (INR). EMD - Rs. 15,000/- (INR).	
Last date of submission of E-Tender: 8/12/2021, 3 PM.	
Date & time of opening of Tender: 10/12/2021, 3 PM.	
Price of bid documents: Rs. 1500/- + 18% GST (Rs. 1770)	
For further details visit <a href="http://www.kstmuseum.com">www.kstmuseum.com</a>	

# Private vaccine stocks near expiry date

Experts call for administering COVID-19 booster dose to frontline workers and those at higher risk

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI

Private hospitals in States such as Gujarat and Jharkhand could face wastage of COVID-19 vaccines as stocks approach the expiry date, Girdhar Gyani, director-general of the Association of Healthcare Providers (India), says.

By the association's survey, such a situation can arise as early as December if a mechanism to remedy this is not immediately put in place.

"This is happening in the private healthcare sector. We are getting news from other parts of the country also about vaccine stocks nearing expiry date. The Union Health Ministry has given us this understanding that they may export the excess stock to prevent waste. We have approached the Ministry ask-



**Virus shield:** Health workers during a door-to-door vaccination drive in Siliguri, West Bengal. ■ AFP

ing it to direct manufacturers to take back the excess stock and also look into making booster dose available for healthcare workers who were vaccinated early this year," Mr. Gyani said.

According to the Health Ministry, the States and the Union Territories have more than 21.65 crore balance and

increased from six to nine months.

## Millions of doses

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

This stock would possibly start expiring from January or February 2022. Dr. Mahajan added that in case the expert committee of the Government decided that a booster dose was necessary, then this stock could be used for boosters for healthcare and frontline workers and those who were at higher risk.

"The objective should be to minimise wastage of this precious resource," he said.

The existing shelf life is nine months, which is same as that of Covishield. The shelf life of Covishield was in-

Bishnu Panigrahi, group head, Medical Strategy and Operations, Fortis Healthcare, said that while his hospital continued to administer vaccines across all its centres in India, the daily footfall was low. "So looking at this, we are ordering in a prudent manner, so that we are never overstocked. We are reviewing our vaccine stocks on a regular basis. We are also actively reaching out to people to take their second dose," he said.

Stating that it was important to coordinate the production, storage, cold chain and distribution of vaccines, Rajeev Jayadevan, member, national, Indian Medical Association task force on coronavirus and deputy medical director of Sunrise Hospitals, Kochi, said any imbalance in this process could lead to wastage.

With many countries witnessing surges in COVID-19 cases despite high levels of vaccination, there was a



A health worker collecting swabs in New Delhi.

■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

need for continued vigil, given the unpredictable and contagious nature of the disease, it said.

Hence, all efforts must be implemented to preserve the gains made so far and to prevent deterioration of COVID scenario across the country," the letter said.

According to data released by the Ministry, Naga-

land reported 342 average daily tests in the week ending November 22. This is in stark contrast to the 1,250 average daily tests conducted in the period August 23-29. The Ministry further said that worrying trends with regards to tests, tests per million, positivity rate and higher dependence on rapid antigen tests had been observed in various districts of the State.

"Also, with the onset of winter and increased pollution in some States, prevalence of ILI/SARI and respiratory distress symptoms should be closely monitored, with tests conducted regularly for timely monitoring and clustering of cases for early hotspot identification," it said.

# Normal international flights very soon: Govt.

Restrictions on the number of flights have led to fares soaring, say airlines

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

International flights are likely to be normalised before 2021-end, Rajiv Bansal, Secretary, Civil Aviation Ministry, said on Wednesday.

India banned scheduled international flights from March 22, 2020. Over the past 18 months, however, it has entered into "air bubble" arrangements with 31 countries under which a limited number of flights are permitted with several restrictions.

Scheduled international flights are likely to resume "very soon" and "by the end of this year", Mr. Bansal told reporters. Several airlines,



**Out of reach:** Only a limited number of flights are available under the 'air bubble' arrangement with 31 countries. ■ AP

embassies, tour operators and travel agents have appealed to the Government to allow pre-COVID capacity as restrictions on the number of flights under "air bubbles" have led to fares soaring. For example, as per the agree-

ment with Dubai, its airlines Emirates and flydubai are allowed only 4,800 seats per day, or 33,600 seats per week, whereas they were allowed 65,200 flights per week before the pandemic under the bilateral air ser-

vice agreement. As a result, airlines say, the capacity has come down to half on the India-Dubai route leading to doubling of fares to ₹40,000-₹45,000.

As different Ministries sit down to chalk out a strategy to reopen flights, the key focus will be on ensuring safety of health. "I am all for regaining our space in the civil aviation arena and making a hub in India and for more wide-bodied aircraft. We will get there but bear with me and trust me, I am on your side. We will work together but in a safe environment," Mr. Bansal said.

(With inputs from PTI)

# UAE seeks exemption from air bubble

Envoy cites Dubai expo rush, says passenger footfall will double if curbs are lifted



**Ahmed Al-Banna**  
We have asked the Government to exempt us from those restrictions during the expo but are yet to receive any green light."

He said at present the UAE national carriers – Emirates and Etihad – were travelling at only 30% of their capacity, and the number of passengers travelling "would double" if India lifted the "bubble" restrictions. This would also help those trying to visit the expo that began on October 1, which, officials said, received about 41 lakh visits,

including about 3.9 lakh visitors to the India Pavilion.

## Jaishankar visit

The problem over flight capacity is also likely to figure in the bilateral conversations as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is expected to travel to Abu Dhabi next week to address the "Indian Ocean Region" Conference on December 4-6.

This will be Mr. Jaishankar's second visit in two months, after he visited the expo and met the UAE leadership on November 13-14. Speaking about the newly launched India-Israel-UAE-U.S. quadrilateral at the time, Mr. Jaishankar said there would be an in-person ministerial meeting of what is being called the "West Asian Quad" in the next few weeks.

To questions on the new

Quad, Mr. Al-Banna said the "Quadrant" is not a strategic collaboration. "We have emphasised that the Quadrant is an economic arrangement between the four countries. I read articles that said this was about ... creating a second NATO ... that doesn't make any sense. This will concentrate on business and economic collaborations."

He said preparations were under way on teams that would work on the various issues identified for cooperation, to be followed by a ministerial meeting.

Mr. Al-Banna also said he hoped that the India-UAE negotiations on a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) would be concluded in the next few months, possibly even before March 2022, which would give a fillip to bilateral trade, investment and travel.

# Tension brewing on Assam-Arunachal border

Dispute with Meghalaya to be resolved

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Assam has moved closer to resolving its decades-old boundary dispute with Meghalaya, but tension has been brewing on its Arunachal Pradesh frontier.

Miscreants allegedly fired at Assam forest officials on November 23 in the Ronga Reserve Forest of the State's Lakhimpur district. The spot is near the Arunachal Pradesh border.

On November 20, a team of Assam forest officials was detained by allegedly illegal settlers from Arunachal Pradesh's Hailakandi district in the forest. They were later rescued by the Assam police.

The Lakhimpur district police officials said a joint operation was on with their Arunachal Pradesh counter-

parts to apprehend the miscreants.

The firing coincided with the visit of the members of the border committees of Assam and Meghalaya to various areas of difference along the inter-State boundary. These areas included Hawla, Lyngkhung, Jimbri-gaon, Boklapara and Patagona villages on the border of Ri-Bhoi (Meghalaya) and Kamrup (Assam) districts.

Things have not been quiet on Assam's border with Mizoram too. Forest officials in southern Assam's Hailakandi district have flagged a 3.5-km road being built by Mizoram inside a reserve forest in Assam despite the Centre's advisory against construction in disputed areas along the inter-State boundary.

# FAITH

## Bhakti in Kali Yuga

In the depiction of Krishna avatar in the Bhagavata Purana, many people get the chance to move with Him closely and experience His presence. They are attracted to Him and express their devotion in their individual ways. Among them Uddhava, a kinsman and great devotee of Krishna, is described as one who is also most dear to the Lord. At the end of His avatar, when Krishna has to depart, Uddhava is unable to bear the thought of being separated from Him and voices his many concerns to the Lord, pointed out Sri Dushyant Sridhar in a discourse.

The Supreme Lord, the embodiment of Sat-chit-ananda, is beyond form and name; yet He came down to earth in human form for the sake of His devotees.

Now, without Krishna's protection what would be the fate of people in Kali Yuga when cruelty is sure to hold full sway, asks Uddhava. Krishna should not leave the earth, for even good people shall feel the adverse influences of Kali Yuga. In the Bhagavata Mahatmya, it is held that the Lord started to think deeply on what Uddhava said and then decided to assimilate all His powers and essence into the text Bhagavata Purana. Krishna tells Uddhava that one who has intense love for Him and constantly remembers Him with love and devotion is sure to get liberated from samsara. He can attain whatever he wants.

Bhakti helps to initiate the thoughts of the Lord in people and by listening to the purana or by reading it one gradually begins to feel the presence of the Lord in the text. The purana gives mental strength to people in Kali Yuga to overcome the power of Maya that distorts one's understanding of Truth. It removes the sins of people and helps them to win over the passions of lust and anger.

**CROSSWORD**

**13411**

(set by Hypatia)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9			8			
11						
13						
16						
21						
24						
26						

**ACROSS**

- Commotion from one held-up in court? (6)
- Rain storms crossing in the morning around harbour (6)
- Emperor shoots arrogant guards (4)
- Say crab cactus, near rocks (10)
- "Harischandra" initially screened from machine projecting movie (6)
- Reverend airing sticky stuff with kid in scheduled hour (4,4)

- Display keystrokes of genius.  
Type your answers in our online grids!  
@ <https://qrq.page.link/jjpTn>
- SCAN TO PLAY
- 13 American soldiers entering welcome treaty (9)  
15 Chase people (4)  
16 Story of son succeeding king in musical composition (4)  
17 A sacred book with heavyweight describing India's struggle (9)  
21 In the US, say red party captures a state (8)  
22 Icons of Italy playing games (6)  
24 Swamps in planet earth trapping Hydrogen and Sulphur (10)  
25 Remains clean (4)  
26 Scolding eschewing capital punishment (6)  
27 Army so responsibly protects city (6)
- DOWN
- Knight backs Arthur, perhaps taking a chance (7)
  - Mufflers essentially in fashion (5)
  - Cry from demand by divorcee? (7)
  - Fall from a bus tour many take regularly (6)
  - Perpetual tax saved by current worker (9)
  - Jack only got shellfish (7)
  - Area for shooting thin gun (7,6)
  - Lost great player during finale (9)
  - Chant following saint with a Church organ (7)
  - Craving voyeurs finally entertained by XXX (7)
  - Several obey unexpectedly, thus supervise ably (7)
  - A long line distributing volume of liquid (6)
  - German car with zero sound (5)

# SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13410

THROWS	M	A	R	J	O	R	A	M
R	O	V	A	E	U			
I	L	K	R	A	E	K		
N	A	M	S	K	A	R	S	H
M	O	L	S	S	A	D	T	
A	M	P	H	I	T	H	E	A
M	P	H	I	T	H	E	A	T
A	M	P	H	I	T	H	E	A
PHANTOM	THEATRE	INNERS	CONDENSATION	ADRENALINE	ROUNDFROG	SYLLABUS	REGI	ROADMAPS

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

No. SSS360

www.mightyfingers.com

CM YK MN ND NE

# Chinese firms eye Afghanistan's lithium

With Taliban nod, companies have begun 'inspections' of possible projects to tap lithium deposits

ANANTH KRISHNAN

HONG KONG

A number of Chinese companies have already begun "on-site inspections" of possible projects to tap lithium deposits in Afghanistan, having received the green light to do so from the Taliban regime, according to a report in the Chinese state media on Wednesday.

Lithium is one of many resources in Afghanistan present in large deposits but as yet untapped, largely because of years of political instability and the lack of infrastructure. A Chinese company secured the rights to mine one of the world's biggest copper reserves in Afghanistan at Aynak more than a decade ago, but has not yet begun work on extraction.

While Chinese firms are aware of the risks and pitfalls, they have not wasted time scouting out potential deposits of lithium, a valuable resource for a range of industries from electric cars to



**Untapped market:** Taliban members atop military vehicles in Kabul earlier this month. ■REUTERS

energy storage systems.

A report on Wednesday in the Communist Party-run newspaper *Global Times*, citing Chinese businessmen, said, "Representatives of several Chinese companies have arrived in Afghanistan on special visas and are conducting on-site inspections of potential lithium projects, while others have made contacts about such projects."

The visas were obtained from Afghan authorities "after coordination between the China Arab Economic

and Trade Promotion Committee in Kabul and Afghanistan's Mining Ministry" with "representatives of five Chinese companies" arriving in early November "to conduct on-site inspections", Yu Minghui, who heads the trade promotion committee, told the newspaper.

Besides the five companies present in Afghanistan, another "at least 20" state-owned and private firms had made inquiries about lithium projects, the committee said.

Mr. Yu said company representatives were "most concerned about basic guarantees of security and social order in Afghanistan", but also "praised the Afghan Taliban's friendliness toward Chinese investors".

The Taliban Government has said it would welcome Chinese investment and support President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative, and was also open to extending the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan.

#### Security situation

The security situation, not to mention a dire economic crisis including food shortages, are among the many challenges. Chinese media reported that on Saturday, a train carrying 1,000 tonnes of humanitarian aid was sent to Afghanistan from China's western Xinjiang region. "The problem is to ensure safety," Zhou Shijian, former vice president of the China Chamber of Commerce of Metals, Minerals and Chemi-

cals Importers and Exporters, told the newspaper. "If safety is not guaranteed, the gain will not be worth the loss."

Last month, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with acting Deputy Prime Minister Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in Doha, who assured Beijing that "a friendly policy towards China" was "a firm choice" by the Taliban.

Mr. Wang "expressed China's willingness to continue to provide humanitarian aid to Afghanistan within its capacity and work with the international community to help Afghanistan alleviate temporary difficulties and realise economic reconstruction as well as independent development", the Chinese Foreign Ministry said then.

Mr. Wang in September had announced China would "urgently provide 200 million yuan [\$30.96 million] worth of grains, winter supplies, vaccines, and medicines to Afghanistan" as well as 3 million vaccines.

## Erdogan hosts Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince

Visit seeks to repair tense relations

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANKARA

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is hosting Abu Dhabi's powerful Crown Prince, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, on Wednesday, as Turkey and the United Arab Emirates seek to repair their tense relations and increase economic cooperation.

The visit by the Crown Prince, seen as the *de facto* leader and the force behind the UAE's foreign policy posture, is his first official trip to Turkey since 2012, and the highest-level visit by

an Emirati official since relations hit a low. His brother who is the UAE National Security Adviser, Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed Al Nahyan, visited Turkey in August as the first step toward mending ties. The fallout between Ankara and Abu Dhabi reverberated across West Asia, resulting in a proxy conflict in Libya as well as tensions in the Gulf and in the eastern Mediterranean. Tensions also played out on social media, with jabs and taunts by officials, state-aligned accounts and government supporters.

## U.S. President invites Taiwan to online meet on democracy

China says it 'firmly opposes' inclusion of island

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden has invited Taiwan to a virtual summit on democracy alongside more than 100 countries – a move that sparked indignation from China, which is not on the list.

Taiwan thanked Mr. Biden for the invitation and said the gathering would be a rare opportunity for the self-ruled democracy to burnish its credentials on the world stage. "Through this summit, Taiwan can share its democratic success story," Presidential Office spokesperson Xavier Chang told reporters.

China said it "firmly opposed" the inclusion of an island it regards as "an inalienable part of Chinese territory." Beijing claims self-ruled Taiwan as part of its territory to be retaken one day, by force if necessary. The global conference was a campaign pledge by the U.S. President, who has placed the struggle between democracies and "autocratic Governments" at the heart of his foreign policy. The 'Summit for Democracy' will take place online on December 9 and 10 ahead of an in-person meeting at its second edition next year.

The meeting was long advertised, but the guest list – published Tuesday on the U.S. State Department's website – will be closely scrutinised. The U.S.'s main rivals,



China and Russia, are not on it.

The invitation is a major coup for Taipei at a time when Beijing is ramping up its campaign to keep Taiwan locked out of international bodies. Only 15 countries officially recognise Taipei over Beijing, although many nations maintain *de facto* diplomatic relations with the island. The U.S. does not recognise Taiwan as an independent country, but it holds it up as a rare model of progressive democracy in Asia and maintains it as a crucial regional ally. It opposes any change to Taiwan's status by force. China balks at any use of the word "Taiwan" or diplomatic gestures that might lend a sense of international legitimacy to the island. Taiwan's Foreign Ministry said it would be represented at the summit by its *de facto* U.S. Ambassador Bi-khim Hsiao and Digital Minister Audery Tang, who is one of the world's few openly transgender national politicians.

## IN BRIEF



Sri Lanka partially lifts chemical fertilizers ban

COLOMBO  
Sri Lanka has decided to partially lift the ban on chemical fertilizers and permit the private sector to import it to allow the nation's farmers to purchase it from the open market, Agriculture Minister Mahindana Aluthgama said. PTI

## Andersson becomes first woman Prime Minister of Sweden

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

STOCKHOLM

Sweden's Parliament elected Finance Minister Magdalena Andersson as the country's first woman Prime Minister on Wednesday, hours after she clinched a last-minute deal that gave her victory by the slimmest of possible margins.

The 54-year-old, who took over as leader of the Social Democrats earlier this month, reached a deal with the Left Party late on Tuesday to raise pensions in exchange for its backing in Wednesday's vote in Parliament.

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B), NIRMAN SOUDHA, BHUBANESWAR**  
E-mail : [seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com](mailto:seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com)

**Bid Identification No.: S.E.E.C (R&B) 10/2021-22**  
No. 24/22 / Date 23.11.21

The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for E.I. works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in: <https://tendersorissa.gov.in>. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from 5.00 P.M. of 30.11.2021 to 5:00 P.M. of 15.12.2021. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened at 11:30 A.M. of 16.12.2021 in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [www.tendersorissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in). Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website.

Superintending Engineer,  
Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, BBSR.  
OIPR-34006/11/0010/2022

## 31 migrants dead after boat capsizes

REUTERS

PARIS

At least 31 people died on Wednesday after their dinghy capsized while crossing the English Channel from France to Britain, in the worst disaster on record involving migrants in the waters separating the countries.

More migrants left France's northern shores than usual to take advantage of calm sea conditions on Wednesday, according to fishermen.

One fisherman called the rescue services after seeing an empty dinghy and people floating motionless nearby.

Franck Dhersin, deputy head of regional transport and mayor of Teteghem on the northern French coast, said the death toll had reached 31 and that two people were still missing.

This comes as Germany is seeing a surge in cases, and the political transition has somewhat hampered the country's response. Mr. Scholz also stressed the im-

## German parties reach deal for coalition Govt.

Agreement to end Angela Merkel's era

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN

Three German parties have reached a deal to form a new Government that will end the era of longtime Chancellor Angela Merkel, according to Olaf Scholz, who is poised to replace her.



Olaf Scholz

portance of a sovereign Europe, friendship with France and partnership with the United States as key cornerstones of the Government's foreign policy – continuing a long post-war tradition.

The new Government would not seek "the lowest common denominator, but the politics of big impacts", Mr. Scholz promised.

The Social Democrats have been negotiating with the Greens and the pro-business Free Democrats since narrowly winning a national election on September 26.

## Sri Lanka Cabinet clears China's role in terminal project

### Island nation ropes in Chinese firm for second phase

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has decided to rope in China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) to construct the second phase of the Colombo Port's East Container Terminal (ECT), which was earlier to be developed jointly by Sri Lanka, India and Japan, until Colombo reneged on a 2019 tri-lateral agreement.

In a Cabinet decision taken on Tuesday, Colombo approved the development of the strategic port terminal



**Boosting ties:** Colombo Port's East Container Terminal.

in stages, to be "totally operated" by the Sri Lanka Ports Authority.

Prominent Sri Lankan firm Access Engineering and CHEC have won the bid to construct the facility, the Department of Government In-

formation said in a statement.

CHEC, a subsidiary of the state-owned China Communications Construction Company, is already involved in strategic infrastructure projects in Sri Lanka, including

the \$1-billion Colombo Port City coming up near Galle Face – the capital's iconic seafront – and a four-lane elevated highway connecting Colombo's suburbs, with a near-\$1-billion investment.

The terms of the highway deal allow the state-run Chi-

nese firm to own and run the highway for 15 years before transferring ownership to Sri Lanka.

With the ECT development project now, China's role in Sri Lanka's ports – China Merchants Port Holdings Company already holds majority stakes at the southern Hambantota Port as well as the Colombo International Container Terminal at the

While India and Japan had earlier agreed to bring in the investment, involving India's Adani Group, the Rajapaksa administration in February scrapped the deal signed by the former Sirisena-Wickremesinghe Government with New Delhi, citing resistance from port worker unions, and the Adani Group's refusal to agree to the terms set by Sri Lanka. India and Japan were quick to express their displeasure. Within weeks, Sri Lanka offered the West Container Terminal development project at the same port to the Adani Group, with no known tendering process, in what Colombo called "a compromise".

### Limited to civil works

CHEC's role at the ECT ap-

pears limited to civil works,

according to sources familiar

with the tendering process.

The Ministry of Port and

Shipping, in its invitation for

international bids, said only

firms with a domestic major-

ity ownership – over 51%

of the state held by Sri Lankan

nationals – were eligible to

participate. The ECT's de-

velopment would require con-

struction of an additional

700-metre-long quay wall

and infrastructure around it,

that was earlier estimated to

cost at least \$700 million.

### HAFFKINE BIO-PHARMACEUTICAL CORPORATION LTD.

(Govt.of Maharashtra Undertaking)

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An UN accredited Govt. of Maharashtra Undertaking Company is engaged in the manufacturing of life saving vaccines, anti-sera and pharmaceutical formulations is on a look out for the following posts on permanent basis for their Parel unit.

Rs.No.	Name of Post	No. of Vacancies
1.	Manager (Quality Assurance)	01
2.	Manager (Quality Control Biological)	01
3.	Manager (Marketing)	01
4.	Manager (Accounts)	01
5.	Plant Engineer	01

For detailed information such as Educational Qualifications, Age, Experience, last date of submission of application, general terms and conditions etc. is available on the "Circular" page on company's website i.e. [www.vaccinehaffkine.com/circular](http://www.vaccinehaffkine.com/circular). Recruitment on above posts will be on permanent basis.

Application should be submitted in hard copy by post/by hand along with relevant documents within 25 days of this advertisement on following address.

The Managing Director

Haffkine Bio Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd

Acharya Donde Marg, Parel, Mumbai- 400 012

DGIPR/2021/2022/ 2855

Sd/-

Managing Director

Material Manager

Haffkine Bio Pharmaceutical Corporation Ltd

</

## MARKET WATCH

	24-11-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	58,340	-0.55
US Dollar	74.40	0.02
Gold	46,613	-0.60
Brent oil	82.09	1.17

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	763.05	33.80
Asian Paints	3157.00	-28.55
Axiscity	685.15	-0.50
Bajaj Auto	3407.10	-27.75
Bajaj Finserv	17408.70	40.60
Bajaj Finance	717.30	63.00
Bharti Airtel	758.90	0.00
BPCL	403.35	5.75
Britannia Ind	3623.35	-38.80
Cipla	893.45	-17.15
Coal India	159.10	2.90
Divis Lab	4682.70	-80.60
Dr Reddy's Lab	4598.05	-33.90
Eicher Motors	2536.95	-62.25
Gasim Ind	1746.95	-36.40
HCL Tech.	1119.45	6.85
HDFC	2883.55	-22.95
HDFC Bank	1518.05	2.50
HDFC Life	687.20	-8.20
Hero MotoCorp	2621.05	-11.15
Hindalco	452.10	1.90
Hind Unilever	2374.75	-19.45
ICICI Bank	760.20	8.35
IndusInd Bank	970.40	-10.95
Infosys	1696.00	-40.90
Indian Oil Corp	127.60	1.45
ITC	227.70	-3.90
JSW Steel	683.25	-0.05
Kotak Bank	2011.40	28.50
L&T	1862.50	-23.85
M&M	893.20	-8.15
Maruti Suzuki	7669.45	-184.55
Nestle India Ltd.	19086.90	-94.65
NTPC	135.35	1.85
ONGC	153.45	6.75
PowerGrid Corp	203.30	1.45
Reliance Ind	2351.40	-34.45
SBI Life	1163.75	10.25
State Bank	493.15	0.10
Shree Cement	26883.75	143.25
Sun Pharma	778.95	-6.25
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	798.95	-22.00
Tata Motors	488.65	-6.85
Tata Steel	1178.50	-13.55
TCS	3443.30	-20.95
Tech Mahindra	1538.10	-22.45
Titan	2375.85	-11.85
UltraTech Cement	7577.30	-80.65
UPL	721.70	-3.55
Wipro	636.50	-6.30

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on November 24		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.20	74.52
Euro	83.18	83.54
British Pound	99.10	99.53
Japanese Yen (100)	64.46	64.76
Chinese Yuan	11.61	11.67
Swiss Franc	79.26	79.60
Singapore Dollar	54.25	54.50
Canadian Dollar	58.47	58.72
Malaysian Ringgit	17.62	17.70
Australian Dollar	53.52	53.76

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



## Cybersecurity firm Inspira to raise ₹300 cr.

MUMBAI Cybersecurity firm Inspira Enterprise India is planning to raise fresh capital of ₹300 crore through an IPO to pursue geographical expansion. The company is planning to expand footprint across European, West Asian, and South Asian countries.

## JM Financial unveils Bondskart.com

CHENNAI JM Financial Products Ltd., the NBFC arm of JM Financial Group, announced the unveiling of Bondskart.com, a digital investment platform for ease of investment in an extensive array of debt securities. "There is no entry or exit fee for the investors. The minimum investment is ₹2 lakh," said Ajay Mangunia, MD and Head, Institutional Fixed Income.

# Centre's cryptocurrency ban plan said to spur heavy selling

Traders said several exchanges were facing deposit and withdrawal challenges



In the shadows: Industry estimates peg the number of investors in cryptocurrencies at 15-20 million. ■ AFP

**RBI must aid growth by staying accommodative'**  
Reversal risks faster revival: Assocham

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) should continue with an accommodative interest rate stance as long as necessary to sustain and further push the pace of economic growth, Assocham said on Wednesday.

While concerns over inflation, especially in the Wholesale Price Index, needed to be addressed, measures other than reversal of the accommodative stance should be encouraged, it added. "The RBI and its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) have done a commendable job to retain the present policy rates. However, central banks in some of the developed economies are moving



towards tapering the accommodative policies.

"We are sure and as we have been maintaining that the RBI would not follow this template and continue with the low interest rates," the industry body said in a statement. "Any reversal of the accommodative interest rate stance may dampen faster revival in investment," Assocham added.

## IL&FS resolves ₹757-cr. debt with IPTF sale

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

IL&FS Group said it had completed the sale of 71.84% stake in IL&FS Prime Terminals FZC (IPTF) to VTTI Terminal I BV. "Sale of IPTF has successfully resolved IL&FS Group debt outstanding to the tune of ₹757.79 crore through this transaction," IL&FS said. IL&FS's stake in Prime Terminals FZC was held through IL&FS Maritime Infrastructure Company Ltd. (IMICL).

The sale has also enabled release of corporate guarantee of \$10 million issued by IMICL. Key lenders to the firm, including SBI, had debt outstanding of more than \$80 million which has been fully repaid, IL&FS said.

## Airports to attract ₹90,000 cr. in investments over five years'

Airport count to rise to 220, from 136 currently: Bansal

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The airports sector is expected to see an investment of ₹90,000 crore in a five-year period, with almost ₹68,000 crore coming from the private players, a senior official said on Wednesday.

The civil aviation sector, which was battered by the COVID-19 pandemic that had also resulted in the suspension of domestic and international flight services, is slowly on the recovery path and the daily domestic air traffic is nearing the pre-COVID level of 4 lakh.

Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Bansal said investments totalling ₹90,000 crore would be made for air-

## 'Survey suggests 71% have low or no trust in cryptocurrency'

It must be taxed like a digital asset held abroad

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

About 71% Indians have low or zero trust in cryptocurrencies, according to a recent survey by LocalCircles.

The survey added that 54% do not want the government to legalise cryptocurrencies but want them taxed on its

cryptocurrency traders.

WazirX, one of India's largest cryptocurrency exchanges, said earlier on its Twitter account that it was investigating reports that users were facing delays on its app and website. It later said the issue had been resolved.

There are an estimated 15-20 million cryptocurrency investors in India, with total crypto holdings of about ₹400 billion, according to industry estimates.

The findings show that the Central Bank Digital Currency is seen as more trustworthy

that begins on November 29.

The bill also seeks to create a facilitative framework for creation of an official digital currency to be issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

As per the survey, families of 87% of the respondents do not have anyone trading or investing in cryptocurrencies and 54% do not want the government to legalise cryptocurrencies but tax them like a digital asset held abroad.

The Centre plans to introduce a Bill to regulate cryptocurrencies but ban all private cryptocurrencies in the winter session of Parliament

said in a release. "The study also finds that 51% of the respondents support India rolling out its own digital currency which is managed by the RBI while 26% are against the same. This indicates that the Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) would be a more trustworthy investment," it added.

"LocalCircles will be sharing the findings of this study with the senior leadership of Government of India, the RBI leadership and all Members of Parliament such that public feedback on cryptocurrencies can be given the due consideration as laws related to it are finalised," said Sachin Taparia, founder, LocalCircles.

## NITI Aayog for full-stack digital banks

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Government think-tank NITI Aayog on Wednesday proposed setting up of full-stack 'digital banks', which would principally rely on the Internet and other proximate channels to offer their services and not physical branches, to mitigate the financial deepening challenges being faced in the country.

"In other words, these entities will issue deposits, make loans and offer the full suite of services that the Banking Regulation Act empowers them to. As the name suggests, however, DBs will principally rely on the Internet and other proximate channels to offer their services," it said in a discussion paper.

## Music Tribe bets big on India's tech talent

Sets up centre in Bengaluru, to deploy 100 engineers for toning up software

## MINI TEJASWI

BENGALURU

Betting big on the tech prowess of India, Music Tribe, a global player in the audio-visual industry, has set up an innovation centre in Bengaluru to develop embedded software, applications and mobility solutions for next generation music production systems like synthesizers, mixers and other audio-visual products.

"This new innovation centre in India is in line with our digital obsession and the initial aim is to deploy over 100 engineers here over the coming quarters," said founder and CEO Uli Behringer.

The new innovation centre will collaborate with



the company's other such facilities in Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, U.K., U.S. and China," said G. Krishna Kumar, VP and centre head at Music Tribe India. "The India team will strengthen Music Tribe's software capabilities around embedded software, cloud

and digital technologies including AI, ML and edge computing," he added.

Music Tribe also has audio-visual product manufacturing facilities in China, Malaysia and Thailand and is likely to set up a manufacturing facility in India as well at a later point.

Music Tribe designs and sells a wide range of audio-visual products including mixers, synthesizers, amplifiers, signal processors, microphones, hi-fi speakers and headphones.

Other than products under the Behringer brand, the company also owns brands such as Midas, Klark Teknik, Lab Gruppen, Tannoy, Aston Microphones, TC Electronic

and TC Helicon. The \$12-billion audio-visual product industry is currently dominated by companies such as Harman, Yamaha, Cisco, Crestron, Logitech, Roland, Bosch and Music Tribe. Americas account for 40%, while Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) and Asia Pacific hold 30% market share each.

## Thin market

India currently has only a thin slice of 2.3% in the sector. However, the country is expected to witness a steady growth in the use of audio-visual products/systems and the consumption of musical and audio-visual content was on the rise, said Music Tribe.

## 'Transitional' digital tax pact struck with U.S.

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

India and the U.S. have agreed to a transitional approach on the equalisation levy or digital tax on e-commerce supplies beginning April 1, the Finance Ministry said on Wednesday.

"India and the United States have agreed that the same terms ... shall apply between the United States and India with respect to India's charge of 2% equalisation levy on e-commerce supply of services and the United States' trade action regarding the said equalisation levy," the Ministry said in a statement.

The shares will be listed on stock exchanges by December 10. The price band for the offer has been fixed at ₹870-900 per equity share.

Bids can be made for a minimum of 16 equity shares and in multiples of 16 thereafter, company officials said. The offer com-

prises fresh issue of shares for ₹2,000 crore and an offer for sale of 5.83 crore shares by shareholders such as Safecrop Investments India – which is selling 3.06 crore shares – Konark Trust, MMPL Trust, Apis Growth 6, Mio IV Star, University of Notre Dame Du Lac, Mir Star, ROC Capital, Ven

# Spinners hold the key as India begins its Test journey under Dravid

New Zealand will bank on its experienced duo of skipper Williamson and Taylor to show the way in these conditions against Ashwin, Jadeja and Axar



## TOPPING THE CHARTS IN INDIA-NZ TESTS IN INDIA

FOR INDIA						
BATTING	M	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg	50s/100s
Rahul Dravid	8	14	893	222	63.78	1/4
BOWLING	M	Inns	Wkts	BBI	SR	5WI/10WM
R. Ashwin	5	10	45	7/59	31.4	6/3

FOR NEW ZEALAND						
BATTING	M	Inns	Runs	HS	Avg	50s/100s
Bert Sutcliffe	9	16	885	230 n.o.	68.07	3/3
BOWLING	M	Inns	Wkts	BBI	SR	5WI/10WM
Richard Hadlee	6	10	31	6/49	44.0	2/1
Daniel Vettori	8	13	31	6/127	102.7	2/0

## FORM GUIDE

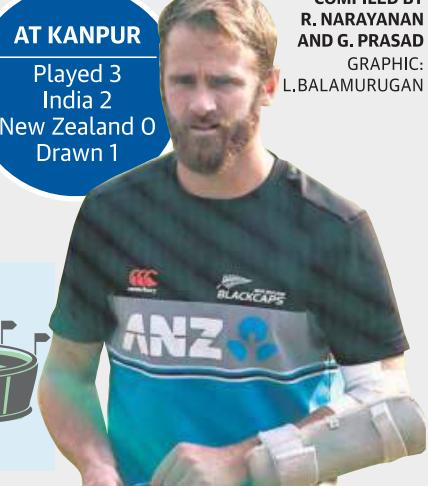
(last five matches, latest game first)

India  
W L W D L

New Zealand  
W W D W W

## THE SCHEDULE

Nov. 25-29:  
Kanpur  
Dec. 3-7:  
Mumbai  
Both Tests start at 9.30 a.m.



## India-A makes cautious reply

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BLOEMFONTEIN  
India-A was 125 for one, chasing South Africa-A's mammoth 509 for seven declared, on the second day of the first 'Test' on Wednesday.

Captain Priyank Panchal and Abhimanyu Easwaran were batting on 45 and 27 at close. India still trails by 384 in the four-day match.

Opener Prithvi Shaw (48, 45b, 9x4) was looking ominous before he was dismissed in the 14th over.

Earlier, South Africa-A added 166 before declaring its first innings at 509 for seven.

### The scores:

South Africa-A 509/7 decl. in 135.3 overs (Pieter Malan 163, Tony de Zorzi 117) vs India-A 125/1 in 33 overs (Prithvi Shaw 48, Priyank Panchal 45 batting).

## Sindhu rallies to advance

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BALI  
P.V. Sindhu showed great determination to outwit her opponent in the women's singles opening round, while B. Sai Praneeth and K. Srikanth also advanced to the men's singles second round of the Indonesia Open Super 1000 event here on Wednesday.

After a slow start, Sindhu engineered a turnaround to register a 21-21, 21-17, 21-17 win over Aya Ohori.

**Other results (first round):**  
Men: B. Sai Praneeth bt Toma Junior Popov (Fra) 21-19, 21-18; K. Srikanth bt H.S. Pranoy 21-15, 19-21, 21-12.

**Women: Doubles:** Gabriela Stoeva & Stefani Stoeva (Bul) bt N. Sikk Reddy & Ashwini Ponnappa 29-27, 21-18.

**Mixed doubles:** Kyohei Yamashita & Naru Shinoya (Jpn) bt Sikki & Dhruv Kapila 21-7, 21-12; Takuro Hoki & Nami Matsuyama (Jpn) bt Ashwini & B. Sumeeth Reddy 22-24, 21-12, 21-19.

## Mendis puts Lanka on the brink of victory

### WI IN SRI LANKA

#### AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GALLE  
Sri Lanka needs just four wickets to win the first Test against West Indies in Galle after setting the all-but-impossible target of 348 on Wednesday's penultimate day of play.

West Indies had made just 52 before bad light forced an early end after the hosts' spin trio made quick work of the top order.

The sensational collapse saw the tourists lose four wickets in 15 balls for just four runs.

Ramesh Mendis was the pick of the bowlers finishing with four for 17. The off-spinner had the makings of a hat-trick as he trapped Kyle Mayers leg before.

Lasith Embuldeniya accounted for Jermaine Blackwood and Roston Chase.

There was little hope for



Bamboozled: Jason Holder, much like his teammates, had no answer to Ramesh Mendis. ■ AFP

West Indies at 18 for six and all signs were that the game was going to end on the fourth day.

Then Nkrumah Bonner (18) and da Silva (15) batted for just over 45 minutes to hang in be-

fore the umpires called bad light.

Sri Lanka declared its second innings on 191 for four after a 123-run stand by Angelo Mathews and Dimuth Karunaratne in just 150 deliveries.

West Indies was 230 all out in the first innings.

Skipper Karunaratne, who had posted 147 in the first innings, narrowly missed twin centuries with 83, including nine fours.

West Indies was 230 all out in the first innings.

ing was off to the worst possible start when a botched clearance by Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, following a miscommunication with his defenders in the third minute, was beautifully chipped into the goal by Hernandez.

Hernandez's second was through a brilliant free kick to the top-right corner, but that came after a blunder from Udanta Singh. The winner misplaced a pass, and in an attempt to make amends, ended up fouling Jonathas Cristian.

In the 90th minute, Silva saw a powerful shot from close range saved by Odisha goalie Kamaljit Singh. Soon enough, Suarez turned Pratik Chowdhary inside out and bundled the ball in to put the result to bed.

**The result:** Odisha FC 3 (Hernandez 3, 51, Suarez 90) bt Bengaluru FC 1 (Costa 21).

Regardless, BFC was clearly below par. The even-

to disallow the goal.

Replays showed that the Brazilian had encroached the penalty box before the kick was taken. But the same replay also showed an Odisha player encroaching, which should have resulted in the penalty being retaken.

**The result:** Odisha FC 3 (Hernandez 3, 51, Suarez 90) bt Bengaluru FC 1 (Costa 21).

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Javi. ■ FOCUS SPORTS/ISL

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### NZ IN INDIA

#### RAKESH RAO

KANPUR  
With a new coach, a stand-in captain and another home series waiting to be won, a depleted India still looks ready to whip out a familiar result as the first Test gets underway here from Thursday.

Moreover, given the conditions at the Green Park Stadium here and spin-resources in the squad, coach Rahul Dravid may not be required to bring in much of his cricketing acumen to stump the opposition on his "Test debut".

Leading the squad which is without some of the regulars, Ajinkya Rahane is confident he has the ammunition needed to take out New Zealand, the reigning World Test champion.

Given that spinners will call the shots, it remains to be seen which two new-ball bowlers among Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav and Prasidh Krishna will be considered.

The absence of K.L. Rahul means Shubman Gill and Mayank Agarwal will open, and Shreyas Iyer makes his Test debut. Regulars like Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Jayant Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav, Mohammed Siraj and Prasidh Krishna.

**New Zealand:** Kane Williamson (Captain), Tom Blundell (wk), Tom Latham, Ross Taylor, Daryl Mitchell, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, William Somerville, Tim Southee, Will Young, Neil Wagner and Kyle Jamieson.

Ajinkya, Cheteshwar Pujara and comeback-man Wriddhiman Saha, along with the five bowlers, complete the playing XI.

New Zealand not only faces concerns regarding playing quality spinners on these pitches, but also how its slower bowlers bowl to the Indian batters.

Looking to do one better than last time in the on-going WTC, India has no reason to provide batter-friendly pitches in the series. Similarly, New Zealand is not known to alter its home advantages in any format.

After all, India and New Zealand thrive in home conditions. In the past 10 seasons, if one considers only the decisive Tests played in these countries, New Zealand won 43 out of 48 and India 47 out of 51.

Given that spinners will call the shots, it remains to be seen which two new-ball bowlers among Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav and Prasidh Krishna will be considered.

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**Match starts at 9.30 a.m.**

## Shreyas set to make Test debut, confirms Rahane

Stand-in skipper says the absence of K.L. Rahul is a big blow



The wait is over: Shreyas, seen with India coach Rahul Dravid, is likely to get his Test cap on Thursday. ■ AFP

#### RAKESH RAO

#### KANPUR

Finally, the wait is over for Shreyas Iyer. The Mumbai player will make his Test debut against New Zealand here on Thursday.

First added to the Test squad in March 2017 as cover for Virat Kohli on the eve of the fourth Test against Australia, Shreyas went on to make his ODI debut (against New Zealand) and T20I debut (against Sri Lanka) later that year.

As a result, after 22 ODIs and 32 T20Is, Shreyas gets to play Test cricket. Having made a mark with some tall scores consistently in the domestic circuit, Shreyas averages 52.18 in First Class cricket (4592 runs in 54 matches).

Interestingly, in his last First Class match, Shreyas played for Rest of India against Vidarbha in the Irani Cup in February 2019. Confirming the Test debut for Shreyas, stand-in

skipper Ajinkya Rahane did not rule out another debutant in Thursday's playing XI. This leaves a ray of hope for his Mumbai teammate Surakumar Yadav.

Rahane described the absence of opener K.L. Rahul as a "big blow."

"He did really well in England. Obviously, we will miss him. But, we have guys who can do that job (of an opener)."

Like Cheteshwar Pujara on Tuesday, Rahane, too, chose to downplay his inconsistency in getting big scores since that match-winning century in Melbourne last year.

"My job is to contribute for the team and contribution doesn't mean you score a hundred every game. A 30, 40, 70 at a crucial moment are also important contributions," he said, before strangely adding: "I have never thought where I am going. What happens in the future is not of concern to me."

## IN BRIEF



Mahmudullah retires from Tests

DHAKA  
Bangladesh's Mahmudullah Riyad announced his retirement from Test cricket on Wednesday after a 12-year career. The 35-year-old played his last Test against Zimbabwe in July this year with Bangladesh recording a 220-run win. ■ AFP

Vaughan dropped by BBC  
SALFORD (ENGLAND)  
Former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan was dropped by the BBC because of his involvement in the racism controversy enveloping Yorkshire. Vaughan has denied the allegations and said his reputation has been "trashed unfairly," calling it "the worst thing I have ever experienced."

AP

## Determined France ambushes India

Clement and Sanjay perform hat-tricks, but the latter's goes in vain

## TV PICKS

**India vs New Zealand:** 1st Test, day 1, Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.  
**Sri Lanka vs West Indies:** 1st Test, day 5, Sony Six (SD & HD), 9.45 a.m.  
**ISL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**Europa League:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m.; Sony Ten 1, 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Friday)

## IN BRIEF



**NY Knicks hold off short-handed LA Lakers**

**NEW YORK**  
Evan Fournier scored 26 points as the host New York Knicks squandered a 25-point lead before recovering to beat the LeBron James-less Los Angeles Lakers 106-100 in the NBA on Tuesday.

**The results:** Miami 100 bt Detroit 92, New York 106 bt LA Lakers 100, Portland 119 bt Denver 100, Dallas 112 bt LA Clippers 104 (OT).



**Harmanpreet named WBBL Player of the Tournament**

**SYDNEY**  
Melbourne Renegades star Harmanpreet Kaur has been named the Women Big Bash League (WBBL) Player of the Tournament. The Indian all-rounder, who ended the regular season as her side's leading batter with 399 runs and 15 wickets, finished ahead of the Perth Scorchers pair of Beth Mooney and Sophie Devine. ANI

**Darshna triumphs**



**Darshna Rathore.**

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

**PATIALA**  
Darshna Rathore shot 50 to beat Ganemat Sekhon by four points in the women's skeet final of the 64th National shooting championship at the New Moti Bagh Gun Club on Wednesday.

After qualifying third with 113, Darshna did well to top the field ahead of Ganemat (117) and Areeba Khan (116).

Former champions, Mapeshwari Chauhan, Sanjya Sheikh and Rashmni Rathore failed to make the final.

Ganemat won the junior gold beating Areeba Khan 4-3 in the shoot-off after the two tied on 50.

**The results: Skeet: Women:** 1. Darshna Rathore 50 (113); 2. Ganemat Sekhon 46 (117); 3. Raiza Dhillon 36 (110); **Junior women:** 1. Ganemat Sekhon 50(4) 117; 2. Areeba Khan 50 (3) 116; 3. Darshna Rathore 41 (113).

## DELHI CRICKET

**Kabir's five-for helps Haryana Academy reach the final**

A five-wicket haul by Kabir Bishnoi helped Haryana Academy beat Sehgal Club by three wickets and reach the final of the 36th Laxman Das Chhabra memorial cricket tournament.

**The scores (semifinal):** Sehgal Club 171 in 37 overs (Shivam Gupta 58, Kshitij Sharma 44, Kabir Bishnoi 5/26, Poonish Mehta 3/24) lost to Haryana Academy 174/7 in 38 overs (Yash Vardhan Dalal 40, Vishal Choudhary 3/24).

**Prince Kumar powers MPS Club into final**  
A fluent knock of 74 by Prince Kumar helped MPS Club to a five-wicket victory

## United &amp; Chelsea make the knockouts

Barcelona still needs a mountain to climb in its final game against group leader Bayern

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PARIS

Energy by a change of manager and another opportunistic finish by Cristiano Ronaldo, Manchester United qualified for the knockout stage of the Champions League with a game to spare.

United was led for the first time by Michael Carrick following the weekend firing of Ole Gunnar Solskjær and, just like his predecessor, the interim manager was thankful for a goal by the Champions League's record scorer.

## Lobbed finish

Ronaldo produced a sublime lobbed finish to put United ahead against Villarreal on Tuesday and a 90th-minute strike by Jadon Sancho sealed a 2-0 win to secure progress as the winner of



**Goal-fest:** Hudson-Odoi, left, pokes in Chelsea's third in the rout of Juventus. ■ AP

## Group F

Another English team, defending champion Chelsea, also advanced on the back of a 4-0 win over already-qualified Juventus.

Chelsea and Juventus are tied on 12 points with a game left to play.

Barcelona, now coached by former star midfielder Xavi Hernandez, has advanced

from its group every season for almost two decades but a 0-0 draw at home to Benfica means the Spanish club might need to beat Bayern Munich in the final round of

games to advance.

If Barca fails to beat Bayern away, Benfica could overtake the Spanish club with a win at home to already-eliminated Dynamo Kyiv. If they finish tied on points, Benfica would advance courtesy of their head-to-head record.

**The results: Group E:** Dynamo Kiev 1 (Garmash 70) lost to Bayern Munich 2 (Lewandowski 14, Coman 42); Barcelona 0 drew with Atalanta 3 (Zapata 10, Palomino 51, Muriel 88).

**Group F:** Villarreal 0 lost to Manchester United 2 (Ronaldo 78, Sancho 90); Young Boys 3 (Siebatcheu 39, Sierra 80, Hefti 84) drew with Atalanta 3 (Zapata 10, Palomino 51, Muriel 88).

**Group G:** Lille 1 (David 31) bt Salzburg 0; Sevilla 2 (Jordan 13, Mir 90+7) bt Wolfsburg 0.

**Group H:** Chelsea 4 (Chalobah 25, James 56, Hudson-Odoi 58, Werner 90+5) bt Juventus 0; Malmo 1 (Rieks 28) lost to Zenit Saint Petersburg 1 (Rakitsky 90+2+pen).

4-2, retd.

**\$25,000 ITF women, Ortiz:** Italy: **Singles:** Pre-quarterfinals: Karman Kaur Thandi bt Ylena In-Albon (Sui) 6-4, 4-6, 6-3. **First round:** Karman Kaur Thandi bt Deborah Chiesa (Ita) 4-6, 0, 1-0, retd.

**\$15,000 ITF women, Cancun, Mexico:** **First round:** Raveena Kingsley (RSA) bt Sahaja Yamalapali 7-5, 6-2.

**Doubles:** Pre-quarterfinals: Isabella Barrera Aguirre & Marika Jones (US) bt Lucia Gonzales (Per) & Sahaja Yamalapali 6-1, 6-1.

**\$52,080 Challenger, Manama:**

**First round:** Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Vladislav Orlov (Ukr) 6-2, 6-4.

**Doubles:** Pre-quarterfinals: Sriram Balaji & Divij Sharan bt Abdulkarim Abdulkabi & Hasan Abdulkabin (Brn) 6-1, 6-0; Arjun Kadhe & Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Omar Ahmed & Saud Al-hogbani (Brn) 6-0, 3-1, retd.; Nuno Borges & Francisco Cabral (Por) bt Goncalo Oliveira (Por) & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan 3-6, 6-2, [10-6].

## Ramkumar eases past Orlov

## INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU

Sixth seed Ramkumar Ramanathan beat qualifier Vladislav Orlov in the first round of the \$52,080 Challenger tennis tournament.

In the \$100,000 ITF women's event in Dubai, Ankiti Raina and Tereza Mihalikova made the quarterfinals beating Alena Fomin-Klotz and Ekaterina Yashina.

In the \$25,000 ITF women's event in Ortiz (Italy), Karman Kaur Thandi defeated fourth seed Ylena In-Albon to reach the quarterfinals.

**The results: \$100,000 ITF women, Dubai:** **Doubles:** Pre-quarterfinals: Tereza Mihalikova (Svk) & Ankiti Raina bt Aleena Fomin-Klotz & Ekaterina Yashina (Rus) 7-5, 7-5.

**\$60,000 ITF women, Brasilia:** **First round:** Carolina Meligeni Alves (Bra) bt Riya Bhatia 3-6,

## Sathiyan, Ayhika advance

All other Indians exit in singles

## WORLD TT

SPORTS BUREAU  
HOUSTON

G. Sathiyan and Ayhika Mukherjee were the lone Indian players to enter the singles second round of the World table tennis championships here on Tuesday.

The mixed doubles duo of Sharath and Archana Kamath entered the second round with a 11-7, 11-6, 11-6 win over Algeria's Sami Kherrouf and Katia Kessaci.

**The results (first round): Men:** **Singles:** Cedric Nyuyink (Bel) bt Sharath Kamal 9-11, 11-5, 11-6, 11-7, 11-9; G. Sathiyan bt Yaroslav Zhdumenko (Ukr) 11-2, 11-9, 11-, 11-3; Bode Abiodun (Ngr) bt A. Amralaj 11-6, 5-11, 5-11, 8-10, 12-11, 11-6; Benedict Duda (Ger) bt Harriet De-sai 11-9, 11-7, 11-7, 11-4.



**Women: Singles:** Bruna Takashashi (Bra) bt Manika Batra 5-11, 13-15, 11-8, 11-4, 11-6, 11-7; Ayhika Mukherjee bt Farah Abdel-Aziz (Egy) 11-7, 14-16, 8-11, 11-6, 11-9, 11-6; Choi Hyojoo (Kor) bt Sutirtha Mukherjee 8-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-0, 11-4; Saki Shibata (Jpn) bt Madhurika Patkar 11-7, 11-4, 11-3, 11-8.

**Mixed doubles:** Sharath Kamal & Archana Kamath bt Sami Kherrouf & Katia Kessaci (Alg) 11-7, 11-6, 11-6.

## Jhili to replace Mirabai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BHUBANESWAR

Jhili Dalabehera will represent India in the women's 49kg category, in place of Mirabai Chanu who has pulled out, in the upcoming World weightlifting championship in Tashkent next month.

## The squad:

**Men:** Sanket Sargar (55kg), Guru Raja (61kg), Jeremy Lalrinnunga (67kg), Achinta Sheuli (73kg), Ajay Singh and Amarjit Guru (both 81kg), Vikas Thakur and Jagdish Vishwakarma (both 96kg), Lovepreet Singh (109kg) and Gurdeep Singh (+109kg).

**Women:** Jhili Dalabehera (49kg), S. Bindrarani Devi (55kg), Poppy Hazarika (59kg), Komal Khan (61kg), Harjinder Kaur and Lalchhanhami (both 71kg), Poonam Yadav and R. Arrockiya Alish (both 76kg), Anuradha Pavunraj (87kg) and Purnima Pandey (+87kg).

## Asian Games is Mirabai's main target'

Coach Sharma says they are working on her snatch technique

## WEIGHTLIFTING

Y.B. SARANGI  
BHUBANESWAR

National weightlifting coach Vijay Sharma said winning a medal in the 2022 Asian Games would be the main target for Olympic silver medallist Mirabai Chanu.

Sharma has decided not to field Mirabai in the upcoming World championships in Tashkent from December 7 to 17.

"We are working on Mira's snatch technique. We are trying to rectify a technical fault. You need time for that. I cannot see the kind of performance she needs to produce to compete at the World championships," said Sharma on Wednesday.

"Since we are working on



**Getting ready:** Mirabai is missing the Worlds to fine-tune some technical issue. ■ PTI

the technique, there is no question of how much she does in snatch. In clean and jerk, she has not gone past 100-105kg. We are not taking load and rush, then there is a chance of picking up an injury." Sharma said the Asian Games, where Mirabai would face strong competition from the Chinese lifters, would be the main challenge

for the 27-year-old.

"When we are qualifying (for the Commonwealth Games) on the basis of her No.1 ranking, then there is no need to go to the World championships (which is also a qualifying event for the 2022 Commonwealth Games). We have a (CWG qualifying) competition (in Singapore) in February, we need to test ourselves there.

"Even if she does not do anything special, she will win the CWG gold. But the main target is the Asian Games. We have sufficient time to train for the Asiad, which is very close to the CWG. If we achieve the peak too early, then it will be difficult to maintain that performance for a long period of time," said Sharma.

## Manish gets the better of Sekulic

Karan Singh beats Niki Poonacha in straight sets

## ITF MEN

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
GURUGRAM

Manish Sureshkumar got his act right and beat the finalist of the last two events, Philip Sekulic of Australia, 6-3, 7-6 (5) in the first round of the \$15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament at the Tennis Project on Wednesday.

The 22-year-old overcame moments of uncertainty to haul himself past the talented Sekulic, whom he had beaten for the title in the final in Indore.

Sekulic engaged in verbal volleys with his father right through the match and lacked the mental energy to fight his way past trouble this day. Thus, he was unable to drive home the advantage when leading 5-3, 30-0 in the second set.

In another match, Karan Singh continued to hold sway over two-time national champion Niki Poonacha as he beat the second seed 6-2, 6-3. Poonacha has been trou-



Having negotiated three rounds of the qualifying event, Karan was sharp with his game. He had beaten Poonacha in the first round in Indore.

Ishaque Eqbal converted his sixth match point to beat seventh seed Rishabh Agarwal 7-6(4), 6-3.

Top seed Sidharth Rawat played close to his best to dismiss the challenge from the young Dev Javia in

straight sets. Eighth seed D.P. Prajwal Dev overcame a tricky start to beat Romain Faucon of Belgium in three sets. In the pre-quarterfinals, he will play Nitin Kumar Sinha who also overcame a slow start to beat Bharath Kumar.

**The results: First round:** Sidharth Rawat bt Dev Javia 6-3, 6-4; Arvid Nordquist (Swe) bt Madhwin Kamath 2-6, 6-1, 6-4; Paras Dahiya bt Shabbaaz Khan 7-6(4), 6-1; Ishaque Eqbal bt Rishabh Agarwal 7-6(4), 6-3; Manish Sureshkumar bt Philip Sekulic (Aus) 6-3, 7-6(5); Digvijay Pratap Singh bt Lakshya Gupta 7-5, 5-7, 6-1.

Julian Cash (GBR) bt Arthav Neema 6-2, 6-2; Dusty Boyer (USA) bt Adil Kalyanpur 6-1, 6-4; S.D. Prajwal Dev bt Romain Faucon (Bel) 4-6, 6-1, 6-2; Nitin Kumar Sinha bt Bharath Kumar 4-6, 6-3, 6-4; Nicolas Tepmehc (Fra) bt Fardeen Qamar 3-6, 6-3, 6-0; Karan Singh bt Niki Poonacha 6-2, 6-3.

**Doubles:** Yuki Bhambri & Saketh Myneni bt Aryan Goveas & Karunuday Singh 6-3, 6-4; Julian Cash

# Text & Context

## NEWS IN NUMBERS



### Half effective

**50** In percent, the effectiveness of two doses of Covaxin against symptomatic COVID-19, according to the first real-world assessment of India's indigenous coronavirus vaccine published in *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* journal. The results of an interim study recently published in *The Lancet* showed that two doses of Covaxin, also known as BBV152, had 77.8% efficacy against symptomatic disease and present no serious safety concerns. The latest study assessed 2,714 hospital workers from April 15-May 15, who were symptomatic. PTI

### Terror again in J&K

**3** The number of militants killed in an encounter with the security forces in the Rambagh area of Srinagar on Wednesday. Officials said the militants' identities and group affiliation were still being ascertained. Two spells of lockdown – the first after J&K was stripped of its statehood and its special constitutional status, and the second related to COVID-19 – had put a lid on new terrorist incidents. However, terror seems to be increasing again, and civilians, including from the minority community, are being targeted more. AGENCIES

### COVID-19 and a cult

**4,116** The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in South Korea on Tuesday, a new record for any single-day for the country. A little-known sect led by a pastor who pokes people's eyes to heal them is at the centre of the latest outbreak. In a tiny rural church in a town of 427 residents in Cheonan city, south of Seoul, at least 241 people linked to the religious community had tested positive for COVID-19. About 90% of the religious community was unvaccinated. REUTERS

### Lira on the decline

**40** In percent, Turkey's currency Lira's losses against the dollar this year. On Tuesday, it crashed to record lows driven by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's defence of rate cuts. On Wednesday morning, the Lira weakened as far as 13.15 to the U.S. currency. Many Turks, already grappling with inflation of around 20%, fear prices will accelerate. Opposition politicians have accused Mr. Erdogan of dragging the country into a crisis. Retailers are also struggling, with some websites stopping sales of electronic products. REUTERS

### One more debut

**303** The number of players who would have debuted for India in Tests after Shreyas Iyer joins the playing XI in Kanpur on Thursday. India's stand-in captain Ajinkya Rahane confirmed Iyer's inclusion on Wednesday. Iyer has secured the spot after K.L. Rahul was ruled out following a left thigh muscle strain. "It's obviously a big blow. Rahul did really well in England. But we have guys who can do the job, guys who have done well for us in the past and are experienced," Rahane said.

COMPILATION BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

## EXPLAINER

# Falling back on reserves to tilt the scales

Will the move to exert pressure on the powerful OPEC+ oil producers, that turned down suggestions to enhance output, pay off or prove counter-productive?

## THE GIST

N.RAVI KUMAR

**The story so far:** India on November 23 announced that it will release 5 million barrels of crude oil from strategic petroleum reserves (SPR) or the stockpiles. This is part of a coordinated approach mooted by the U.S. and other major oil consumers after the oil-producing OPEC+ bloc waved off suggestions to boost the output for a calming effect on the prices. At the heart of this are the petroleum product prices that have been rising steadily for months now, and which threaten to throw a spanner in the post-pandemic economic recovery process.

### What is behind India's decision to use crude oil stockpiles?

Rising crude oil prices in international markets to which pump prices of petrol and diesel in the country are intrinsically tied to, a nudge from the U.S. and the long-felt need to send out a stern message to the powerful oil-producing lobby are behind the Centre's decision to use crude oil reserves, albeit in a

**The U.S. along with China, Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom have also announced that they will be part of this exercise,**

limited way. Quoting an unnamed top Government official, PTI said it would be the first time that India will be releasing crude oil stocks to cool international oil prices. About 5 million barrels will be released, starting as early as 7-10 days, according to the official.

India is not alone in resorting to such a move. The U.S., China, Japan, South Korea and the United Kingdom have also announced that they will be part of this exercise, widely perceived to be a measure by major energy-consuming countries to flex their muscles.

### When are the rest in the group likely to follow suit?

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in a statement on November 23, said that at the direction of President Joe Biden, the Secretary of Energy, Jennifer M. Granholm, authorised 50 million barrels of crude oil from the DOE's Strategic Petroleum Reserve to be made available. According to the PTI



report, China has also said it is working on crude oil release. Citing a report in *Nikkei* newspaper, Reuters stated that Japan will hold auctions for about 4.2 million barrels of oil out of its national stockpile.

### How many petroleum stockpiles does India hold and who will get access to it?

India stores 5.33 million tonnes (MT) of crude oil in underground caverns. The strategic crude oil storage at Visakhapatnam, commissioned in June 2015, Mangaluru (October 2016) and Padur, near Udupi (December 2018), were created from a perspective of ensuring energy security, especially during any supply disruptions. The contents from the caverns can be supplied to refineries either through pipelines or through a combination of pipelines and coastal movement, according to the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) Ltd, the wholly owned subsidiary of the Oil Industry Development Board. These strategic storages are in addition to the

existing storages of crude oil and petroleum products with the oil companies. Two new SPRs, with an additional storage of 6.5 MT, are proposed to be constructed at Chandikhol in Odisha and Padur.

India relies on imports to meet 80-85% of the crude oil refined in the country. According to the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell, there were 226.955 MT crude oil imports in 2019-2020 as against 226.498 MT in the previous fiscal year. In 2020-21, a year ravaged by the pandemic, the imports were lower at 196.461 MT.

According to PTI, the 5 million barrels will be sold to refineries of Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), which are connected by pipeline to the strategic reserves.

### Will this move change pump prices of petrol and diesel?

The pump prices declined sharply after the Centre, earlier this month, reduced the

excise duty on petrol by ₹5 a litre and the levy on diesel by ₹10 a litre. In addition to this, some States also reduced the VAT on the fuels. Interestingly, global crude oil prices that were behind the Government's decision to cut the levy started tapering on the back of fresh COVID-19-triggered worries in Europe. The threat of a coordinated release of the reserves, the PTI report said, has knocked the wind out of crude oil's rally.

It would be sometime before any impact is likely on the pump prices as the quantities committed to be released are not enough to cause a ripple effect. The OPEC and its ally producers could resort to putting on hold the incremental production they planned ahead as a measure to keep the global prices from crashing. Bloomberg oil strategist Julian Lee says the OPEC+ group would have to defer at least two months' worth of planned output increases to offset strategic stockpile releases led by the U.S. The group is due to hold discussions on Dec. 2 to set production plans for January.

**Black gold:** A view of the crude cavern of the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd at Lova Gardens in Visakhapatnam, in 2015.

THE HINDU

## EXPLAINER

# The need for a proper Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy

How many bills have been tabled without prior discussions? What needs to be done to improve public consultation in policymaking?

ARUN PS

**The story so far:** The Union Government has listed 29 Bills (26 new and three pending) to be tabled in the winter session of Parliament. In 2014, the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy was adopted, mandating a host of rules, including that whenever the Government makes any law, it must place a draft version of it in the public domain for at least 30 days. Since the inception of the policy, 227 of the 301 bills introduced in Parliament have been presented without any prior consultation. Of the 74 placed in public domain for comment, at least 40 did not adhere to the 30-day deadline.

### What is the policy?

The Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy (PLCP) 2014 mandates that whenever the Government makes any laws (bills, rules, regulations etc.), it must place a draft version of it in the public domain for at least 30 days. The policy also says that along with the draft, a note explaining the law in simple language and justifying the proposal, its financial implication, impact on the environment and fundamental rights, a study on the social and financial costs of the bill, etc. should



be uploaded. The respective departments should also upload the summary of all the feedback that they receive on the circulated draft.

The PLCP was formulated based on the broad recommendations of the National Advisory Council headed by Sonia Gandhi (2013) and the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (2002). It aimed to create an institutionalised space for public participation in lawmaking processes.

### Why is it important?

This policy provides a forum for citizens and relevant stakeholders to interact with

the policymakers in the executive during the initial stages of lawmaking. Protests in the recent past over laws such as the farm laws, the RTI Amendment Act, the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, etc. have all highlighted that there is discontent among relevant stakeholders and the public at large since they were not looped in while framing such laws. Public consultations enhance transparency, increase accountability and could result in the building of an informed Government where citizens are treated as partners and not as subjects. For example, concerns raised by civil society members (#SaveTheInternet

campaign) were addressed by the Telecom Regulatory Authority in its framing of the net neutrality rules after extensive consultation and deliberation processes adopted by them.

### What is the status of its implementation?

During the 16th Lok Sabha (May 2014 to May 2019) 186 bills were introduced in Parliament, of which 142 saw no consultation prior to introduction. From the 44 bills placed in the public domain for receipt of comments, 24 did not adhere to the 30-day deadline. During the 17th Lok Sabha (June 2019 to present), 115 bills were introduced in Parliament, of which 85 saw no consultation prior to introduction. From the 30 bills placed in public domain for receipt of comment, 16 of them did not adhere to the 30-day deadline.

The tentative schedule for the winter session indicates that a total of 29 bills are listed for introduction and passing. Of these, 17 saw no prior consultation while from the 12 that were placed in the public domain, only six adhered to the 30-day deadline.

Arun P.S. is a public policy researcher based out of Kerala

Though it is required that the mandates of an approved policy be heeded by all Government departments, the absence of a statutory or constitutional right has watered down its effect. The effective implementation of the policy requires subsequent amendments in executive procedural guidelines like the Manual of Parliamentary Procedures and Handbook on Writing Cabinet Notes. However, during a subsequent amendment to the Manual of Parliamentary Procedures, the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs ignored the Ministry of Law and Justice when it requested them to incorporate PLCP provisions in the manual.

Incorporation of pre-legislative consultation in the procedures of the Cabinet, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha etc. should be prioritised. Similarly, it must be required of ministers while introducing the bill to place an addendum note on the details of the pre-legislative consultation. Empowering citizens with a right to participate in pre-legislative consultations through a statutory and a constitutional commitment could be a gamechanger.

## THE GIST

**In 2014, the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy was adopted, mandating a host of rules, including that whenever the Government makes any law, it must place a draft version of it in the public domain for at least 30 days.**

**This policy provides a forum for citizens and relevant stakeholders to interact with the policymakers.**

**Though it is a requirement that should be heeded by all the Government departments, the absence of a statutory or constitutional right has watered down its effect.**



**Hard work:** A daily wage labourer eats lunch on a piece of tin sheet at a construction site in New Delhi, in 2019. ■ THE HINDU

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

# The shaky foundation of the labour law reforms

It could be a long wait before employers and workers enjoy the so-called benefits extended by the labour codes

K.R. SHYAM SUNDAR

*Following the repeal of the farm laws by the Union Government, the Trade Unions have decided to step up their protests against the Labour codes passed in 2019, 2020 and which are yet to be notified. In this article dated August 10, 2021, K.R. Shyam Sundar writes about the codes; what they are, how they were formed and are now being implemented. Edited excerpts:*

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#### THE GIST

■ The National Democratic Alliance Government enacted the Code on Wages in August 2019 and the other three Codes, viz., the Industrial Relations Code, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code and Code on Social Security (CSS) in September 2020.

■ The Government passed these laws in a hurry and held only symbolic and partial consultation with the central trade unions. Till August 2021, major States have not even issued the draft rules under any codes.

■ In the meanwhile, the Supreme Court of India has exerted pressure on both the Central and the State Governments to implement a 'one nation, one ration card' (ONOR) scheme and register all the unorganised workers under the National Database for Unorganized Workers (NDUW).

#### A rushed exercise

Controversies surround the processes of the enactment of codes and the framing of rules. The Government has held only symbolic and partial consultation with the central trade unions. The three codes were passed in Parliament even as the Opposition parties, otherwise insignificant, boycotted the proceedings. The tearing hurry in which the Government carried out the reforms even during the COVID-19 period gave tremendous hope to employers and potential investors. It announced its intentions of implementing the Codes from April 1, 2021 even as State governments were completely unprepared with the rules. Symbolically, labour law reforms have been affected and the Government can boast of it; simply put, it is more symbolic rather than a meaningful act.

#### Court directives

The Central Government has deferred the possible date of implementation to October 1, 2021, again tentatively. In the meanwhile, the Supreme Court of India has exerted pressure on both the Central and the State Governments to implement a 'one nation, one ration card' (ONOR) scheme and register all the unorganised workers under the National Database for Unorganized

Workers (NDUW), which was to have been done by July 31, 2021. Government agencies are rushing to comply with both the directives. In ONOR, Aadhaar seeding and the universal availability of an electronic point of sale (EPOS) system are necessary. And for the NDUW, it has to register each of the approximately 400 million workers, a conservative figure.

Perhaps, the Supreme Court passed such an extraordinary perhaps impracticable order following the hesitancy in early 2020 to provide relief to suffering migrant workers following the national lockdown. One is not sure when Governments would comply fully and well with the Supreme Court's orders. Unorganised workers including migrant workers will continue to be deprived of their promised and extended entitlements.

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#### Government's line vs reality

The Government said the codes would extend universal minimum wages and social security, enable enhanced industrial safety and the provision of social security to gig workers, among other things. The Industrial Relations Code provides for recognition of trade union(s) by employers, a labour right that eluded workers for seven decades. On the other hand, employers celebrated the extension of tremendous flexibility to them, even those unasked, such as relief from framing standing orders for most firms. But do they enjoy these benefits?

On August 3, 2021, I browsed the Simpliance website (a law portal) to assess the record of State Governments regarding rules under the codes. It was a revelation to find that major States such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Haryana and Delhi have not issued the draft rules under any codes. Karnataka, Gujarat and Jharkhand have framed Rules for the Code on Wages and the Industrial Relations Code. Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Punjab have framed rules for all

the codes. Even though the Code on Wages was enacted in August 2019, it was only in March 2021 that the Central Government notified the constitution of an advisory committee. On June 3, 2021 it also announced an expert committee with a tenure of three years to advise it on minimum wages. Then, on July 12, 2021, it announced that the wage index's base year would be shifted from 1965 to 2019 to use the revised wage index to determine minimum wages. The Government seems to be clueless regarding the implementation of minimum wages.

#### Poor safety record

The incidence of major industrial accidents has remained undiminished even during the COVID-19 period. For instance, IndustriAll reported that between May to June, 32 major industrial accidents occurred in India, killing 75 workers. Industrial safety continues to be a grave concern even after the enactment of the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code.

According to several research reports, COVID-19 intensified informality, led to the withdrawal of workers from the labour market, reduced earnings, increased unemployment and widened inequality. The non-statutory floor level minimum wage remains a meagre ₹178 still even as Wholesale Price Index-inflation rates have galloped to 12% in June 2021. It did not implement the widely endorsed measure of direct benefit transfer at least for low-income families.

#### In perspective

Thus, we see two aspects concerning labour market governance in India. One, the Government has failed to provide legal visibility to millions of unorganised and migrant workers, even after decades, and despite direction by the highest court in the land.

Two, despite the gazetting of four Codes, age-old laws are in force. Thus, they reflect poorly not only on the governance abilities of the governments but also on the countervailing power of the Opposition parties. Were the labour law reforms rushed with little or no debate and consultation whatsoever, only to remain in the gazette books? Employers and workers cannot enjoy the so-called benefits extended by the codes.

#### THE DAILY QUIZ

**A popular quote goes thus "The world would be a nicer place if everyone had the ability to love as unconditionally as a dog". A quiz on 'man's best friend'.**

1 The dog is one of the most ubiquitous domestic animals. According to experts, all dogs, more than 400 breeds of them, trace their ancestry to which specific member of the Canidae family?

2 Usually standing no taller than 8 inches, which breed is considered the smallest and is named after a place in which country?

3 What is the native name for the 'Maiden's Beastmaster', an indigenous sighthound found in South India (specifically Tamil Nadu)?

4 What is the adjective for dog-like and what is the

study of matters related to domestic dogs called?

5 Two of the most popular fictional dogs are Snoopy (Peanuts) and Snowy (Tintin). What breeds are they supposed to be?

6 Which breed of our furry friend is called the 'barkless dog' because it is known for making a yodeling noise instead of barking?



◀ According to the Guinness Book of World Records, this is the world's oldest known breed of domesticated dog. Identify. ■ AP

Please send in your answers to the [dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in](mailto:dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in)

**Answers to the previous day's daily quiz:**  
1.Chaebol, 2.Kim Dae-Jung, 3.Hellbound, 4.Ri Chun-hee, 5.Largest known prime number, 6.Soohorong & Bandabi; Pyeongchang

**Early Birds:** Mohd Kiron Karim| Ranjan Anil Kumar| Sakshi Shahil Nagamani Cherukuri| Manish Mittal



**KEYWORD**

## Hysterical realism

How an insult turned into a literary genre

G. SAMPATH

The term 'hysterical realism' was supposed to be the first salvo in a literary feud. While the feud never really took off, the term itself, despite being intended in a pejorative sense, has gained currency as a useful descriptor of a certain kind of contemporary fiction. It was coined by the English critic James Wood in a 2000 essay in which he lamented a literary tendency to cover up a lack of something primary with an excess of many things secondary.

These novels - Wood invoked Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, Salman Rushdie's *Fury*, Don DeLillo's *White Noise* and David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, among others -- were typically marked by an overabundance of cartoonish characters, a profusion of stories, and a surfeit of information about obscure things, all rendered in glittering prose running into 1,000 pages or more. For Wood, a conservative who believes that a novel's mandate is to explore individual consciousness, these works were "brilliant cabinets of wonders" that hid a profound lack - "the human". As he put it, in the hysterical realist novel, "the conventions of realism are not being abolished but, on the contrary, over-worked. One's objections are made not at the level of verisimilitude but at the level of morality: the style of writing is not to be faulted because it lacks reality - the usual charge - but because it seems evasive of reality, while borrowing from realism itself. It is not a cock-up but a cover-up."

Wood's essay was so closely argued that even Smith, the immediate target of his critique, was forced to acknowledge that hysterical realism was a "painfully accurate term for the sort of overblown, manic prose to be found in novels like my own *White Teeth*". Her defence was that novelists write not what they want but what they can.

From the vantage of literary history, the rise of hysterical realism is only a recent wrinkle in the vast canvas of realism that began that began to dominate prose fiction in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Realism, simply put, denotes fiction that faithfully mirrors reality. It evolved in opposition to romanticism, where it was not reality but dramatic or genre conventions that dictated content. There are many types of realism, depending on which aspect of reality gets priority. For instance, social realist novels dwell on the lives of the working classes, whereas psychological realism focuses on character motivation. Then there is magic realism, which blurs the line between reality and fantasy.

To the lay reader may not be conversant with literary theory, realism might seem like the 'obvious' framework for fiction writing. After all, the most 'commonsensical' criticism of a novel (or even a film) is that it is 'unrealistic' or 'not believable'. But things are not so simple. Realism is one response to a problem of literary aesthetics, which we can define as follows: if creation is an exercise in autonomy, then what is the nature of the relationship between text and reality?

If the subjectivity of the author is at one end of the spectrum, denoting absolute autonomy of the text, and objective reality is at the other end, then the kind of realism one finds in a novel reflects the nature of the relationship between the text and the world. So, for instance, the Harry Potter series of novels is a complete fantasy, whereas Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which too has fantastical elements, isn't -- it is magic realism. Practitioners of hysterical realism - while they may not particularly like the term - might argue that how a human being experiences reality in the age of the internet is best depicted in the 'hysterical' mode, for that is the effect of hyper-mediated reality on human consciousness.

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