



Kannada actor Puneeth Rajkumar laid to rest with state honours  
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Navy gets new guided missile destroyer Visakhapatnam  
page 8

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Sodhi, Boul star in New Zealand's big win over India  
page 13

## IN BRIEF



### Haryana bans crackers in 14 NCR districts

GURUGRAM  
A day after the Gurugram district administration allowed a two-hour window for bursting green crackers on Deepavali, the Haryana Disaster Management Authority on Sunday imposed a blanket ban on all kinds of firecrackers in the State's 14 districts falling under the National Capital Region.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

### HC seeks school's reply on 'forced temple charity'

NEW DELHI  
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CITY ▶ PAGE 2

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CITY ▶ PAGE 2

## SOCIOLOGY

Orientation Lecture: 6 Nov. at 5 PM  
Crash Course: 8 Nov.  
Test Series: 7 Nov.  
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EDUCATION PLUS ▶ PAGE 15

## Bypolls to Kerala, Bengal Rajya Sabha seats notified

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Sunday announced by-elections to two Rajya Sabha seats, one each from Kerala and West Bengal, to be held on November 29. The seats fell vacant due to the resignation of members Jose K. Mani from Kerala on January 11 and Arpita Ghosh from West Bengal on September 15.

The Commission, on May 28, decided "that due to outbreak of the second wave of COVID-19 in the country, it would not be appropriate to hold by-election to the Council of States from Kerala till the pandemic situation significantly improves".

Now, having re-assessed the situation in Kerala, the EC said it decided to announce the schedule for by-elections in Kerala and West Bengal.

MLC elections  
The EC also announced biennial elections to six MLC seats in Telangana and three in Andhra Pradesh that fell vacant after the retirement of the members in June and May respectively.

The EC also announced bypoll to one Maharashtra MLC seat that fell vacant due to the member's death last month.

The polling and counting for all seats would be held on November 29.

# No time-bound pacts on climate change at G-20

No commitments to ending domestic coal consumption

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

India pushed for "safeguarding the interests of the developing world" as Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the G-20 summit at sessions on climate change and sustainable development on Sunday, said G-20 Sherpa and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

No time-bound agreements were reached as leaders of the world's top economies ended the summit in Rome, recommitting to providing \$100 billion a year to counter climate change, and pushing for greater vaccine equality to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.



Wishing well: PM Narendra Modi and other G-20 leaders tossing coins into the Trevi fountain in Rome. Legend says if people throw a coin here, they will return to Rome. ▶ AFP

## India readies emission list

A day ahead of the commencement of the 26th UN Conference of Parties in Glasgow, India has officially endorsed a website, made by Indian climate experts, that lists the historical

carbon dioxide emissions of developed countries.

The database aims to highlight the disparity between the emissions of developed and developing countries. ▶ PAGE 8

and providing finances and technology for vaccine production at "mRNA Hubs" in South Africa, Brazil and Argentina, and to mobilise more international public private financing for "green" projects.

Mr. Modi later described

the summit as "fruitful". Addressing the media, G-20 Sherpa and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal hailed the communiqué for acknowledging India's concerns on climate justice.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## RLD releases election manifesto for U.P.

ANUJ KUMAR  
GAZIABAD

Raising the bar for the battle for Uttar Pradesh, the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) on Sunday promised one crore jobs for the youth if voted to power in the State.

Releasing the party's election manifesto in Lucknow, party president Jayant Singh said the RLD had made 22 resolutions for 2022 after extensive consultation with stakeholders.

Underlining that the RLD

DETAILS ▶ PAGE 9

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Taliban supreme leader Akhundzada makes first public appearance  
page 11



Sodhi, Boul star in New Zealand's big win over India  
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# Row over caste split of MGNREGA wage

Central order sees tensions rise in villages as some groups are paid earlier

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI

For poor villagers in Rajasthan's Ajmer district, a good Deepavali depends on their wages from the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme. So tensions run high when some got paid faster than others for work done over the last six months.

"These are people who did the work together, at the same worksite, for the same number of days. They were all on the same muster roll. But those from SC/ST [Scheduled Castes and Tribes] got paid within 15-20 days. Those from other communi-

they cannot do anything."

Similar concerns have been raised by grassroots activists and union leaders in several States, including Jharkhand, West Bengal, Bihar, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, after a Central directive on March 2 this year to split MGNREGA budget for wage payments along caste lines.

At a meeting with the Finance Secretary and Rural Development Ministry officials on October 11, the Social Justice Ministry and several States warned of "dissension", "backlash" and threats to harmony in villages after the directive.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

ties had to wait two months," said Karthik Singh, a coordinator with the Rajasthan Asanghat Mazdoor Union.

"This caused a lot of worry that there was some gadbad (mess-up), and created suspicion and tensions among the villagers. Panchayat officials say they have submitted the details for everyone but the order to split the payments by caste has come from higher up, so

# Congress MPs in Punjab weigh their options

This comes amid churn in party and promise of new party by ex-CM Amarinder

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

As the political situation continues to unravel in Punjab, Members of Parliament may be trying to evaluate their response to the assertion of former Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh (retd.) that he is determined to float his own party.

With more than two-and-a-half years left for the next Lok Sabha election, the decision may be easy for some while others may have a

more difficult choice to make.

Capt. Amarinder Singh's wife and Lok Sabha member from Patiala is one such MP and so are Mohammad Sadique and Manish Tewari, both close to the former Punjab Chief Minister.

With Punjab's Hindu population between 38% and 40%, the BJP would be keen

to have on board a Hindu face like Mr. Tewari to reach out to an urban Hindu electorate, including forward castes such as Brahmins.

Any decision, however, is incumbent on the Centre resolving the issue of the three contentious farm laws to the satisfaction of the farmers' unions.

Sources told *The Hindu* that Capt. Amarinder Singh had reached out to some of his former colleagues.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8



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Schools for all classes set to open today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Schools for all classes are scheduled to open from Monday at 50% capacity, following a green signal from the Delhi Disaster Management Authority. However, with Deepavali approaching, most private schools are calling students only from the following week.

The Directorate of Education (DoE) has in a circular said that heads of school should ensure that students attend the classes only with parental consent and that attendance is not compulsory as the classes will continue in a hybrid mode.

"Heads of school should plan a timetable as per the capacity/occupancy limit of the classrooms/labs following COVID-19 appropriate behaviour. Lunch breaks may also be staggered to avoid crowding," the DoE said.

## HC seeks school's reply on 'forced temple charity'

Headmistress alleges harassment for refusing to donate

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has issued a notice to a school in the Capital on the plea of a headmistress who alleged that she was being harassed by the school management for refusing to pay ₹70,000 as donation towards the Ram Mandir construction in Ayodhya.

Justice Kameswar Rao issued notices to Rao Mehar Chand Saraswati Vidya Mandir School in Bhalswa and Samarth Shiksha Samiti, the society that runs the school, on the plea by headmistress Hema Bajaj. The HC will hear the case again on December 17.

In her petition, Ms. Bajaj claimed that the target to collect or contribute ₹70,000 to ₹1,00,000 for the purpose of construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya



ability to contribute the amount of ₹70,000. This amount was over and above the yearly donation in the name of 'Samarpān' collected from employees, which too, was raised from ₹5,000 to ₹15,000, she said.

Ms. Bajaj said despite financial constraints, she had donated ₹2,100 for the Ram Mandir collection on March 3, 2021, but refused to pay any amount for 'Samarpān' this year. The petition stated that Ms. Bajaj had sent a complaint to Delhi's Education Minister regarding the harassment caused to her over the forced charity. The office of the Deputy Chief Minister then directed the Department of Education to initiate an inquiry.

Following this, Ms. Bajaj said the school management and the society had been vindictive towards her.

### COVID-19 beds to be used for dengue patients

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Sunday said that one-third of the reserved COVID-19 beds can now be used for treating dengue, malaria, and chikungunya patients.

"Rather it is mentioned in the status report that all the transactions were in the form of cash without any receipt which is a matter of trial and cannot be looked into at this stage," the HC said.

As per the Sunday health bulletin, Delhi has 348 active COVID-19 cases, of which 45 are new. Health Minister Satyendar Jain said that the Government is working hard to fight dengue.

## HC relief to IAF officer in job scam

Promising employment, accused cheated people of ₹2.7 crore

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has granted bail to an Indian Air Force (IAF) officer who was caught running a recruitment scam for employment in the IAF and the Indian Railways.

Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar said the chargesheet has already been filed in the case and a co-accused, with similar charges against him, is also on bail.

The HC also took into account that the accused, Corporal Chakravar Chaudhari, has been in judicial custody since January 8.

Mr. Chaudhari along with a civilian, Than Singh, was

found to have duped a large number of people by promising them jobs and swindling ₹2.7 crore from them.

As per the status report, during the course of investigation, statements of 18 victims were recorded.

The victims said that the duo had collected originals as well as photocopies of their educational certificates and also taken ₹2.7 crore from them. The two accused, then, issued forged/false call letters and joining letters to the victims.

The public prosecutor said that the allegations against the accused are grave and serious in nature.

The court, however, said,

"No receipt has been brought on record by the prosecution to show that the alleged transaction of ₹2.7 crore from several aspiring candidates were made by the petitioner [Mr. Chaudhari]..."

"Rather it is mentioned in the status report that all the transactions were in the form of cash without any receipt which is a matter of trial and cannot be looked into at this stage," the HC said.

It also directed Mr. Chaudhari not to leave the country without the trial court's permission and not tamper with the evidence or threaten the witnesses.

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ANUJ KUMAR

In her introduction to "A King's Gambit", a one-of-a-kind exhibition showcasing the original costumes of Satyajit Ray's *Shatranj Ke Khilari*, curator Indranji Majumdar fondly describes the opening sequence of the film where a hand reaches across the chessboard and makes a move. Another hand, this time from the opposite end, appears a second later to counter it. "The woven silk sleeves and ornate rings of the players are the only indication that the scene is set in a bygone era," says Majumdar.

As the camera zooms out to bring the two players – Nawabs Mir Roshan Ali and Mirza Sajjad Ali – into focus, what strikes you first is the grandeur of it all – the rich backdrop, lavish decor, stylish artefacts, and the magnificent costumes worn by the indolent royals.

Apart from the beleaguered poet-king, Lt.-General Sir James Outram, Captain Weston and Doctor Fayer also find faithful representation in the clothes that they don.

The costumes reflect the detailed and fastidious research that went into the production. On display are a wide range of achkanas, angarkhas, jamas, pyjamas, shararas, ornate cholis, turbans, pagris, silver ornaments, and footwear from producer Suresh Jindal's personal collection, preserved over the years in steel boxes with camphor squares.

Describing Ray as a "phenomenal researcher", Jindal says when it came to research and learning anything new, Ray had the "curiosity and inquisitiveness of a child".

Majumdar says that Ray drew from the English translation of Abdul Halim Sharar's *Lucknow, The Last Phase of an Eastern Culture*. "It took a top craftsman of Agra three months to do the embroidery on the green robe of Wajid Ali Shah. The shararas that Shabana (Azmi) wore were stitched by poet Ali Sardar Jafri's sisters. A whole collection of priceless heirloom shawls was loaned to us by Thakur families of Calcutta," shares Jindal.

A lot of credit for rendering the authentic feel goes to Shama Zaidi who not only transcribed Ray's English script with Javed Siddiqui but also took care of the costumes. "Apart from her grooming in theatre, Shama, of course, hails from the milieu and understands the ecosystem. She had the first-hand experience of seeing and handling the costumes that were required," says Jindal, who knew her from her theatre days. A lot of information, Jindal says, came from the paintings of the era. The Kathak scene, in particular, was inspired by an engraving of that period.

The Salar Jung Museum,



(Left) A scene from *Shatranj Ke Khilari*; (below) producer Suresh Jindal.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



## CLOTHES MAKETH THE STORY

In Ray's centenary year, a new exhibition showcasing the original costumes of *Shatranj Ke Khilari* celebrates the master's eye for detail

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The Salar Jung Museum, the Falaknuma Palace of the Nizams of Hyderabad and Awadh dialect and it reflects in the Censor Certificate.

It also means Ray, for the first time, was working with a language and culture that was not exactly his own. "Of course, he was concerned about making his first non-Bengali film.

But in Shama and Javed, he had the right support to guide him on the diction and mannerisms. Ray was a giant of a man in all possible terms but he was equally humble and open to suggestions," Jindal, who co-produced *Gandhi*, says Attenborough carried the same trait on the sets. He also had a team to guide him on "diction and mannerisms".

Saeed Jaffery was Ray's choice, while Jindal suggested Sanjeev Kumar and Amjad Khan for their star value and theatre background. "Richard Attenborough

Ray was not aware of their strengths. He watched all kinds of cinema and was a regular at the International Film Festival of India in Delhi. It also reflects in his choice of casting veteran actor Veena as Wajid Ali Shah's mother. In those days, film sets often became a wrestling ring between competent actors, but Jindal says "Saeed and Sanjeev were too secure in their craft to get into a wrestling match".

The film manages to bring out the conflicting layers in Wajid Ali Shah's personality, which English historians often fail to appreciate. When the Company was berating him as incompetent, Wajid's poetry was being sung on the streets of Awadh. "During his time, Awadh was the biggest contributor to the Company's coffers. Lucknow and Muslims, in general, loved the film as Wajid is a very loved figure in their history," says Jindal, who also produced landmark films, *Rajnigandha* and *Katha*.

Appreciating the detailing of costumes in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Bajirao Mastani* and *Padmavati*, Jindal says the role of costumes has moved a lot since then but such exhibitions are rare in India. "I hope more such exhibitions can be held all over our vast and rich land to inspire pride in our people for their incomparable heritage in fabric design and related crafts."

(*A King's Gambit: Chess, Costumes and a Crown* is on display at the India International Centre, New Delhi, till November 5)

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1	Date of issue of Tender Notice	28-10-2021
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3	Bid submission start date	28-10-2021
4	Bid Submission end date	02-11-2021
5	Deadline for receiving the hard copies (CDR & EMD).	03-11-2021
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vii) Documentary evidence

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RISE 06:33	SET 17:37	
RISE 02:29	SET 15:34	
TUESDAY, NOV. 02		
RISE 06:34	SET 17:36	
RISE 03:32	SET 16:07	
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 03		
RISE 06:35	SET 17:35	
RISE 04:35	SET 16:42	

Delhi Weather max min  
Delhi City 30 16  
Safdarjang 30 16  
Palam 29 18

Delhi Palam Today  
30°C A dry weather to prevail. Day will be slight warm with mainly clear sky. Night will be slight cool and hazy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow  
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# Haryana makes U-turn, bans crackers in 14 NCR districts

People throng shops during day oblivious of the fresh order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM



A view of a cracker shop in Gurugram. ■ ASHOK KUMAR

A day after the Gurugram district administration allowed a two-hour window for bursting green crackers on Deepavali, the Haryana Disaster Management Authority on Sunday put a blanket ban on all kinds of firecrackers in the State's 14 districts falling under the National Capital Region (NCR).

The two-page order said, "In view of the various directions of the National Green Tribunal and the Supreme Court, there would be a total ban on the sale or use of all kinds of firecrackers in the 14 NCR districts." The order said the bursting of crackers could affect the respiratory health of vulnerable groups.

**Exceptions outside NCR**  
Outside the NCR, in the cities and towns in Haryana with "moderate" or below

air quality as per the average ambient air quality in November last year, green crackers can be burst between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. on the day of Deepavali. For Chhath Puja, crackers can be burst for two hours from 6 a.m. However, community bursting of firecrackers will be promoted in these areas.

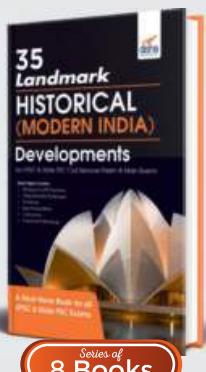
The District Magistrate, Gurugram, on Saturday allowed bursting of green crackers from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. on November 4. People thronged the cracker shops on Sunday, oblivious of the fresh directions. "I read in the newspaper about the directions allowing a two-hour window for bursting of crackers. It has come as a huge relief as my son had been nagging me to buy crackers," said Vibender Sharma, a resident of Sector 63, while buying firecrackers at a wholesale store in Gadauli Khurd village.

Another customer Manoj, who bought a sack full of crackers, said he was not aware of any court directions banning crackers. "Where is the ban? Crackers are freely available and people are openly buying them," he said.

Ashok Kumar, owner of Stars Night store, said the sale of firecrackers was stopped in the evening after the police informed them about the fresh directions.

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26-yr-old shot at by brother-in-law over interfaith marriage

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 26-year-old man was shot at by his brother-in-law and an accomplice in north-west Delhi's Model Town on Sunday, the police said. The accused have been identified as Shahawaz and Hritik, and the victim as Deva.

DCP (North-West) Usha Rangnani said Mr. Deva from Adarsh Nagar was married to one of the accused's sister against the family's wishes. At 12 a.m., the police received a call that a person was lying on the road with a gunshot injury. He was taken to a nearby hospital.

The accused, who came to the spot on a bike, shot at Mr. Deva, the DCP said. The accused were allegedly against the interfaith marriage, an officer said, adding that a case under Section 307 (attempt to murder) of the Indian Penal Code and Sections of the Arms Act has been registered.



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## BJP MLA joins Trinamool Congress in Tripura

TMC rally held after HC's intervention

### SYED SAJJAD ALI

AGARTALA

Rebel Tripura BJP MLA Ashok Das, who has been keeping his distance from the party for over two years, finally joined the Trinamool Congress in the presence of its national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee here on Sunday.

Mr. Banerjee addressed his first public rally in Tripura after 2016 with a restricted audience of 500 to respect an order of the High Court of Tripura.

The TMC had moved the High Court after the police made attempts to shift the rally venue from outside space of Rabindra Satabarshiki Bhawan to a sports ground citing coronavirus risk.

Former West Bengal Minister Rajib Banerjee, who was a member of the national executive committee of the BJP, also rejoined the TMC at the venue. He had quitted from the Ministry

and the party ahead of the Assembly elections held this year. Mr. Rajib's return to his old party in Tripura attains significance as indications suggest that he will be given an important responsibility.

Mr. Das, who was considered close to former Health Minister Sudip Roy Barman, did not speak at the rally. Mr. Das was elected from Surma constituency in Dhalai district in 2018 polls and recently he made his intentions clear to leave the BJP.

It was known to everyone he (Das) will be leaving. Departure of one or two people will not have any impact on the BJP," State Information Minister Sushanta Chowdhury said at a press conference convened to counter allegations of Mr. Abhishek.

Mr. Banerjee spoke against alleged failures of CM Biplob Kumar Deb and his government.

# Over 100 schools sans teachers in Delhi's backyard

Nuh figures at bottom of the Niti Aayog's 'Most Aspirational Districts' list in 2018

### ASHOK KUMAR

NUH

The Government Girls' Middle School in Nuh's Devla Nangli, with around 100 students, never had a teacher over the past decade, except for a few months in between when a science teacher was appointed. But she soon got transferred out. In view of the loss of learning for the children, the headmaster at the Primary School in the same campus has asked his staff members to teach the girls in their free time. The staff members, though qualified to teach only the primary classes, also teach the students at the Senior Secondary School, also in the same campus, but with only one Trained Graduate Teacher for Physical Education.

As many as 111 schools, including Primary, Middle and Senior Secondary, in Nuh don't have a single teacher. This Meo Muslim-dominated district of Haryana not just borders the State's financial capital and IT hub Gurugram, but also falls in the National Capital Region. Only a 100 km away from Delhi, Nuh, ironically, figures among Niti Aayog's 100-odd "Most Aspirational Districts", a euphemism for the backward areas, and was at the bottom of the table in 2018. Now it ranks 31. Education is among the five thematic areas identified for the rankings.

Another Girls' Senior Secondary school in Khor Basai with a strength of 300 and catering to around half-a-dozen villages has a lone woman teacher, commuting from Gurugram. School principal Dinesh Sharma has requested the staff members from the neighbouring boys' school to teach the girls. "There has been no deployment of staff on deputation officially," says Mr. Sharma. His former student, Rahul Khan, and Raisika, a local girl, also volunteer.

"It is not just the teaching staff, but the amenities like black board and drinking water are also missing. The doors to the toilets are broken. The contractor has left the construction work. There is no visit from the higher-ups," says Mr. Sharma, recently promoted as principal, sounding helpless.

As one drives down the NH-248A, the number of schools without teachers grows in Puhana and Ferozepur Jhirka blocks bordering Rajasthan and the student-to-teacher ratio worsens. Of the five blocks, these two blocks together account for around 80 schools

### Education Infrastructure in Nuh at a Glance

Name of Office	Designation	Sanction	Working	Vacant
Principal	99	78	21	
Head Master (High School)	20	19	01	
Lecturer (PGT)	1,473	588	885	
Elementary Head Master	358	171	187	
Master C&V (TGT)	2,579	824	1,755	
Head Teacher (Primary School)	353	274	79	
JBT	4,204	2,295	1,909	

The only teacher at the girls' middle school at Khor Basai village in Nuh.

V.V. KRISHNAN

SOURCE: DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER, NUH

without teachers.

The 2017-batch Junior Basic Training teacher Surender, posted at Devla Nangli's Primary School, says not just the teachers, but the staff in other departments also reluctant to be posted at Nuh owing to poor connectivity and lack of basic amenities.

Surender, a native of Mahendragarh district, daily spends six hours travelling to and from Nuh for lack of good accommodation facilities. "I tried staying at a rented accommodation in a village, but the water was not even fit

for bathing. It is difficult to get a branded drinking water bottle. For vegetarians, it is even more difficult," says Surender.

Appointed under the Meowat cadre, specially created by the Congress government, Surender says he could not get transfer outside Nuh and felt like "married to this area". Many of the teachers, even from far-off areas such as Sonipat and Rohtak, prefer to commute daily and have hired luxury buses to travel.

Dhirpal says posting to Nuh was considered "punishment posting" with the area being crime-prone, but the situation has changed over the past few years.

"People, especially the women, would fear posting to Nuh. But the outlook has changed a lot. A large population prefers to send their kids to madrasas, and also enrol them in schools just to take benefit of government schemes," says Dhirpal, of Jhajjar's Badli.

The acute shortage of teaching staff is also been an important contributor to the

high dropout rate.

While the hiring for the Meowat cadre is disproportionate to the number of sanctioned posts, the teachers from the rest of Haryana, if transferred to Nuh, take legal course to get their transfer order revoked. "While many schools have surplus teachers, almost half of the sanctioned posts in Nuh are vacant for years. The government had also promised 10% allowance to the teachers, but it remains unfulfilled," says Surender Kumar, JBT teacher, from Bhiwani.

Mohammad Alisher, reengaged as a teacher after his retirement, suggests hiring more local youth.

### Govt. assurance

Deputy Commissioner Capt. Shakti Singh tells *The Hindu* that teachers were temporarily deputed and in some cases were being shared among schools within the same campus. He added the matter was taken up with the government and they were assured that soon more teachers would be provided.

## 'Govt. must focus on giving jobs'

### STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

memorandum to Pratap Jena, Panchayatiraj Minister, and sought his intervention.

"There is very high demand for work in the State... by record 34.9 lakh households and only 29.2 lakh of families were provided work," the group said. "A campaign must be taken up for registering work demand in collaboration with civil society organisations," said Sameet Panda, lead member of the network.

### Government of Jammu & Kashmir

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### OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

#### DEATH

IN BRIEF



**TTD plumps for organic products**

TIRUPATI The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams has taken a decision to procure products made by using 'natural farming methods' to meet its future requirements. The announcement came from TTD Chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy at the closing ceremony of the 'Gau Maha Sammelan' here on Sunday.

**30 fall ill after consuming spurious toddy**

MEDAK As many as 30 people were taken ill after consuming adulterated toddy at Ousulapally in Telangana's Medak district on Friday night. They were shifted to a private hospital and were discharged after treatment.

**Rule curve level fixed by panel not maintained, says Minister**

'Kerala not opposed to giving water to T.N.'

A CORRESPONDENT IDUKKI

Agriculture Minister P. Prasad, who visited the Mullaperiyar dam along with Water Resources Minister Roshy Augustine on Sunday, said the rule curve level for the dam fixed by the Central Water Commission (CWC) had not been maintained.

The upper rule curve level till October 31 was 138 feet and it had not been maintained, he said.

"The Kerala Government is not opposed to giving water to Tamil Nadu for its agricultural purpose but the sa-

# Puneeth laid to rest with state honours

Brothers Shivarajkumar and Raghavendra thank Karnataka Govt. and fans for peaceful farewell

STAFF REPORTER  
BENGALURU

Kannada film star Puneeth Rajkumar was laid to rest with full state honours next to his parents Dr. Rajkumar and Parvathamma Rajkumar at Sree Kanteerava Studios on Sunday in the presence of family, friends, dignitaries, and people from the film industry. The sombre ceremony concluded by 8 a.m.

Puneeth Rajkumar died on October 29 following cardiac arrest.

The coffin was taken to the final resting place in a procession through the city at the crack of dawn. For security reasons, the last journey from Sree Kanteerava Stadium began much before the publicly announced time. However, the funeral procession was greeted by hundreds of fans and well-wishers who had kept a vigil



**Final salute:** Police personnel giving a gun salute during the last rites of Puneeth Rajkumar at Kanteerava Studios on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

through the night to pay their respects. Though they were not allowed inside the studios, thousands of people gathered outside raising slogans and crying "Appu Amara" as they bid farewell to the actor.

The State police paid their respects with a 21-gun salute. Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai handed over the national flag wrapped around the mortal remains of the actor to his wife Ashwini Revanth. After this, the

family conducted the last rites. Vinay Rajkumar, elder son of Raghavendra Rajkumar, conducted the religious rituals as per the family tradition. Puneeth Rajkumar's wife and their two daughters – Dhriti and Vanditha – held

on to each other in grief. Shivarajkumar and Raghavendra Rajkumar wept uncontrollably as their brother was buried.

Several prominent film personalities and politicians, including Mr. Bommali, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Siddaramaiah, former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, and KPCC president D.K. Shiva Kumar, paid their last respects.

Mr. Shivarajkumar and Mr. Raghavendra Rajkumar thanked the Government and fans for ensuring a peaceful farewell to their brother. In the wake of a few ardent fans reportedly ending their lives, they appealed to people to not harm themselves. "The show must go on, life will move on. We need to tolerate this sadness and move on," they said.

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Monday:** Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over southern interior & coastal Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over northern interior Tamil Nadu, coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam, Rayalaseema, southern interior Karnataka and Kerala & Mahe.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	31.7	22.5	Kozhikode	51.0	31.5	20.0
Ahmedabad	—	33.5	14.7	Kurnool	5.0	32.5	23.7
Aizawl	—	—	20.0	Lucknow	—	29.6	16.2
Allahabad	—	—	—	Madurai	5.0	27.8	24.6
Bengaluru	0.3	28.0	20.3	Mangaluru	2.8	32.3	23.6
Bhopal	—	—	13.0	Mumbai	—	35.3	24.0
Bhubaneswar	—	32.0	22.4	Mysuru	—	29.0	22.0
Chandigarh	—	30.2	13.2	New Delhi	—	29.7	16.5
Chennai	12.0	31.6	25.9	Patna	—	30.8	18.2
Coimbatore	4.0	28.7	23.1	Port Blair	—	31.6	26.3
Dehradun	—	—	13.5	Puducherry	18.6	31.4	25.1
Gangtok	—	18.2	12.5	Pune	—	32.5	19.4
Goa	—	35.6	25.4	Raipur	—	31.3	21.0
Guwahati	—	32.2	20.2	Ranchi	—	28.4	17.1
Hubballi	—	—	—	Shillong	—	22.6	12.4
Hyderabad	—	31.0	23.0	Shimla	—	19.0	8.4
Imphal	—	28.7	17.1	Srinagar	—	18.8	2.6
Jaipur	—	31.8	15.6	Thiruvananthapuram	2.0	29.8	24.2
Kochi	0.6	28.6	24.0	Tiruchi	7.0	38.2	25.0
Kohima	—	22.7	12.3	Vijayawada	0.3	32.4	25.0
Kolkata	—	31.8	21.6	Visakhapatnam	2.0	31.6	25.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)  
**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	.8	—	.37	.296	.200	■
Bengaluru	13	24	166	—	.72	■
Chennai	.2	.11	.33	.21	.65	■
Delhi	7	51	66	.262	.391	■
Hyderabad	.5	.56	.46	.165	.129	■
Kolkata	38	30	.26	.181	.138	■
Lucknow	22	.75	.57	.282	.258	■
Mumbai	.7	.8	.3	.295	.160	■
Pune	23	.55	.106	.193	.125	■
Visakhapatnam	.19	.34	.54	.65	■	■

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sonipat, Haryana recorded overall highest quality index (AQI) score of 410 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 12.

AQI Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

## Tiger poaching comes to light after a year

Forest officials nab two persons

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD

An incident of tiger poaching from a year ago came to light on Saturday when forest officials nabbed two persons trying to transport tiger body parts near Kagaznagar district.

The incident comes on the heels of an operation in Mulugu district exactly four weeks ago, raising serious concerns about the safety of big cats in the reserve forests of Telangana. In the latest operation which took place on Saturday evening, two persons, named Kotnaka Dev Rao and Godugu Avinash, were apprehended by the Forest Range Officer of Kagaznagar for possessing tiger skin.

During enquiry, they revealed that the skin was be-

## Bineesh Kodiyeri returns home

STAFF REPORTER THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of former CPI(M) Kerala Secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, who was lodged in a Bengaluru jail in a money laundering case over the past year, returned home on Sunday, two days after the High Court of Karnataka granted him bail.

Upon enquiry, it was revealed that the tiger skin was brought from Vengonda village the same day unearthed more body parts of the big cat from the house of Pendur Mukund Rao. Eight more persons have been picked up from Vengonda and brought to Kagaznagar forest division office.

He said "the country's biggest political party" was behind his arrest.

The ED, which accused

Bineesh of being involved

in financing the drug business of Mohammed Anoop, the prime accused, had arrested him on October 29 last year.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu said libraries were treasure troves.

Mahatma Gandhi, an avid book reader, had visited this historic library thrice, he recalled.

Earlier, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu donated ₹5 lakh to the library on behalf of the Swar-

## Contribute to revival of libraries, Venkaiah Naidu tells youth

They had a special role in freedom struggle: Vice-President



**Treasure trove:** Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu during his visit to the Rammohan Library in Vijayawada on Sunday.

na Bharat Trust (SBT) and the Muppavarapu Foundation being run by his daughter Deepa Venkat and son Harshavardhan.

Meanwhile, in an interaction with the candidates of various vocational courses offered by the SBT at Atkur,

near Gannavaram, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu said youth should acquire a wide variety of skills to build successful careers.

He insisted that there were no substitutes for discipline and hard work for anyone dreaming big in life.

near Gannavaram, Mr. Venkaiah Naidu said youth should acquire a wide variety of skills to build successful careers.

He insisted that there

were no substitutes for discipline and hard work for anyone dreaming big in life.

## T.N. schools to reopen for Classes I to VIII today

S. POORVJA CHENNAI

A section of students of Classes I to VIII will be returning to their respective campuses on Monday, after a gap of nearly 20 months. The COVID-19 pandemic had resulted in the closure of schools in March 2020.

Though many institutions have decided to conduct physical classes by following the safety protocol, some have opted to wait and watch before following suit.

While allowing schools to function, the School Education Department emphasised that the "happiness of students" was a priority. It has framed directives that will determine how the next few weeks will play out for students of government and aided schools.

"Over the next 10 to 15

days, our focus will be on reminding students that schools are happy spaces and ensuring the environment remains welcoming to them.

For students of Classes I and II in particular, who have never attended classes on campus, we are asking schools not to be rigid about timings, and allay the concerns of parents whenever needed," an official said.

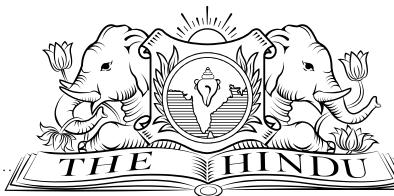
The Directorate of Elementary Education stated that for a fortnight or so, the focus will be on encouraging students to participate in activities, including sharing of experiences, story-telling, music, dance and drawing. The State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT) has prepared a bridge course, which will be taken up after the first two weeks for all classes.

"Over the next 10 to 15

## First gay couple to tie the knot in Telugu States

With family blessings, Hyderabad duo to celebrate their relationship without any marriage formalities

ABHINAV



## Underestimated utility

Lowered outlay for rural guarantee scheme has led to used up allocation and wage delays

**T**hat as many as 21 of 35 States/UTs have utilised, by October 29, over 100% of their allocated funds under the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for FY2021-22 is not a surprise. In the previous year, the allocations for MGNREGS were increased by ₹50,000 crore to meet the demand for work, with the Revised Estimates for spending for the scheme going up to ₹11,500 crore. MGNREGS was a life-saver for the poor, especially migrant labourers, following the sudden lockdown announced by the Union government. In this year's Budget, the Finance Minister allocated ₹73,000 crore for the scheme, which was higher than the previous year's absolute number in Budget allocations, but this amounted only to 2.1% of the Budget expenditure, the lowest outlay in those terms in the last six years. By October-end, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh had utilised more than 130% of their respective allocations for the scheme, indicating the extent to which rural workers depend on the scheme even in relatively better-off States. Clearly, the Union government has underestimated the demand for work under the scheme, which even if it involves arduous and menial labour has accounted for a large chunk of rural employment at a time when the economy suffered a steep contraction due to the effects of the pandemic.

In response to a report, officials in the Rural Development Ministry accused States of "artificially" creating demand, but this has not been borne out from ground reports which continue to indicate rising demand for work and wages in rural India; civil society activists claim that some workers have been turned away by officials despite the demand for work because of the paucity of funds. The Union Government must ensure that the allocation is adequate for wage payments to be done and for demand to be met in the remaining months of this financial year. The utility of MGNREGS as a scheme that alleviates distress has never been in question. From acting as an effective substitute in the absence of crop and weather insurance in aiding poor farm households and helping to provide wages during agrarian crises, to being an avenue for employment during the economic crisis induced by the pandemic and the response, MGNREGS has turned out to be a salve for farm workers and labourers. Delays in wage payments could also result in a decline in rural consumption, which plays a vital role in stimulating the economy. Besides the scheme's utility in distress, it also has the potential, if works are upgraded suitably, to continue to improve rural development and infrastructure. The Union Government must consider this during allocations and not be conservative in its outlay or remain unmindful of the overall potential of the scheme.

## The big push

Biden will have to negotiate to promote his vision for social security and climate change

**I**n what appears to be a rush to the finish line but is in fact the intention to fulfil long-standing policy promises of the Democratic Party, U.S. President Joe Biden sought to push through Congress an omnibus mega-bill seeking \$1.85 trillion for social security and climate change. While the initiative seemed to be thrust forward on a shorter timeline so that Mr. Biden could speak of his domestic agenda achievements at the G20 meeting in Rome and COP26 in Scotland, the once-in-a-generation bill speaks to issues such as providing universal pre-kindergarten, extending an expanded tax credit for parents, further reducing health-care premiums for those covered under the Obama-era Affordable Care Act, reducing a waiting list for in-home care, building a million units of low-income housing, and worker training and higher education. To balance the implied considerable hike in federal public expenditure, the bill proposes to raise revenue via a 15% minimum tax on the reported profits of large corporations, clamping down on profit-shifting by multinationals, tighter enforcement for large corporations and ultra-high net worth individuals, a 1% tax on corporate tax buybacks, an additional 5% tax on incomes exceeding \$10 million a year and another 3% tax on incomes above \$25 million, and policies to limit business losses for the very wealthy and a 3.8% Medicare tax on people earning more than \$400,000 a year who did not previously pay that tax.

Although Democrats have 50 Senators in the Upper House of Congress and Vice-President Kamala Harris could cast a tie-breaking vote should the need arise, the passage of this bill which will be remembered as a major component of Mr. Biden's legacy, hangs on the razor's edge. This is in part because at least two Senators, from Arizona and West Virginia, are potential holdouts. The conundrum that Mr. Biden is facing is a paradox of omnibus bills – different constituents view only some parts of the bill as desirable. For example, House Democrats appear unwilling to pass a version of the bill that the Senate has already cleared, sanctioning a \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package. Lawmakers such as Pramila Jayapal have opined that the Congressional Progressive Caucus would only support the broader vision of the Build Back Better Act, which includes the ambitious climate change programme, federal paid leave for families, a substantial expansion of Medicare policy and two free years of community college. To succeed, Mr. Biden will have to negotiate with all stakeholders to find a compromise formula. At stake is the U.S.'s prospect of climbing out of the recessionary economic trough it was pushed into by the pandemic, not only by directly spurring commercial activity through public expenditure but also by investing in education and social security to keep America's workforce competitive.

# The Court's order on Pegasus still falls short

Far too many cases have been diluted with the appointment of external panels, in turn compromising civil liberties



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

**O**n October 27, the Supreme Court of India appointed an independent committee to inquire into charges that the Union government had used the mobile phone spyware Pegasus to invade, access, and snoop into devices used by India's citizens. The Court's direction has been met with adulation. But the time to sing our paean is not yet here. Much as the Court's declarations of law brim with brio, its order still falls short of delivering justice.

### No guarantee still

Faced with the Government's resolute refusal to file a proper affidavit, either confirming or denying the use of Pegasus, the Court, one might have thought, would have issued a writ compelling the state to adduce evidence. Instead, it left the fact finding to a committee of experts. There is no guarantee that a government that chose to remain silent before the Court will now somehow come clean before an external panel. The question then is this: should the Government fail to cooperate, how must the Court respond?

The petitioners before the Supreme Court relied on an investigation conducted by a consortium of global media. These reports revealed that hundreds of phone numbers from India had appeared on a global list of more than 50,000 numbers that were selected for surveillance by clients of the Israeli firm, the NSO Group.

The NSO has since confirmed that its

spyware is sold only to governments, chiefly for the purposes of fighting terrorism. The petitioners said that forensic analysis had confirmed the presence of Pegasus on the devices of at least 10 Indians, including some of those before the Court.

### Time-tested strategy

But the cases presented a set of familiar challenges. In response to the allegations made against it, the Government invoked its most-beloved bogey: national security. It effectively claimed that the interests of the country's safety meant that it was under no obligation to tell the Court whether it in fact used the software or not. What is more, according to it, the very adoption of this argument virtually forbade the Court from probing further. This is a strategy that has worked well in the past. In matters purportedly involving national security, the Court has shown an extraordinary level of deference to the executive.

The cases also posed another hurdle: a contest over facts. The petitioners were asserting the occurrence of illegal surveillance. The Government was offering no explicit response to their claims. How then was the Court to unravel the truth? Again, in recent times, the Court has invariably veered towards rejecting claims made against the state on the basis that it cannot decide the veracity of a pleading without conducting a full-fledged trial, the conduct of which is beyond the bailiwick of constitutional courts.

Now, to some degree, in its order appointing a committee, the Court has bucked the trend of absolute deference. The Court has held that there is no magic formula to the Government's incantation of national security, that its power



of judicial review is not denuded merely because the state asserts that the country's safety is at stake.

### A clear path of accountability

The order recognises, correctly, that spying on an individual, whether by the state or by an outside agency, amounts to an infraction of privacy. This is not to suggest that all surveillance is illegal. But, as the order concludes, any limitation on a fundamental right must be proportional and based on evidence. "In a democratic country governed by the rule of law," the judges hold, "indiscriminate spying on individuals cannot be allowed except with sufficient statutory safeguards, by following the procedure established by law under the Constitution."

In holding thus, the Court has effectively recognised that an act of surveillance must be tested on four grounds: first, the action must be supported by legislation; second, the state must show the Court that the restriction made is aimed at a legitimate governmental end; third, the state must demonstrate that there are no less intrusive means available to it to achieve the same objective; and, finally, the state must establish that there is a rational nexus between the limitation imposed and the aims underlying the measure.

The test provides a clear path to holding the Government accountable. But for a coherent applica-

tion of these standards the Court must arrive at a conclusion on facts. Ordinarily, in prerogative proceedings, evidence is taken on affidavit. In other words, the parties before the Court present their version of the facts through a sworn, written statement. The Court then appreciates the evidence to arrive at a deduction.

In the cases concerning Pegasus, each of the petitioners affirmed a set of facts, claiming that mobile phones of Indian citizens – from journalists and activists to politicians – had been subject to intrusion. In response, the Government refused to file anything more than what it described as a "limited affidavit". Apart from a general denial of the petitioners' case, this affidavit, the Court found, did not "provide any clarity as to the facts of the matter at hand."

### For the Court

The absence of a categorical denial from the Government, the order holds, ought to lead to a *prima facie* belief, if nothing else, that there is truth in the petitioners' claims. Having held thus, one might have expected the Court to frame a set of specific questions demanding answers from the state. These might have included the following: did the Government purchase Pegasus? Did it use the software on the phones of Indian citizens? If so, was such use backed by law? What were the reasons for which the use was authorised?

If answers to these questions were still not forthcoming, elementary principles of evidence law allow the Court to draw what is known as an "adverse inference". A party that fails to answer questions put to it will only risk the Court drawing a conclusion of fact

against it. If, on this basis, the petitioners' case is taken as true, there can be little doubt that there has been an illegitimate violation of a fundamental right. The Court then can grant any number of remedies: it can make a declaration that the Government was in the wrong; and it can issue a writ compelling the Government to disclose all materials relevant to the purchase and use of Pegasus.

It is, therefore, unclear why we need a committee at all. Surely, the Court possesses the power to gather evidence on its own, to even allow, in exceptional cases, for cross-examination of important witnesses. A committee might well be necessary where the task of collecting evidence is somehow beyond the Court's remit. But that is not the case here.

Ultimately, in the future, the Court must think more carefully about questions of proof and rules of evidence. Ad hoc committees – sterile as their members might be – cannot be the solution. Far too many cases are consigned to the back burner on the appointment of external panels, and, in the process, civil liberties are compromised.

For now, it is encouraging that the Court has kept these cases on its docket. If it finds in eight weeks' time, when the cases are next scheduled to be listed, that the Government has been delaying or obstructing the committee, it must proceed to use its prerogative powers to both provide a declaration of illegality and issue a mandatory order to the state compelling it to perform its constitutional duties. Only then will the Court's various eulogies to the values of privacy have any true meaning.

*Suhrit Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court*

## Getting nutrition back on the school high table

COVID-19 or otherwise, educational institutions need to ensure that schoolchildren are nurtured and nourished



SUBBARAO M. GAVARAVARAPU & HEMALATHA R.

**W**ith COVID-19 cases reducing in the country, several establishments, including schools, are opening again. While the reopening of all schools is on the anvil, the festive season ahead and the fact that children are not yet in the ambit of the vaccination drive are causing apprehension. We, as a society, must focus on the nutrition of children to ensure they are armed with good immunity as they get ready to take on new challenges especially after emerging from the confines of their homes. However, it is important to remember that even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, India was facing significant nutritional challenges.

Hence, there is a need to pivot on children's nutrition, using the novel coronavirus pandemic to better understand current nutrition and nutritional requirements for a healthy body and mind.

**Tackling India's triple burden**  
India faces multiple problems of under-nutrition and overweight/obesity coexisting with deficiencies of micronutrients such as iron, zinc, calcium and several vitamins. This triple burden of malnutrition has to be identified, understood and addressed. It is

much more important especially in the case of children and adolescents as it is during these phases of life that we see rapid growth of the body and development of food habits. Childhood and adolescence are two conjoined periods of continuous growth and development – a seamless duration. For instance, between two and 10 years of age, children tend to grow at an average of 6.7 cm in height and 1.5 to 3 kg in weight every year. But specifically, when the growth spurt happens at about 10-12 years in girls and two years later in boys during adolescence, their nutritional needs are vastly increased. In the case of girls, their nutritional status impacts not only their health but that of generations to come. Malnutrition in any form can put children and adolescents at risk of compromised immune function, thus making them vulnerable to infections.

### Social factors

To understand and foster their immunity, one also needs to understand disruptive social environment factors that affect diet quality. In urban as well as among middle class and affluent communities, restricted movement, constrained socialisation and even dwindling physical contact have become the new normal. COVID-19 isolation and fatigue have led to generalised stress, adding to the immunity challenge for children. These challenges coupled with a lack of diet diversity leading to imbalanced micronutrient intake or consumption of high carbohydrate and high sugar foods, endanger the child's health by



compromising their immunity and making them vulnerable to infections. Hence, the way we approach nutrition needs to change.

### Need for a balanced diet

It is essential to look beyond minimum calorie requirements and ensure children consume a balanced diet with adequate diversity in order to ensure the required balance of all necessary nutrients. Providing children with a balanced diet packed with all the necessary nutrients provides them with a solid foundation for an active and healthy life. Often overlooked, micronutrients are essential for production of enzymes, hormones and other substances for good immune function, healthy growth and development. Each stage of the body's immune response relies on the presence of many micronutrients. To combat hidden hunger, affordable, accessible and diverse food sources must be made available across India. Micronutrients that are primarily available in fruits, vegetables, greens, nuts, legumes and whole grains play a crucial role in enhancing the native and adaptive

immune function and also aid 'immune memory' formation. A substantial serving of fresh fruits and vegetables, as much as about 300-500 gm per day per child is recommended depending on the age group. These, along with curd and nuts, can increase beneficial probiotic bacteria in the intestine. But it is better to help them choose fresh fruits rather than fruit juices. Thoroughly cooked meat/poultry and sea fish are very good for protein; sea fish also provide essential fats. About 300ml-400 ml of milk or curd can provide the required calcium, good quality protein and other nutrients.

Among urban and affluent groups, indulgence in frequent munching of high-calorie snacks and sweetened beverages that are devoid of beneficial nutrients should be discouraged. However, fats need not be seen as a villain – children and adolescents need about 25g-50g a day, which should ideally be derived from more than two varieties of oils. Maintaining ideal body weight, regular physical activity, adequate water intake along with adequate sleep and low screen time can go a long way in building and regulating their immunity.

### Noon meal scheme

The Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman Yojana (PM POSHAN) – the mid-day meal programme in its new avatar – is all set to broaden base itself even to students of pre-primary levels or Bal Vatikas of government and government-aided primary schools along with primary and upper primary schoolchil-

dren who are already within the ambit of the mid-day meal programme. The PM POSHAN envisages providing 450 Kcal energy and 12g of protein for primary; 700 Kcal and 20g protein for upper primary children through diet diversity. In addition, monitoring haemoglobin levels of schoolchildren, appointment of nutritional experts to ensure the haemoglobin and growth status are continuously monitored; focus on nutrigardens are all welcome steps as we prepare to reopen schools. Moreover, special provisions for nutritional items for children in districts with high prevalence of anaemia and the involvement of farmer producer organisations and self-help group women will strengthen linkages and convergence for promoting children's nutrition.

COVID-19 or no COVID-19, good immunity will lay the foundation for long-term well-being. After all, good nutrition, safe food, and positive lifestyles are the cornerstones of great immune function. To ensure this, schools, when they reopen, should be avenues for teaching nutrition as a life skill than rhetorical pedagogy. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that our children are nurtured and nourished.

*Dr. Subbarao M. Gavaravarapu is Scientist E and heads the Nutrition Information, Communication and Health Education (NICHE) division at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)-National Institute of Nutrition (ICMR-NIN), Hyderabad. Dr. Hemalatha R. is Director, ICMR-NIN, Hyderabad*

## 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.

### Saving a rural lifeline

It is distressing that the only lifeline available to the rural poor, the MGNREGA scheme, almost faced the danger of getting derailed midway due to a lack of foresight and planning. Given the extreme form of distress faced by wage earners, including farm workers, during the pandemic and the warnings given by the scientists and other experts that the pandemic is likely to continue, the allocations for the scheme should have been raised substantially. In addition, the number of days guaranteed under the scheme should have been raised to at least 150. The argument that States are "artificially creating

demands" for work does not hold water as there are established procedures for receipt and registration of applications for work and maintenance of records. Farm workers, who constitute more than 42% of the total workforce in India, are the backbone of the rural economy. Their distress should be considered as a national crisis and given the highest attention.

KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI,  
Hyderabad

**The Pope and India**  
It is gratifying to note that the Prime Minister's meeting with the Pope was cordial. Though a religious head, the Pope has been very forthcoming in the past, reiterating his

concerns on issues such as climate change, poverty and in enabling a better planet. The Pope's anxiety over the goings-on in Syria and Afghanistan, professing different religions, exemplifies the fact that his thoughts are more humane in nature. One can safely assume that there could be expectations from the Vatican, that as the largest democracy, India plays a key role in taking forward aforesaid concerns to a logical conclusion. An India visit would also enable the Pope to experience first hand how various religions strive to live in harmony with each other in a country wedded to secular credentials. This could help corrective actions required on all sides and put to rest

any misgivings on the existence of discrimination among religions.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,  
Chennai

**A check needed**  
Social media is playing a critical role in polarising things in the country as exemplified by the outrageous campaign against one of the players in the Indian cricket team. The intellectual class should not move away and needs to assert itself. Communal forces should not be allowed to divert attention from livelihood issues and lawlessness through a social media blitz.

As for the Opposition, it has

so far failed to sink its petty differences in meeting the challenges posed by Hindutva elements.

MANOHAR ALEMBATH,  
Burlington, Boston, U.S.

**Puneeth Rajkumar**  
News of the sudden passing of Puneeth Rajkumar, one of marquee names of the Kannada celluloid world, and at a young age, caused sad reading. He strode the Kannada film world like a colossus and will live forever in the hearts of millions of his fans. He was

**CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:**  
In an OpEd article titled "The need to move away from clientelism" (October 28, 2021), mortality rate was erroneously given as a percentage instead of rate. It is calculated as the number of deaths per 1,000 of the population.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552663; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com

To read more letters online, scan the QR code  
affable in his demeanour and very philanthropic..

NARAYAN R.,  
Bengaluru

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# A reminder from SARS-CoV-2

Provoking nature beyond a point can lead to unimagined and irreversible consequences for human beings



PRANAY LAL

*Viruses are one of the most persistent and potent forces of evolution, writes Pranay Lal in his new book, Invisible Empire: The Natural History of Viruses. As SARS-CoV-2 has shown, a virus is a force to be feared. "Everything about viruses is extreme, including perhaps, the reactions they evoke," says Lal as he profiles this abundant life form with the help of photographs, illustrations, anecdotes and paintings. An excerpt from the book:*

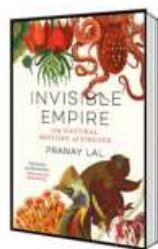
Much as we baulk at the idea, we are not unique. The human species, like all other living things, is an amalgam of creatures pieced together, gene by gene, and passed down by different life forms over deep time. Our genes were handed down to us from our ancestral ape, monkey, pig, shrew, gecko, fish, worm, grass, moss and bacterium, with several other creatures in between. Without genetic mutations, there would be no humans or, for that matter, any other life form that we see around us. These mutations – tiny errors in replicating the genetic code – occur randomly each time a cell (or virus) makes copies of itself, thereby becoming the starting point for an unexpected evolutionary journey. A very tiny number of mutations successfully create variation in a population. Natural selection then amplifies traits and creates variants which eventually can evolve into distinct species. These changes could be anything that confers an ability to thrive better in an evolving environment – blending a chameleon more effectively into a forest that is drying up; extending the necks of okapis and gerenuks so they can more easily nibble on the overhanging foliage of tall trees; or simply helping microbes evade a strong immune response and allowing them to attach themselves to a cell.

#### Genetic monsters

Viruses together with other microbes speed up the gene exchange between similar and often unrelated life forms. From a virus's perspective, all



GETTY IMAGES/ STOCK PHOTO



Invisible Empire: The Natural History of Viruses  
Pranay Lal  
Penguin/Viking  
₹799

living creatures are genetic Frankenstein's monsters that they have stitched together. Nearly 8% of our genes, for instance, are uniquely viral in origin, and despite thousands and millions of years of adding, editing and deleting genes, we remain genetically similar in many ways. A virus is capable of crossing over into us to cause infection because some of our shared genes, proteins and common cellular components enable it to establish itself.

Take SARS-CoV2, one of our most recent chance encounters. A few generations ago, a population of viruses acquired changes in their genes (and proteins) from an animal host which provided them with the ability to infect humans. The virus binds to a protein receptor, ACE2 (or Angiotensin-converting enzyme 2; angiotensin is a protein hormone that causes blood vessels to become narrower and is vital for maintaining blood pressure and fluid balance in the body), which it recognises in us. ACE2 is found in several mammals, and in us they are primarily present in our lungs and guts. When virologists teased open the RNA of SARS-CoV2, they found that it carried genes that are found in a variety of animals – in other viruses, bacteria, slugs, small mammals, and perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, nearly 94% of its genes are found in humans too. But a handful of its genes are completely unique to it and their functions are yet unknown. This makes it difficult to predict how SARS-CoV2 will behave once it enters our bodies.

Our technological progress, our

ability to acquire instant (albeit often ephemeral) gratification, has lulled us into believing that we possess enough power to subdue and manipulate nature. We choose which relationships we want to foster and which we will cult and sever, and try to make nature serve us selectively and indefinitely. This kind of brinkmanship makes us feel that we can control nature, but as we have been slow to realise, this control is delusional. It is time we stopped looking at nature as a pliable variable or as an entity that impedes 'progress', or a tool of one-upmanship. I say this now because there are controversies about the origin of SARS-CoV2 – did the virus jump from an animal to unsuspecting buyers in a wet market or did it leak from a lab? Was it designed as a bioweapon? For me, these questions are relevant only if we have the courage to take corrective action and hold institutions or governments accountable. Otherwise this is a futile blame game best left to politicians and diplomats. The origin of the virus could be significant for science if it helps us determine the virus's lineage and identify its potential hosts which will help us plan future strate-

gies.

Regardless of how it originated, SARS-CoV-2 reminds us that provoking nature beyond a point can lead to unimagined and irreversible consequences. Anyone who understands nature's processes knows that soils, mud, detritus, mulch, sand, gravel, grit and rock are crucial pieces in the climate change story, as are the ocean currents, wind circulation, the shapes and size of land masses and, of course, life forms – especially microbes, the principal primary energy producers on Earth that regulate the bulk of Earth's carbon-oxygen cycle. When all these small pieces come together, they power Earth's engines. This engine is an enormous, planetary scale, biogeocochemical reactor – but it starts from small things. Viruses cause a billion infections a second. They tinker and shuffle genes at great speed, creating possibilities of making new varieties of life. Like geological processes which create and shape diverse landscapes, viruses and microbes enable speciation and find ways to fit new entities within ecosystems that their predecessors have shaped. Each ecosystem – a tropical forest, a vast grassland, a small pool or even microbiomes within every individual creature – has been thousands and even millions of years in the making, and is constantly evolving.

#### Here to stay

Like any other pathogen that established itself as a persistent disease, SARS-CoV-2, too, was a chance occurrence. We enabled its crossover through destruction of habitats and trade in wildlife. And once the outbreak occurred, mass movements of people, weak and bigoted science, the fragmented response by agencies, a blunderbuss of regulations and distrust between states sustained the spread and evolution of the novel virus. For SARS-CoV-2, the pandemic is not just a one-off chance but an evolutionary moment. The effects of the pandemic will not wear off any time soon. The virus has triggered massive changes starting with our bodies and embracing the body politic and these will probably stay with us for a very long time. Perhaps forever.

Excerpted with permission from Penguin Random House India

# Living on death row with illness

A report on the mental health conditions of death row prisoners explores a neglected aspect of sentencing



SOUMITRA PATHARE

Last month, 'Deathworthy: A Mental Health Perspective of the Death Penalty', an important report by Project 39A, based at the National Law University, Delhi, was published. It explores the mental health concerns of death row prisoners, the intellectual disabilities they have, and the psychological impact of being on death row.

India remains among the 55 retentionist countries where the death penalty is still handed down for certain crimes. Data on how many death row prisoners have mental health conditions and/or intellectual disabilities are hard to come by (because the prisoners are not specifically assessed for it) and so this report helps to improve our understanding of this much-neglected topic.

#### No right to fair trial

The report presents the detailed histories of 88 death row prisoners in India. Of them, 30 were found with a depressive illness, 19 with anxiety disorder, and three prisoners reported having psychotic episodes. Of particular concern is the fact that eight had attempted suicide and close to 50% said they had considered it. Worryingly, nearly 11% of these death row prisoners were diagnosed with intellectual disabilities and most of them had deficits in intellectual functioning.

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights calls upon countries "not to impose the death penalty on a person suffering from any form of mental disorder or to execute any such person". Yet, the laws of most countries don't explicitly prohibit this. Mental illness and intellectual disabilities complicate the death penalty. Persons with mental illness and intellectual disabilities may not be able to instruct their lawyers to mount a robust defence, thus jeopardising the right to a fair trial enshrined in our Constitution. The 'insanity defence' in the Indian Penal Code sets such a high barrier that it can't be met in most cases. Even when there is an obvious history of mental illness, courts in India are usually unwilling to consider the plea of insanity by defence lawyers. In *State of Maharashtra v. Santosh Maruti Mane* (2014), the Bombay High Court, while confirming the death penalty for a man who had gone on a bus rampage that claimed nine lives, and rejecting his insanity plea, had stated, "Mere prior incidence of treatment is

not sufficient. It has to be established that at the time of commission of an offence, the accused was of unsound mind and incapable of understanding the consequences of his action". It is impossible for any psychiatrist, days or weeks after the offence was committed, to certify that the above conditions existed at the precise moment the offence was committed. In *Shatrughan Chauhan v. Union of India* (2014), the Supreme Court had said that mental illness should warrant the commutation of death sentence to life imprisonment. Despite this, courts do not consider mental illness as a mitigating factor when imposing punishment.

The report also highlights another important and neglected aspect of mental illness: the social determinants of mental illness. Mental illness is more common among the poor and those with mental illness are more likely to end up in poverty. Those who have experienced childhood abuse are significantly more likely to experience mental illness in adulthood than those who did not. The report provides an insight into the poverty, abuse, neglect and violence that mark the overwhelming majority of death row prisoners with mental illness. It sheds light on the stigma, social ostracisation and grief of families of those sentenced to death.

#### Adopting a psycho-social approach

The authors argue that courts should take a psycho-social approach towards sentence mitigation using the framework recommended by the Supreme Court in *Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab* (1980). The apex court had laid down guidelines that courts should take into consideration before imposing the death penalty. These include mental health issues such as "extreme mental or emotional disturbance" at the time of the incident and acting under "duress". A psycho-social approach will allow courts to take into account the life history of an individual and relate this to the mental state of the individual.

The report says, "We have sentenced to death people, who, due to the nature of their disability, might very well be exempt from the death penalty altogether." Society, especially those in the criminal justice system, including legal and medical professionals, should mull over this. Mental illness is not a crime. Those with mental illness are vulnerable to violation of their rights. We need to ask ourselves what purpose is served by executing people who have a mental illness or an intellectual disability. This report, one hopes, will trigger these discussions.

Soumitra Pathare is a Consultant Psychiatrist and Director of the Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy at the Indian Law Society

#### STATE OF PLAY

## The DMK's gubernatorial test

Its core values will be put to test in the coming months

B. KOLAPPAN & S. VIJAY KUMAR

The DMK, an ardent advocate of federalism, has always questioned the role of Governors. DMK founder C.N. Annadurai likened the Governor's role to a goat's beard, saying both were unnecessary. The dismissal of the M. Karunanidhi government on the recommendations of Governor K. K. Shah during the Emergency further hardened the DMK's stand. In



'Union' "signifies federal principles". Perhaps to dispel preconceived notions, Mr. Ravi, soon after being sworn in, said he would function within the parameters laid down in the Constitution and hoped to make his relationship with the DMK government "as beautiful as possible".

The DMK government, however vocal it is on federalism, cannot afford to antagonise the Governor, that too so early. Tamil Nadu was witness to the bitter battle between Governor M. Channa Reddy and Chief Minister Jayalalithaa in the mid-1990s, with the latter claiming that he had acted "without decency" when she called on him at the Raj Bhavan in August 1993. Since 1996, the relationship between the Raj Bhavan and the Secretariat have largely been cordial. The DMK, which shared power at the Centre from 1999 to 2013, made use of its clout and got Surjit Singh Barnala appointed in 2004. Karunanidhi shared a special relationship with Barnala as the latter had refused to recommend the dismissal of the DMK government in January 1991.

Against this backdrop, a recent letter to heads of departments by Chief Secretary V. Irai Anbu intimating them that Governor R.N. Ravi "wished to know about the functioning of certain departments" and the "ongoing welfare schemes of both the State as well as the Union government" has stirred a controversy. Mr. Stalin has not said anything about the letter yet. However, the DMK's allies – Congress and Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi – have questioned the Governor's authority in seeking reports from State government departments. The Governor can only be briefed by the Chief Minister, just as the President is briefed by the Prime Minister, they contend. DMK spokespersons, though, have tried to walk a tightrope arguing that Mr. Ravi's actions are distinct from that of his predecessor, who directly interacted with officials.

The Chief Secretary clarified that his communication requesting the secretaries to prepare presentations for the Governor was "routine" and described the debate on his letter as "unnecessary". Nevertheless, the development points to a political situation created by a strong government at the Centre. The appointment of Mr. Ravi, a former Intelligence Bureau officer, as Governor had created suspicion within the DMK and among its allies. They felt that he had been sent to Tamil Nadu to checkmate the DMK government, which had referred to the Central government as the 'Union' government arguing that

#### DATA POINT

## Accidental deaths decline

In 2020, as a nationwide lockdown was enforced in India, accidental deaths declined by 11% compared to 2019. This is the highest such decline in the past 45 years. Road accidents, which form a majority of accidental deaths, fell by 14%. However, the decline in deaths was not uniform across the country. In six States, accidental deaths due to deliberate/negligent conduct of human beings increased compared to 2019.

By Jasmin Nihalani

1 In April 2020, road accidents fell to 8,350 from 38,866 in January

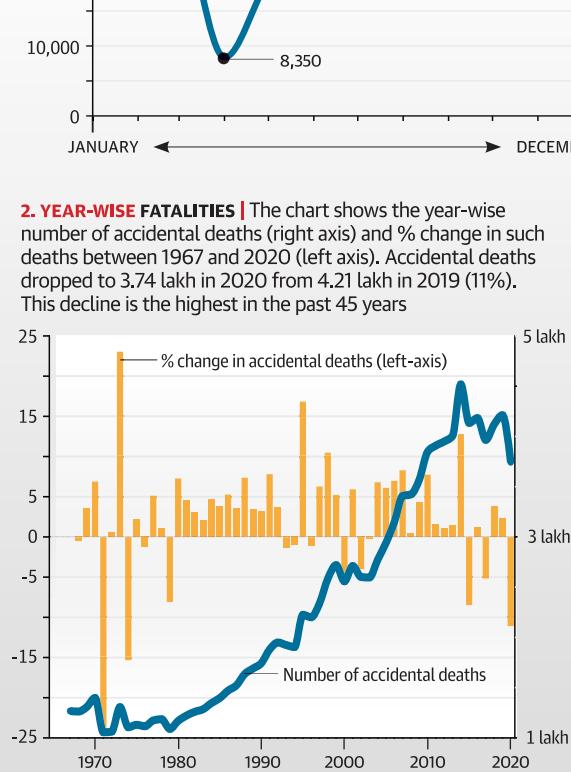
2 In 2020, 1.3 lakh people died due to road accidents

3 In 2020, railway accidents decreased by 51% compared to 2019

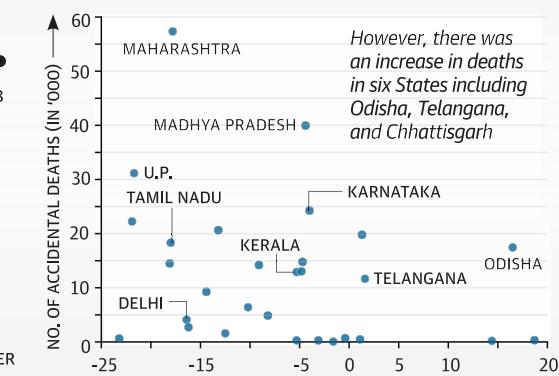


1. SHARP FALL | The chart depicts the month-wise number of road accidents in 2020. Following the implementation of the national lockdown in March, there was a 79% drop in accidents in April compared to January. However, accidents started rising again and by December, they reached the levels observed in January

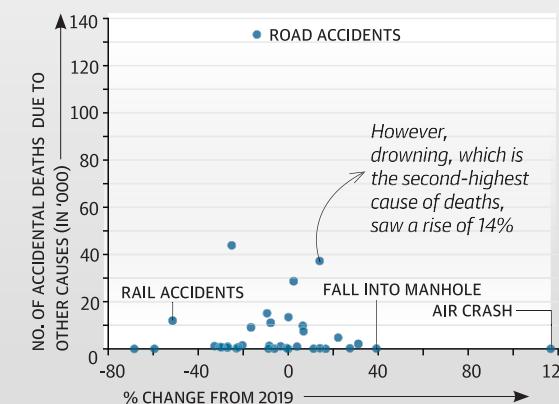
2. YEAR-WISE FATALITIES | The chart shows the year-wise number of accidental deaths (right axis) and % change in such deaths between 1967 and 2020 (left axis). Accidental deaths dropped to 3.74 lakh in 2020 from 4.21 lakh in 2019 (11%). This decline is the highest in the past 45 years



3. STATE-WISE DEATHS | The chart plots State-wise accidental deaths in 2020 due to deliberate/negligent conduct of human beings and the % change from 2019. Deaths declined in a majority of the States, including Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan



4. CAUSES OF DEATHS | The chart plots the causes of accidental deaths in 2020 due to deliberate/negligent conduct of human beings and the % change from 2019. Road accidents make up a third of such deaths. In 2020 they declined by 14%. Railway accidents, which comprise nearly 3% of such deaths, saw a decline of over 50%



#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 1, 1971

Stolen idol sold in the U.S.

Madras, Oct. 31: The Tamil Nadu Police tonight claimed to have unearthed a gang of racketeers who had managed to smuggle out a 1,200-year-old Nataraja idol from an ancient temple in Sivapuram (ten km. from Kumbakonam) to New York. The 1.4 metre idol of the early Chola period has been sold to an art lover in New York for a sum of \$one million (Rs. 75 lakhs), police said. Facts came to light when police arrested on Thursday Thilagar of Kuttalam (Thanjavur district) who narrated the startling story of how the idol made its way from Kumbakonam to Madras, then to Bombay and finally to New York, passing innumerable hands. The Nataraja idol, police said, was among the six other idols recovered when some local people unearthed them in a place, six miles from Kumbakonam in 1952. The other idols were Sivakamasundari, Somaskandar, Vinayagar Tirugnanam Sambandar and another Amman. The temple trustees at Sivapuram to whom the idols were handed over, finding them mutilated and tarnished, got them back after being polished by some famous sthapathis. Police said that moulds of Nataraja and Somaskanda idols were taken subsequently by some men who had links with Bombay racketeers in idol smuggling and fakes were cast from the idols.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 1, 1921  
All India Sadhus' Conference

The Sadhus' Conference met in Jallianwala Bagh on Saturday. Mahant Lachmendas, Chairman said that the Government action against Shankaracharya had made it incumbent on Sadhus to enter politics. Parmatma had laid it on Sadhus and Mahatmas to protect Dharma and they should not fear the prison. Shankaracharya Bhaktarth and Govindananda were already in jail. True Sadhus should be the upholders of Liberty and Servants of the country. Swami Jagdishwaranand Bharti of Hardwar who presided exhorted the Sadhus to take up national service. He regretted that while Sadhus in previous regimes received respect and Jagirs, they were now suspects as in Simla where they were interrogated by every constable. He dwelt on the duty of King and Government to keep the subjects satisfied and traced the history of repression in India commencing with the Rowlett Bill and referred to the Khilafat question and happenings in Jallianwala Bagh resulting in non-co-operation.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## No time-bound pacts on climate change at G-20

"We have also been able to push the commitment of the developed world to provide \$100 billion every year through from now until 2025. And the commitment of all the countries to mobilise greater levels of capital for the less developed countries and the emerging economies," he said, referring to the previous commitments made at the Paris agreement, which have not yet been fulfilled.

Climate negotiators from the U.S., EU and U.K. had made a number of visits to Delhi over the past few months, pressing for India to update its commitments (NDCs) to include its target of 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030, and to set a date for ending the use of coal in power plants.

However, Mr. Goyal said it would be necessary for developed countries to

achieve much quicker emission cuts so that there is more "carbon space for the developing countries to pursue their development agenda".

"There are no adequate technologies to be able to absorb large amounts of clean energy into the grids and to maintain grid stability. And therefore, we will have to look at more technology before we can identify a year for Net Zero," Mr. Goyal said.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said the failure of the G-20 summit to set a specific date for countries to achieve "Net Zero" carbon emissions had left his hopes "unfulfilled" but "not buried", as the joint communique set the stage for tough negotiations at the COP26 Climate Change summit in Glasgow that begins on Monday.

## Row over caste split of MGNREGA wage

"A decision was then taken to go back to a single muster and payment system," said one of the officials who attended the meeting. State government officials also said they had been informally assured that the directive would be revoked.

However, no such order has been issued as yet, and a statement from the Rural Development Ministry on Saturday only said the system was being streamlined.

"The category wise (SC, ST and Others) wage payment system, as made applicable from this current financial year, has been introduced to accurately reflect on the ground flow of funds to various population groups. Its further streamlining is being undertaken," it said.

**SC payments favoured**  
An analysis of 18 lakh fund transfer order transactions from 10 States between April and September by researchers from LibTech India showed that SC workers in most States were getting paid significantly faster than others.

"Under the MGNREGA law, once the fund transfer order is approved, the Centre should take no longer than seven days to sign the payment order and credit the bank accounts of workers. The Centre transferred money to 46% of SC workers within the mandated seven days, while 80% got paid within 15 days after FTO approval. However, among non-SC/ST workers, only 26% were paid within seven days, and 51% were paid within 15 days," explained Rajendran Narayanan, an assistant professor at Azim Premji University who led the LibTech research.

"It goes against the universality of the MGNREGA scheme," he added.

In Jharkhand, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, the gap was even more stark. In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, money was transferred within the mandated seven days for about half of

SC and ST workers, but only 7% of workers from other communities. In Chhattisgarh, it was ST workers who got paid much faster than others.

On the other hand, the Social Justice Ministry received complaints from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana that it was payments for SC workers which were being delayed, "creating dissensions in village communities".

A senior official in Tamil Nadu also said the Rural Development Department had received multiple complaints from SC representatives that their wages came later than others in June, the first time payment was made after the Central directive was implemented.

The Karnataka government wrote to the Centre last month, noting that the SC account received funds six times during a period when funds were not received at all for the other two categories although wage demand was generated across categories, adding that field level officials were unable to provide any explanation to those left bereft.

**Cohesion at stake**  
Abhay Kumar, a leader of the Gramene Coolie Karmikara Sangathan, a union of 2.5 lakh MGNREGA workers in Karnataka, has seen the devastating impact on the ground.

"For years, we have seen that MGNREGA workers unions help to remove casteism, as women workers work together, and so start to socialise with each other across communities. But after this order, there is a backlash and divisions are coming back," he said, noting that SC workers were getting paid earlier in about 80% cases.

"Earlier, they used the word 'we', saying 'we are fighting for our wages'. Now it has gone back to 'ours versus theirs'. This kind of language signifies a very harmful and dangerous change in our communities," he warned.

While sentencing her to three years in prison, additional sessions judge Sidharth Sharma granted her bail. Her appeal against the conviction was delayed in the Delhi High Court due to the COVID pandemic.

Born in the Vikaspuri area of Delhi, Gupta had property at Bhiwadi in Ajmer where she was living alone at the time of her death.

"Madhuri died in May and I did not know of it for days. Her brother Arun Gupta contacted me in June to inform that her death took place when the rest of the country was battling the second wave of COVID-19. However, she died of diabetes-related complications," Mr. Dahiya said.

These developments have come alongside Capt. Amarinder's dismissal of media reports that he is engaged in back channel talks with the Congress high command.

## Punjab Congress MPs weigh their options

However, none is said to have committed to joining his party or the BJP.

But independent of the Captain's plans, leaders belonging to traditional Congress families are upset with the new order in Punjab, with Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and Pradesh Congress Committee chief Navjot Singh Sidhu being considered "newcomers" who have pipped the old guard. And this includes leaders like Partap Singh Bajwa and Ravneet Singh Bittu.

# Ahead of COP26, Indian site highlights emissions gap

Climate Equity Monitor underlines New Delhi's demand for climate justice

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI

A day ahead of the commencement of the 26th United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) in Glasgow, Scotland, India has officially endorsed a website, made by Indian climate experts, that lists the historical carbon dioxide emissions of developed countries.

The database aims to highlight the disparity between the emissions of developed and developing countries with countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia and those in Western Europe shown as having a net carbon debt while developing countries such as India and China having net credit.

The key fact that the database highlights is that it is only fair that developed countries must commit to steeper targets towards curbing emissions than developing countries.

India is the third largest



Fresh hope: A banner advertising the UN Climate Change Conference in Glasgow on Sunday. ■ REUTERS

emitter of carbon emissions annually but the sixth largest when historical emissions are considered, and when accounting for the size of its population it is among the lowest per capita emitters. This underlines India's demands for climate justice being at the heart of negotiations and its reluctance to agree to a fixed time frame to reach net zero, or when – in balance – it will cease to emit greenhouse gases.

The website is intended to debunk the narrative pro-

vided by many developed countries, and global non-government organisations that focus attention continually on what developing countries must do, constantly demanding greater commitment and action from them," says an accompanying press statement from the Environment Ministry.

"Welcome to the scientific initiative, Climate Equity Monitor, (<https://climateequitymonitor.in>) which went live today. Its focus on equity & climate action from a data

and evidence-based perspective will encourage vigorous discussion on the crucial issue and engage experts from all nations," Mr. Yadav tweeted from his official handle.

The Climate Equity Monitor, as the site is called, is aimed at monitoring the performance of Annex-I Parties under the UNFCCC (developed countries) based on the "foundational principles" of the Climate Convention.

The performance and policies of the Non Annex-I Parties (developing countries) will be provided for comparison, the statement notes.

The website was conceptualised and developed by the Climate Change Group at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Department at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru, with other independent researchers.

## EU, U.S. end dispute over steel, aluminium tariff

They will combat 'dirty' production

REUTERS  
ROME

The United States and the European Union on Sunday ended a dispute over steel and aluminium tariffs and said they would work on a global arrangement to combat "dirty" production and overcapacity in the industry.

"The United States and the European Union have reached a major breakthrough that will address the existential threat of climate change while also protecting American jobs and American industry," U.S. President Joe Biden said.

Speaking at a joint news event with European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen on the sidelines of a G20 leaders' meeting in Rome, Mr. Biden said the deal with the EU immediately removed tariffs on EU steel and aluminium that were imposed by the Donald Trump administration in 2018.

In response, the EU removed tariffs on U.S. products like whiskey, power

boats and Harley-Davidson motorcycles, imposed in retaliation for the steel and aluminium tariffs.

Rather than just a simple return to the status quo from 2018, the United States and the European Union plan to also address the existential threat of climate change and production overcapacity in the steel industry, one of the biggest CO2 emitters in the world.

"The global arrangement will add a powerful new tool in our quest for sustainability, achieving climate neutrality, and ensuring a level playing field for our steel and aluminium industries," the European Commission head said.

The global deal is to be worked out over the next two years to promote "green" steel and aluminium production and will be open to all countries that want to join, including China, whom the EU and the United States blame for excess global steel production capacity and "dirty" production technology.

## IN BRIEF



Third FIR lodged against Kiran Gosavi

PUNE  
The Pune police have lodged a third FIR pertaining to cheating against Kiran Gosavi, the controversial 'independent witness' of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and self-styled 'private investigator' of the Mumbai cruise drug case. Mr. Gosavi, who made news after his selfie with Aryan Khan went viral on social media after the drug bust of October 2, was arrested by the city police on October 28 in connection with a cheating case lodged against him in 2018.

**Series production**  
The design of Project 15B has largely maintained the hull form, propulsion machinery, many platform equipment and major weapons and sensors as the Kolkata class to benefit from series production.

However, these ships feature enhanced stealth features over the earlier class through shaping of hull and use of radar transparent

deck fittings which make them difficult to detect and also feature significant advances in automation and networking.

These ships are propelled by four gas turbines in Combined Gas and Gas (COGAG) configuration and have maximum endurance of 4000 nm at economical speed of 14 knots, the Navy had said earlier.

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Criticising vice-chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) Arun Halder for claiming before the media that Mr. Wankhede had not committed any fraud, Mr. Malik said the NCSC member had failed to maintain the dignity of his post.

## Navy takes delivery of warship

Stealth guided missile destroyer equipped with BrahMos cruise missiles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The first ship of the four Project-15B state-of-the-art stealth guided missile destroyers, Visakhapatnam, being built at the Mazgaon Docks Limited (MDL), was delivered to the Navy last Friday. Delayed by three years, the ship will be commissioned very soon.

The 163-metre-long warship has a full load displacement of 7,400 tonnes and a maximum speed of 30 knots. The overall indigenous content of the project is approximately 75%, the Navy said on Sunday.

The contract for the construction of the ships was signed in January 2011 at a project cost of about ₹29,643.74 crore.

Since the NIA registered the case on October 10 this year, a total of 25 accused persons have been arrested in multiple raids in J&K. "Further probe continues," an NIA spokesman said.

The four ships are named after major cities from all four corners of the country – Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal and Surat, the Navy said.

The keel of Visakhapatnam was laid in October 2013 and the ship was launched in April 2015. These ships are equipped with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles and long



Battle ready: The first of the four Project-15B ships was delivered to the Navy last Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

range Surface-to-Air missiles (SAM).

The ship has several indigenous weapons systems like medium range SAMs, indigenous torpedo tube launchers, anti-submarine indigenous rocket launchers and 76-mm super rapid gun mount, the Navy said.

The induction of the destroyer, despite the COVID challenges, is a tribute to the collaborative efforts of a large number of stakeholders.

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## At Saharanpur rally, Owaisi slams SP, RLD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GHAZIABAD

Targeting the Samajwadi Party and the Rashtriya Lok Dal at a rally in Saharanpur on Sunday, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi said Muslims had been cheated in the name of secularism.

He claimed that at SP leader Akhilesh Yadav's Saharanpur rally, no Muslim leader was given the privilege to sit on the stage. Muslims constituted around 42% of Saharanpur's population. "Jayant Chaudhary has compared me to a film star who could attract crowds but not votes. I want to tell him that I am here to make Muslims a political force." He said certain parties felt they had controlled the "Muslim mind" by "inculcating a fear" that there was no alternative.

## SP, BSP missing during times of hardships in U.P., says Priyanka

She says only Congress fought for people, denies claims of collusion with BJP

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday questioned the Samajwadi Party, the main Opposition party in Uttar Pradesh, for accusing her party of colluding with the BJP and said she would rather "die" than ally with the saffron party. Only the Congress was going to the people and fighting against the BJP Government in Uttar Pradesh, she said.

### Missing in action

Ms. Vadra's comments at a rally in Gorakhpur came after SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had said that the BJP and the Congress were similar.

"Who shut down the sugar mills set up here by the Congress? The SP and BSP



**Daughter of the soil:** Priyanka Gandhi Vadra being presented a model of a plough in Gorakhpur on Sunday. ■ PTI

Governments closed them and today they say the Congress is in collusion with the BJP," Ms. Vadra said. "I want to ask them where are they? Why can't we see them? Why don't they come to you when there is struggle and during

crisis? Only the Congress is coming, only the Congress is fighting," Ms. Vadra said.

She said the BJP Government had over the past seven years destroyed the efforts of the last 70 years. Ms. Vadra accused the BJP

Government of oppressing various sections of society on a daily basis, including Dalits, OBCs, the poor and Brahmins. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was working against the teachings of Guru Gorakhnath, she said. Mr. Adityanath is the head priest of the Gorakhnath Temple.

### Plea to question

Ms. Vadra also appealed to

the people to start questioning the faith they had in their

leader and look at the unfulfilled promises.

"If you don't become aware and don't raise questions, then U.P.

will not be able to come out

of this abyss. Truth is that in

the name of religion and

faith, your sentiments and

faith have been tampered with. Understand this," she said.

## Rashtriya Lok Dal releases election manifesto for U.P.

Party promises 1 crore jobs for youth if voted to power

ANUJ KUMAR  
GHAZIABAD

Raising the bar for the battle for Uttar Pradesh, the Rashtriya Lok Dal on Sunday promised one crore jobs for youth if voted to power. Releasing the election manifesto in Lucknow, party president Jayant Singh said the party had made 22 resolutions for 2022 after extensive consultation with stakeholders.

Underlining that the RLD was the first political party to release a manifesto, he said the party had set the agenda for the Assembly polls by raising "real issues that concern the electorate."

He hoped that the State Government would respond to the party's manifesto and try to better it in the months leading to the election. "Up till now, it seems that Yogi (Chief Minister Adityanath)

is contesting elections against the Pakistan cricket team and if that is not available he would stand against Aurangazeb," Mr. Singh said.

He added that wherever the BJP would ignite the "fire of communalism", the RLD would work to douse the flames with "the spirit of bhaichara (brotherhood)."

The claim of one crore jobs sounds tall but it is only 3-4 % of the total population of the State," said Mr. Singh. He said that if a Government could not provide jobs to even 3% of its population in five years, there was no point in associating with such a system. "The BJP Government had promised 70 lakh jobs to youth in 2017 but according to party advertisements it has been able to provide only four lakh jobs in the last five years," he said.

Mooting a rethink of high fuel taxes, the SBI's top economist said: "We believe that the Government should ensure that the existing tax structure is favourable to this tax paying population that constitutes 8.5% but cross subsidises 91.5% of the population. To that extent, the existing tax structure particularly of indirect taxes on fuel should not be consumption negative."



**Way forward:** Jayant Singh seeks to counter the BJP's communalism with brotherhood. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

dar Vallabhbabai Patel, promised to double the amount given to farmers under the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana. "The farmers would be given ₹6,000 over the Central Government scheme annually on December 23, the birth anniversary of Chaudhary Charan Singh. For farmers working on barren land, this amount will be ₹9,000," Mr. Singh said, adding that the wage rate of the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme would be raised to ₹320, the highest in the country.

crop insurance scheme for farmers.

Tackling the issue of rising electricity bills in the State, the party promised to waive off the outstanding bills of farmers and weavers and cut down the charges by half. Making a brave move in a region known for its deep-seated patriarchy, the party assured 50% quota for women in jobs and promotions.

Tapping on another long-standing issue, the party also promised that it would establish Benches of the Allahabad High Court in western Uttar Pradesh, Bundelkhand, and Purvanchal.

The manifesto talked about the party's commitment towards smaller administrative units but did not clarify on the demand for carving out a separate Harit Pradesh out of western Uttar Pradesh. It is also silent on reservation for Jats, another long-standing demand in the region, in Central Government jobs. "We have focussed on real issues that should provoke other parties to respond," said Ajay Kumar, co-convenor of the manifesto committee.

On bringing out a separate manifesto when talks on seat adjustment with Samajwadi Party were still in progress, Mr. Singh said the RLD was an independent entity, and a common minimum programme would be worked out.

## Informal sector shrank sharply in 2020-21

Workers in the sector continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic's adverse effects, says SBI report

VIKAS DHOTI  
NEW DELHI

Signalling a greater shift towards formalisation of the economy, the share of the large informal sector in overall economic activity dipped sharply in 2020-21 even as informal workers continue to bear the brunt of the pandemic's adverse effects, the SBI said in a research report.

Concluding that the share of the informal economy may have shrunk to no more than 20% of the economic output from about 52% in 2017-18, SBI group chief economic adviser Soumya Kant Ghosh termed this "a positive development" amid the pandemic.

There are wide variations in the formalisation levels in

### Still in the red

An SBI report claims the share of the informal economy in India may have shrunk to 20% of the country's economic output from about 52% in 2017-18



Sector	2017-18	2020-21
Agriculture	97.1	-
Mining	22.5	15-17
Manufacturing	22.7	19-21
Utilities	5.3	0
Construction	74.5	35-40
Services	86.6	-
Transport	47.7	-
Financial services	11.9	-
Real estate	52.8	-
Public admin.	0	0
Total	52.4	15-20

different sectors but the SBI estimated that the informal economy is possibly at a maximum of 15% to 20% of formal GDP in 2020-21.

An IMF policy paper earlier this year estimated that the share of India's informal economy in the Gross Value

Added (GVA) was at 53.9% in 2011-12 and improved only marginally to 52.4% in 2017-18.

As per a National Sample Survey (NSS) of 2014, around 93% of the workforce earned their livelihoods as informal workers.

The informal sector consists of "own-account" or unorganised enterprises employing hired workers, with the highest share of such unorganised activity being in agriculture where holdings are small and fragmented.

### Agriculture takes a hit

The SBI projections suggest that the informal agriculture sector has shrunk from 97.1% of the sector's GVA in 2017-18 to just 70%-75% in 2020-21, driven by the increased penetration of credit through Kisan credit cards. Real estate has also seen a significant dip in informal activity from 52.8% in 2017-18 to 20%-25% last year.

The report estimated that about ₹1.2 lakh crore of cash

usage has been formalised since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Formal agriculture credit flows have grown ₹4.6 lakh crore between 2017-18 and 2020-21, with digital payments for petrol and diesel rising around ₹1 lakh crore in the same period.

Mooting a rethink of high fuel taxes, the SBI's top economist said: "We believe that the Government should ensure that the existing tax structure is favourable to this tax paying population that constitutes 8.5% but cross subsidises 91.5% of the population. To that extent, the existing tax structure particularly of indirect taxes on fuel should not be consumption negative."

## Afghan nationals receive a lifeline

Those on emergency visa may opt for 'self-employment' and not Govt. jobs

VIJAYA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Afghan nationals who came to India on an emergency visa after Taliban takeover of their country, may opt for "self-employment," a senior government official said.

The official said that other than a Government job or any other work in the government sector, Afghans living here could take up any other employment opportunity for sustenance.

After the Taliban toppled the Government in Afghanistan in August and took over the reins, thousands of Afghans made desperate attempts to flee the country. India also evacuated its Em-

bassy staff along with 112 Hindus and Sikhs from Afghanistan on special flight.

As a humanitarian gesture, on August 17, India introduced "e-Emergency X-Miscellaneous visa" for the distressed residents. However, only a few such visas have been processed so far.

A Home Ministry official declined to give the number of Afghans who had applied for the emergency visa or those who have come to India.

In 2017, the Ministry had liberalised the "stay visa/residential permit" to Afghan nationals on a case-to-case basis on the grounds of well-founded fear of perse-

cution on account of race, religion, sex, nationality, ethnic identity, membership of a particular social group or political opinion in Afghanistan." The stay visa initially valid for one year is State-specific and is restricted to the State where they are permitted to stay.

The eligible Afghans staying here on Long Term Visa, those from the six minority communities — Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jains and Buddhists, are allowed to open bank accounts or purchase small units to live or run a small business. The FRRO keeps a record of such employment opportunities.

## Indiraji sensed she would be killed: Rahul

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Recounting Indira Gandhi's assassination and funeral, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has said that just hours before her death she told him not to cry if something happened to her.

In a video released on YouTube on the former Prime Minister's 37th death anniversary, Mr. Gandhi described the day of his grandmother's funeral as the "second most difficult day of my life".

Indira Gandhi was assassinated in 1984 by two of her security guards, who were linked to Khalistani extremists.

"[In] the morning before she died, she told me that don't cry if something happens to me. I did not understand what she meant and two-three hours later she was dead," Mr. Gandhi said.

**COCHIN PORT TRUST**  
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**TENDER NOTICE**  
Tender No. MD/MES/TECH/188/2021  
Dated: 29-10-2021

Electronic Tenders (e-tenders) in Single Stage Two Cover bidding procedure (Technical bid and Price Bid) are invited by the Deptt. of Environment, Cochin Port Trust for "Dredge cleaning and filled repair of Cochin Port Trust's Ghat Hopper Dredger Nehru Shatabdi" due on 19-11-2021. For more details, please visit our website [www.cochinport.gov.in](http://www.cochinport.gov.in); [www.eprocure.gov.in/cppp](http://eprocure.gov.in/cppp); e-tender portal: [www.tenderwizard.com/CPP/](http://tenderwizard.com/CPP/); Sd/- Deputy Conservator, Cochin Port Trust

Regional Registration Office concerned on gratis basis until further orders. They will not be granted exit or issuance leave India notice by FRRO/FRO concerned without the prior approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs."

Another official said that after the new category of visa was announced, around 60,000 applications were received. "The applications are vetted by the security agencies before they are processed," said the official.

In 2017, the Ministry had liberalised the "stay visa/residential permit" to Afghan nationals on a case-to-case basis on the grounds of well-founded fear of perse-

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The eligible Afghans staying here on Long Term Visa, those from the six minority communities — Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jains and Buddhists, are allowed to open bank accounts or purchase small units to live or run a small business. The FRRO keeps a record of such employment opportunities.

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cuption on account of race, religion, sex, nationality, ethnic identity, membership of a particular social group or political opinion in Afghanistan." The stay visa initially valid for one year is State-specific and is restricted to the State where they are permitted to stay.

The eligible Afghans staying



# Taliban leader makes rare appearance

Belying rumours of his death, Akhundzada visits a madrassa, prays for fighters

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KABUL

Taliban supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada addressed supporters in the southern city of Kandahar, officials announced on Sunday, his first public appearance since taking control of the group in 2016.

Akhundzada has been the spiritual chief of the Islamist movement since 2016 but has remained a reclusive figure, even after the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan.

His low-profile fed speculation about his role in the new Taliban government, formed after the group took control of Kabul in mid-August – and even rumours of his death.

On Saturday, he visited the Darul Uloom Hakimah



Haibatullah Akhundzada

years," Akhundzada said, in the recording. "My intention here is to pray for you and you pray for me".

In the 10-minute recording, he prays for the Taliban martyrs, wounded fighters and the success of officials involved in the "big test" of rebuilding what they call the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

"Let's pray that we come out of this big test successfully. May Allah help us stay strong," he said.

There was tight security at the event and no photographs or video have emerged.

Akhundzada is referred to as "Amirul Momineen", commander of the faithful, the rank conferred on the late Taliban founder Mullah

Omar by his supporters.

Akhundzada is thought to have been selected to serve more as a spiritual figurehead than a military commander, but his unusually public statements will fuel speculation that he now plans to take a more central role in leading the new government.

Akhundzada rose from low-profile religious figure to leader of the Taliban in a swift transition of power after a 2016 U.S. drone strike killed his predecessor, Mullah Akhtar Mansour.

After being appointed leader, he secured the backing of al-Qaeda chief Ayman al-Zawahiri, who showered the cleric with praise – calling him "the emir of the faithful".

## After deal with Pak. Govt., TLP ends protest march

This comes after two weeks of clashes

REUTERS

KARACHI

A hardline Pakistani Islamist group called off a protest march to Islamabad on Sunday after reaching a deal with the government, ending two weeks of clashes that left at least seven policemen dead and scores injured on both sides.

The Tehrik-e-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) began the march calling for the release of jailed leader Saad Rizvi and the expulsion of France's Ambassador over publication caricatures depicting the Prophet Mohammad in a French satirical magazine.

"An agreement for peace and betterment has been reached," Foreign Minister

Shah Mehmood Qureshi, who represented the government in negotiations with the TLP, told a news conference.

Mufti Muneeb ur-Rehman, the main TLP negotiator, said details would emerge at a later stage, "but you will see the practical manifestations shortly".

The National Security Committee had vowed on Friday to crack down hard on TLP if violent protests continued.

Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said Rizvi could not be released without due judicial process being followed, and that the protesters should return home.

## Blinken meets Wang, raises rights concerns

He also noted areas of common interests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Sunday in Rome and raised concerns over human rights, in only their second face-to-face session as tensions between the two powers run high.

Mr. Blinken expressed opposition to actions by China "that run counter to our values and interests... including actions related to human rights, Xinjiang, Tibet, Hong Kong, the East and South China Seas, and Taiwan," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement.

Mr. Blinken also noted

areas where he said the U.S. and China's interests intersect and they can work together, including the DPRK, Burma, Iran, Afghanistan, and the climate crisis."

The meeting in Rome, where both diplomats were attending the G20 summit, is the first between Mr. Blinken and Mr. Wang since a stormy session in Alaska in March in which the Chinese delegation berated the American side as TV cameras rolled. Tensions are high between the world's two biggest economies on a plethora of fronts, including trade, human rights, Taiwan and the COVID-19 pandemic.

## UN urges Sudan Army to reverse coup

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO

The UN Secretary General urged Sudan's coup leaders on Sunday to reverse their takeover of the country, a day after tens of thousands protested against last week's coup.

Antonio Guterres said the generals should "take heed" of Saturday's protests. "Time to go back to the legitimate constitutional arrangements," he said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, the UN envoy for Sudan, Volker Perthes, said that he met on Sunday with Abdalla Hamdok, the deposed Prime Minister to discuss the way forward.

## UAE urges citizens to leave Lebanon 'as soon as possible'

Move comes a day after it recalled diplomats from Beirut

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

DUBAI

The UAE on Sunday called on its citizens in Lebanon to immediately return home, a day after recalling its diplomats from Beirut over a Lebanese Minister's remarks on the Yemen war.

"In light of current events... the Foreign Ministry calls on all its citizens in Lebanon to return to the UAE as soon as possible," it said in a statement.

"The Ministry has taken all necessary measures to facilitate the return of its citizens," it added.

In an interview recorded

in August and aired this week, Lebanese Information Minister George Kordahi said Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen were "defending themselves... against an external aggression", sparking a diplomatic row.

A Saudi-led military coalition that has included the UAE intervened to prop up the Yemeni government in 2015, after Houthi rebels seized the capital Sanaa in 2014.

Saudi Arabia on Friday gave Lebanon's Ambassador 48 hours to leave the country, recalled its envoy from Beirut and suspended all im-

ports from Lebanon. Bahrain and Kuwait quickly followed suit with similar measures, and the UAE on Saturday recalled its diplomats from Beirut in "solidarity" with Riyadh.

**Insulting' remarks**  
The Saudi Foreign Ministry said its moves were taken after the "insulting" remarks on the Yemen war, but also due to the influence of Lebanon's Iran-backed Shia movement Hezbollah.

The UAE's statement came shortly after Mr. Kordahi said that resigning was "out of the question".

## Japan's ruling coalition to maintain a majority

It is projected to win at least 233 seats

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's governing coalition is expected to keep a majority in parliamentary election on Sunday but will lose some seats in a setback for his weeks-old government grappling with a coronavirus-battered economy and regional security challenges, according to exit polls.

Mr. Kishida's Liberal Democratic Party and its junior coalition partner Komeito together were expected to win between 239 to 288 seats in the 465-member lower house, the more powerful of Japan's two-chamber Diet, public broadcaster NHK's exit poll showed.

The LDP alone was expected to win 212-253 seats, with Komeito gaining 27-35 seats, according to the projections. Their combined seats will exceed a parliamentary majority of 233 – but a loss from 305 seats previously.

U.K. disputes French claims over fishing row

ROME

The U.K. government on Sunday contradicted French claims that both sides had agreed to defuse a row over post-Brexit fishing rights, insisting it was up to Paris to back down. France is incensed that Britain and the Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey have not issued some French boats licences to fish in their waters since Brexit took full effect at the start of 2021. AFP



Fumio Kishida

## U.S. bomber flies over West Asia

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI

The U.S. Air Force said on Sunday it flew a B-1B strategic bomber over key maritime chokepoints in West Asia with allies, including Israel, amid ongoing tensions with Iran as its nuclear deal with world powers remains in tatters.

The B-1B Lancer bomber flew on Saturday over the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of all oil traded passes. It also flew over the Red Sea, its narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait and Egypt's Suez Canal.

Fighter jets from Bahrain, Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia flew alongside the bomber.

The Strait of Hormuz has been the scene of attacks on shipping blamed on Iran in recent years.

The Red Sea has seen similar assaults. Iran has denied being involved in the attacks, though it has promised to take revenge on Israel for attacks targeting its nuclear programme.

# China grapples with challenges of slowing economy, outbreaks

Amid these concerns, coupled with upcoming party summit, Xi skips G20, COP26

ANANTH KRISHNAN

HONG KONG

China's government is grappling with twin challenges of weaker-than-expected economic growth and fresh COVID-19 outbreaks, just as the country's leadership prepares for a key Communist Party conclave next week.

After months of a strong recovery, China's factory activity in October slowed, the second straight monthly contraction, as the economy reels from a power crisis, the fallout from troubles plaguing a highly leveraged real sector, and increasing costs of raw materials.

Meanwhile, the country, which has followed a stringent "zero Covid" strategy and continued to maintain strict curbs on international travel while the rest of the world opens up, is now reeling from the biggest outbreak in months. Close to 400 cases have been reported in the last two weeks – a small number compared with the rest of the world, but the spread of the outbreak in multiple provinces has led to stringent lockdowns and mass testing to stamp out the current outbreak, the economic costs of China's "zero-COVID" approach are adding to economic pressures.

The plenum will serve as a platform for Mr. Xi, who scrapped the previously in place ten-year term limit, to ensure support before the congress and ensure the appointment of his acolytes.

Many senior officials, including second-ranked Premier Li Keqiang, are expected to retire next year.

The holding of the plenum next week, coupled with likely concerns over COVID-19, prompted Mr. Xi to skip the G20 in Rome and the COP-26 climate summit in the United Kingdom, which is being attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, U.S. President Joe Biden and other world leaders.

Mr. Xi has not left China since a visit to Myanmar in mid-January 2020, a few days before he ordered the lockdown in Wuhan where the COVID-19 outbreak began.

While the Communist Party will bank on its now tried-and-tested approach of strin-



**Worrying signs:** Steam billowing out of the cooling towers of a coal-fired power station in Nanjing, in this file photo • AP

gate crisis as short-term challenges and the need to ensure "common prosperity" as a longer term challenge, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

**'Common prosperity'**

Mr. Xi faces a balancing act of pressing ahead with his avowed plans to restructure the Chinese economy through what he is calling a push for "common prosperity", including moves to curb the growing sway of major private sector firms especially in the tech sector and to reduce debt in the real estate sector. Among the measures his administration has taken in the past year includes anti-monopoly investigations into Alibaba, curbs on the highly lucrative private education sector, and warnings to real estate firms such as the Evergrande group that they cannot expect bailouts even as they face defaults.

The moves have wiped out close to \$1 trillion in market value of major Chinese private sector firms.

At the same time, Mr. Xi needs to keep the economy ticking ahead of next year's congress and to control the COVID-19 spread, which the Party's official media in the past year has trumpeted as a major triumph of the China model compared to the West. The Party media has also been hitting out at calls for more open investigations into COVID-19's origins and has even suggested the coronavirus outbreak came from the U.S., all to protect the Party's image and push back against criticism from overseas.

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## ASK US

ARATI KRISHNAN

Several readers seek to understand avenues for investments early in their careers. Please refer <https://bit.ly/InvestmentBeginner> or scan the QR code accompanying this article.

**Q. I am 27 and I work in an MNC. I earn ₹42,000 a month. Both my parents are retired and dependent on my income. I spend about ₹10,000-₹15,000 a month. I have previously tried saving via FDs and RDs. Could you suggest an investment avenue that can earn returns such that my parents get a monthly income of ₹10,000-₹15,000?**

AISHWARYA KUMAR

**A.** It will take a few years to build a corpus that is large enough to yield a monthly income of ₹15,000 for your parents. Two safe options to consider for setting up the pension are the Post Office Senior Citizens Savings Scheme (SCSS) and LIC's Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana. In the latter, you can deposit up to ₹15 lakh in the name of each of your parents, if they are above 60, to yield a return of 7.4% per annum. Currently, if you deposit ₹15 lakh, your parents will get a monthly pension of ₹9,250 from this scheme for 10 years. The SCSS, also available to seniors, offers 7.4% for 5 years, a tenure that can be extended. This scheme requires you to open an SCSS account under your parent's name with an authorised bank or post office, which then credits quarterly interest into their savings accounts. Both these options score high on safety on account of central government backing. You can start making deposits in these avenues so that the pension amount eventually reaches your target.

Besides, you can consider debt mutual funds that invest in highly-rated instruments. Presently short-duration debt funds, floating-rate debt funds and funds that invest in PSU bonds and State

Development Loans are good options that can earn you a market-linked return. You can either park a lump sum in such funds or invest regularly through systematic investment plans in their growth plans to accumulate a sufficient corpus. At the end of 3 years (for tax efficiency) you can set up a Systematic Withdrawal Plan (SWP) from these funds that can double up as regular income for your parents. Assuming an annual return of about 6.5%, an investment of about ₹20.5 lakh will be needed to set up a ₹15,000 per month SWP for 20 years.

**Q. I am a director at an NBFC. I am 64. Three years ago, I bought a flat on a home loan of ₹25 lakh and am paying EMI of about ₹20,000. My salary is ₹40,000 and I don't have other planned investments. At this age, I am spending half of my earning on EMI. Given my pay levels, the income tax benefits I get on interest are limited. Is it advisable to quickly prepay the home loan or to invest in some other avenue?**

VIJAYAKUMAR K

**A.** Though the effective interest rate on a home loan may be quite low if you took it in recent years, it appears prudent in your case to quickly prepay the home loan if you have a surplus, before stepping up investments. Many folks make the argument that as long as your investments can earn higher returns than the interest cost (after tax breaks) that you incur on a home loan, it makes sense to invest your surpluses instead of prepaying the loan. However, there are qualitative considerations that lead us to recommend prepaying the loan. One, given your age (64) it may be difficult to predict how long you may like to sustain your current career or work profile in future.

Health conditions cropping up for yourself or family members, may, for instance, intervene to require you to scale down your work commitments. Having a fixed EMI hanging over your head for the next 10-15 years would rob you of the flexibility to take such decisions, as you may be forced to keep up your income levels to meet the loan repayment obligation. Two, while the interest you incur on your home loan is a certain outgo, there's a lot of uncertainty attached to the returns you may end up earning on investments you make now, especially if you choose to make investments in mutual funds or other market-linked avenues. Prepaying a home loan would yield you definite savings of ₹20,000 a month. Three, prepaying the home loan and clearing the mortgage would enhance your family's security and endow you with more peace of mind. It may also be prudent to take a term-life policy for the outstanding loan amount, if you are unable to prepay it in full.

**Q. I am a 30-year-old State government employee. I earn ₹5 lakh a year. Kindly suggest the best investment avenues for getting good returns.**

VAMSHI REDDY

**A.** You must already be contributing to a PF account through your employer. Before adding on other investments, it would be good to buy a term life insurance policy if you have dependents, and health insurance to cover you against sudden medical expenses in case you switch jobs. It is also essential to have an emergency fund of up to 12 months' expenses parked in an FD or other safe avenues.

Both the Public Provident Fund and SIPs in equity funds are good options for starting investments. However, before initiating such investments, it would help to map out your financial goals and the time horizons in which you would like to achieve them.

Do read our earlier article (refer URL / scan QR code alongside) to know more.



Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to [moneywise@thehindu.co.in](mailto:moneywise@thehindu.co.in). Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

# It's time to pay attention to ETFs

Exchange traded funds are starting to offer new investment opportunities

BHAVANA ACHARYA

In these times, there's one investment idea that is steadily gaining attention. That's passive investing, where one invests in an index – such as the Sensex or the Nifty 50 – to earn the same return that the index does. Within passive investing, Exchange Traded Funds or ETFs are gaining so smartly so that it's perfectly possible to build a good, diversified portfolio with just ETFs.

But ETFs can be tricky investments if you don't know how they are built or the factors to look out for. So, let's dig in.

#### Wide variety

Why is it important to know about ETFs in the first place? For one, active mutual funds (MFs), i.e. those that aim to beat the market, are finding it increasingly hard to sustain higher returns, and several have

been lagging benchmarks. Investing in indices lowers the impact of the fund's underperformance on returns, and removes the need to keep note of performance to weed out poor funds and reinvest in good ones. Second, the ETF space is evolving. ETFs are now being built on indices with strategies, sector opportunities, and behaviour that are distinct from the plain-vanilla Nifty 50 or the Sensex or even mainstream MFs.

Low volatility, alpha, value-based, quality-based, private banks, target-maturity debt indices are some examples of differentiated strategies. New ETFs lined up for introduction include indices built on growth sectors, electric vehicles, auto, manufacturing and new-age digital, to name a few. A well-rounded portfolio needs a mix of strategies and styles to capture different opportunities, to manage both downside con-

tainment and participation in rallies. Differentiated indices make great portfolio additions as they offer a return perspective that can complement your core mutual fund portfolio.

Three, some of these indices do not have an index MF variant. In many cases, even where there are index funds, they invest in the ETF itself and not directly in the index. That introduces an additional layer of expense for you; avoidable if you hold the ETF itself. There are more than 90 ETFs already available, spanning a range of indices in equity and debt, as well as global indices. Silver ETFs are on their way, too!

#### What they are

ETFs are introduced by asset management companies (AMCs). They pick the index to track and unveil a new fund offer (NFO) for the ETF. The amount collected in the offer is invested in the constituents of the index (or commodity) in the correct weights. The AMC breaks the ETF into units. Investors in the initial ETF launch will receive units. So far in the

story, this is what an index MF also does.

From here, ETFs differ. The units are listed on stock exchanges, and subsequent investment or selling happens in these units only on the exchange. In other words, post an ETF's introduction, you buy or sell ETFs like you'd buy or sell a share. You would need a demat account to invest in ETFs. Trading activity in these funds does not change their asset size.

#### Market price

That brings up the second aspect – market price. You know the net asset value (NAV) in an MF, which is the asset size divided by the number of units in the fund. An ETF also has an NAV as it still is a pooled investment broken down into units.

But the NAV is not the price at which you invest in an ETF – remember, you are buying or selling units on the stock exchange only and not with the AMC itself. So, you'll be paying the market-determined price when investing in the ETF. The main factor that influences this price is the underlying index

movement. In an ideal world, the market price will exactly track the index (less expenses, of course) and the underlying ETF NAV. But unfortunately, that's not the reality. An ETF's market price is additionally influenced by the demand for the ETF's units and their supply.

To explain, if an ETF sees more buyers on the exchange and not enough sellers, its price moves up and vice versa. This can render the market price out

**More than 90 ETFs are available, spanning a range of indices in equity and debt, as well as global indices**

of sync with the underlying index movement and the NAV – where the ETF will return much higher than the index or lower.

AMCs that manage their ETFs well will see to it that such supply-driven fluctuations are addressed by creating more units (by inviting large investors to invest directly in the ETF and increase its size and units) or managing market activity to ensure that price aberrations are corrected.

A key point to check in an ETF is how closely it tracks the index it is built on – i.e., how much the ETF's returns deviate from the index's returns, known as tracking error. Lower the error, better the ETF.

A large differential between the ETF NAV and its market price is a red flag and an indicator of potentially higher tracking error. Of course, 100% accuracy is not possible due to ETF costs. An ETF's expense ratio can thus make a difference.

#### Keep an eye out

The next factor is trading volumes. Healthy volumes of at least a few crore rupees or several lakhs are good. This means it is easy for you to invest or sell any amount, and without such activity impacting the market price. Tracking errors also tend to be lower if volumes are healthy, though it is not a rule.

In a nutshell, ETFs are starting to offer new opportunities that can be good diversifiers in your portfolio. Keep note of this investment option!

(The author is Co-founder, PrimeInvestor.in)

#### COVER NOTE: DEALING WITH NEW ENTITY

## Continuity amidst change

Mergers and acquisitions can happen in the insurance sector too. So, be prepared

K. NITYA KALYANI

In a previous instalment of Cover Note we saw how group policies can be at discontinuity risk and how you can ensure your coverage is continuous.

The group policies in question were those offered by commercial organisations such as banks for their savings bank account/ credit card customers, or by institutions such as social clubs for their members.

Let us now look at another 'threat' to the continuity of your coverage; change of ownership, or mergers / acquisitions of insurers.

After the liberalisation process in the insurance sector in India started around the turn of the century, we have seen companies changing hands and being merged.

The bottom line here is that you, as a customer, have protection written into the regulation. If your insurance company has a new owner tomorrow, or is merged into another entity, it will be after due diligence and process set out under the law.

**Honouring contract**  
This ensures that the legal contract between you and

your insurer will be honoured till its end. This is the current policy period/year or the payment of the last benefits/ claims (like disability benefits for instance) under general insurance policies. Under life policies, the policy period will stretch into the future until maturity of the policy or the death of the insured person.

Just a word of caution: group life policies are annual in nature. In case of annuity, it will be till the payment of the last annuity / return of purchase price as per the terms of the contract. All this points to a long-term view by the acquirer.

The new company that owns your insurer has to honour all the obligations under the contract and you can establish your rights with them.

Your responsibility is to continue to maintain your policies as valid by being on time with your premiums and so on.

When it comes to renewal, policyholders have the right to lifelong renewal of health insurance and this is



The way it works in real life is it strikes us that renewal is due only when we don't get a reminder or phone call. Or, worse, overdue. The worst, of course, is when we try to call about a claim and are faced with nothingness!

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

binding on your new insurer too. Premium rate increases and underwriting decisions on additional or enhanced coverage rests with the new insurer.

What can you do in an environment when merger news of large insurance companies is in the air?

Keep in touch with your intermediary.

Build and strengthen your relationship with the contact person, his boss the development officer/ agency manager

er / team leader as they may be designated. Visit the branch manager or equivalent and make an acquaintance. Find out the reporting office of that branch, get familiar with their communication / grievance process.

Change of address, queries about renewal or any change in premium rate and so on should be put in writing and you should keep on file both your queries and responses, be they in hard copy or digital.

Many a time, the problem we face is that the agent has retired or is otherwise unresponsive. If, as described above, we maintain a relationship, we will learn about these developments really early and can continue the business relationship without missing a beat.

But the way it works in everyday life is that we realise only when we don't get a renewal reminder or phone call and renewal is due. Or, worse still, overdue. The worst, of course, is when we try to call about a claim and come face to face with nothingness! Trust me it has happened to me too.

Build and strengthen your relationship with the contact person, his boss the development officer/ agency manager

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

#### TECH TRAIL: PRECIOUS METALS

## Gold, silver regain sheen

B.KRISHNAKUMAR

After a sharp fall in September, precious metals regained a bit of their lost sheen in October. The weakness in the U.S. dollar along with concerns pertaining to rising inflation played a key role in helping precious metals close on a positive note at the end of October.

Comex gold gained 1.5% to settle at \$1,783.9 an ounce at the end of October. Comex silver, too, closed on a strong note. The white metal gained 8.6% to close at \$23.95 an ounce.

In the domestic market, MCX gold futures gained 2.4% to close at ₹47,635 per 10 gm. MCX silver futures closed on a firm note, gaining 8.3% to settle at ₹64,534 a kg.

After the sharp fall September, Comex gold price recovered marginally in October. This, however, has not altered the overall weak outlook for the yellow metal. Unless the price moves above ₹1,840, there is a possibility of Comex gold sliding to the ₹1,660-1,670 range.

A fall below ₹1,750 would strengthen the case for a slide to the ₹1,660-1,670 range. In essence, either a move above ₹1,840 or a fall below ₹1,750 would set the tone for the next move in Comex gold.

As anticipated last month, there was a recovery in the price of Comex silver. The recovery however did not help the price cross the key resistance level at \$25. A move past \$25 would be a sign of strength and could help the white metal move to the next target of \$26.75-27.50.

A fall below \$22.8 would be a sign of weakness and could push the silver price to lower levels of \$20.5-21. The short-term trend in Comex sil-



ver hedges on the breakout above ₹25 or a fall below ₹22.90.

The short-term outlook for MCX gold is positive and the price could head to the immediate target of ₹50,500-51,000. A move past ₹48,300 would confirm the positive outlook. This would be under threat if the price slides below ₹46,200. As long as this level is not breached, there would be a strong case for a rise to ₹50,500.

# Indian batters fail to fire again, surrender meekly to New Zealand

Sodhi gives himself a birthday present with a Man-of-the-Match performance; Boult scalps three; chasing a target of 111, Kiwis romp home with 33 balls to spare



Pegged back: Pant, who struggled to get going, is castled by Milne. ■ REUTERS

## ICC T20 WC

AMOL KARHADKAR  
DUBAI

India went from bad to worse as another insipid batting display saw it suffer a humiliating defeat against New Zealand in its ICC T20 World Cup match at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday.

After the Men in Blue finished with a sub-par total – 110 for seven – the Black Caps eased to an eight-wicket win with 33 balls to spare.

The second loss in as many games, after the 10-wicket mauling by Pakistan the previous Sunday, put the team's chances of making it to the semifinal in jeopardy.

**Accurate**  
While the Kiwi bowlers were extremely accurate, the Indian batters were all at sea, both against the three-pronged pace attack of Trent Boult, Tim Southee and Adam Milne and the spin duo of left-arm Mitchell Santner and leggie Ish Sodhi, celebrating his 29th birthday.

Even after tweaking the batting order – Ishan Kishan, who replaced the injured Su-

## Next assignment

**New Zealand:** Nov. 3 vs Scotland, Dubai, 3:30 p.m. IST  
**India:** Nov. 3 vs Afghanistan, Abu Dhabi, 7:30 p.m. IST

ryakumar Yadav (back spasm), opened with K.L. Rahul – which pushed Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli to No. 3 and 4, India couldn't get going after being asked to bat. Failing to pierce the gaps, the top-order batters attempted to clear the ropes and found the fielders in the deep almost every time.

### Powerless play

It was 35 for two in the PowerPlay and the nine-over passage in the middle saw the team add just 38 for the loss of three wickets.

That the Indians couldn't score a boundary for 71 balls – from the sixth over till the 17th – reflected the dominance of the Kiwi bowlers. Kohli's men reached the three-figure mark, thanks to Ravindra Jadeja's cameo.

New Zealand and opener Daryl Mitchell, sensing the opportunity to improve the Net Run Rate, went after the Indian bowlers. Mitchell's ag-

## SCOREBOARD

INDIA

K.L. Rahul c Mitchell b Southee 18 (16b, 3x4), Ishan Kishan c Mitchell b Boult 4 (8b, 1x4), Rohit Sharma c Guttill b Sodhi 14 (14b, 1x4, 1x6), Virat Kohli c Boult b Sodhi 9 (7b), Rishabh Pant c Milne 12 (19b), Hardik Pandya c Guttill b Boult 23 (24b, 1x4), Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 26 (19b, 2x4, 1x6), Shardul Thakur c Guttill b Boult 0 (3b), Mohammed Shami (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (lb-2, w-2); 4; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 110.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-11 (Ishan, 2.5 overs), 2-35 (Rahul, 5.5), 3-40 (Rohit, 7.4), 4-48 (Kohli, 10.1), 5-70 (Pant, 14.3), 6-94 (Hardik, 18.1), 7-94 (Shardul, 18.4).

### NEW ZEALAND BOWLING

gressive knock and some strange captaincy by Kohli – there was no effort to pressure the batters into making mistakes – meant that the chasing team was in cruise control.

While Jasprit Bumrah was the lone wicket-taker, picking up both scalps, Hardik Pandya bowled a couple of overs. Kane Williamson and Devon Conway steered the Kiwis home, the captain's ag-

Boult 4-0-20-3, Southee 4-0-26-1, Santner 4-0-15-0, Milne 4-0-30-1, Sodhi 4-0-17-2.

### NEW ZEALAND

Martin Guptill c Shardul b Bumrah 20 (17b, 3x4), Daryl Mitchell c Rahul b Bumrah 49 (35b, 4x4, 3x6), Kane Williamson (not out) 33 (31b, 3x4), Devon Conway (not out) 2 (4b); Extras (lb-1, w-6); 7; Total (for two wkts. in 14.3 overs): 111.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-24 (Guptill, 3.4), 2-96 (Mitchell, 12.4).

### INDIA BOWLING

Varun 4-0-23-0, Bumrah 4-0-19-2, Jadeja 2-0-23-0, Shami 1-0-11-0, Shardul 1.3-0-17-0, Hardik 2-0-17-0.

Toss: NZ; MoM: Sodhi.

New Zealand won by eight wickets with 33 balls to spare.

nudge to square-leg off Shardul Thakur, who replaced Bhuvneshwar Kumar, ending India's agony.

### Innings scan

INDIA	NEW ZEALAND
54	Dots 34
8	Fours 10
2	Sixes 3
35/2	PP 44/1
5.50	RR 7.65



Spin to win: Sodhi tormented the Indians with a superb spell. ■ AP

## 'Tried to give ourselves some cushion'

Dew factor forced the batters to go for extra runs: Bumrah

AMOL KARHADKAR  
DUBAI

Jasprit Bumrah tried his best to defend a lacklustre display by the Indian batters in the Super 12 game against New Zealand on Sunday.

"As a batting unit, we tried to give ourselves some cushion as we knew that the dew would be a massive factor and batting would be easier in the second innings. We wanted to get extra runs as it would give us the advantage. That's why we played a lot of attacking shots but they didn't come off today," said Bumrah.

With the next match, against Afghanistan, just three nights away, Bumrah conceded that the players needed to be at their best.

"As a sportsman, you face these things. Some days will be good and some bad. What I try to do is not get very high when good days happen and not very low when bad days happen," Bumrah said.

"Try to stay in the moment, analyse what went wrong and what went well, and try to move forward... that's the only way," added the speedster.

Ish Sodhi, one of the ar-



Up, up and not away! Kohli's attempt to break the shackles led to his downfall as he holed out in the deep. ■ GETTY IMAGES

To have a day like that and beat a top-quality side like India is a cool way to spend your birthday

We knew batting would be easier in the second innings and wanted to score extra runs

BUMRAH

chitects of New Zealand's win, admitted that he couldn't have celebrated his 29th birthday better.

"A cool way to spend your birthday. You spend so

much time away from friends and family most of the year. So I guess to have a day like that and beat a top-quality side like India is pretty cool," Sodhi said.

Hamid (3/9) tormented the Namibia middle-order, picking up the wickets of captain Gerhard Erasmus (12), top-scorer David Wiese (26) and J.J. Smit (0).

The Afghans then restricted Namibia to 98 for nine for their second win in the tournament.

Chasing 161, Namibia lost three wickets inside the PowerPlay and could never recover from there. Naveen-ul-Haq (3/26) removed Craig Williams (1) and Michael van Lingen (11) early in a spell of 2/2 and then added another wicket later on.

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## TV PICKS

**Men's T20 World Cup:** Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**Men's Boxing World Championships:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m.  
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

## IN BRIEF



Aguero taken to hospital with chest pain

MADRID  
Sergio Aguero was taken to hospital after suffering breathing problems during Barcelona's 1-1 draw with Alaves on Saturday. Aguero, 33, was forced off in the 41st minute at Camp Nou after he went down clutching his chest. It was not clear what caused the problem. He received treatment on the ground and a stretcher was brought out. AFP

**Injured Pique to miss Barcelona's visit to Kiev**

BARCELONA  
Barcelona's Gerard Pique will miss Tuesday's Champions League clash against Dynamo Kiev with a calf injury, the club said on Sunday. "Tests confirmed that Gerard Pique has a right calf strain and will be out for the foreseeable future," the club said. AFP



Beal takes Wizards to win over Celtics

LOS ANGELES  
Bradley Beal scored a team-high 36 points and Kyle Kuzma grabbed a career-high 17 rebounds as Washington Wizards continued its hot start to the NBA season, beating Boston Celtics 115-112 in double overtime. **The results:** Wizards 115 bt Boston 112 (OT); Pistons 110 bt Magic 103; Pelicans 117 bt Knicks 123; Pacers 94 lost to Raptors 97; 76ers 122 bt Hawks 94; Bulls 107 bt Jazz 99; Grizzlies 103 lost to Heat 129; Bucks 93 lost to Spurs 102; Warriors 103 bt Thunder 82; Timberwolves 91 lost to Nuggets 93; Suns 101 bt Cavaliers 92. AFP



Durant fined \$25,000 for tossing ball into stands

LOS ANGELES  
The NBA has slapped Brooklyn Nets star Kevin Durant with a \$25,000 fine for tossing the ball into the stands during the match against Indiana Pacers on Friday. Durant was fouled with 4:40s left in the third quarter and instead of handing the ball to the referee he launched it into the stands. AFP

**Bopanna loses in doubles semifinals**

ST. PETERSBURG (RUSSIA)  
Rohan Bopanna and Denis Shapovalov lost 6-4, 2-6, 10-4 to fourth seeds Andre Golubev and Hugo Nys in the doubles semifinals of the \$92,370 ATP tournament.

**RSPB wins title**

KOLKATA  
Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) defeated host Sports Authority of India (SAI) 3-0 in the final to win the title in the inaugural National women's inter-department hockey championship here on Sunday. **The results:** Final: RSPB 3 (Karishma Yadav, Amrinder Kaur, Birajini Ekka) bt SAI 0; **Third-place match:** Sashatra Seema Bal 5 (Preeti 2, Manisha, Rajni Bala, Longjam Bijeta Devi) bt Central Reserve Police Force 1 (Pinki Ekka).



Ex-Australia Test spinner Philpott passes away

MELBOURNE  
Former Australia Test cricketer Peter Philpott has passed away at the age of 86 after a long battle with illness. The leg-spinning all-rounder played eight Tests in the 1960s, taking 26 wickets at 38.46. ANI

# India pips Kyrgyz Republic in shootout, finishes second

Dheeraj Singh's heroics leads to heart-break for the opponents; India needs to wait to qualify for its maiden Asian Cup

## U-23 FOOTBALL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
FUJAIRAH (UAE)

Indian football team secured its best ever finish in the AFC U-23 Asian Cup Qualifiers by claiming the second spot in Group E as goalkeeper Dheeraj Singh made some spectacular saves to help the side win the shootout against Kyrgyz Republic 4-2 after regulation time ended goalless score in all the matches (2).

To decide who takes the second and third spots, a penalty shootout was held, which India won 4-2.

Earlier, UAE beat Oman 2-0 to end as the topper of Group E.

Top teams from each Group qualify directly for next year's continental showpiece along with the best four second-placed teams across all Groups.

India now needs to wait till the conclusion of other



**The moment and the man:** The Indian players are ecstatic after prevailing over Kyrgyz Republic, thanks to goalkeeper Dheeraj's crucial saves. ■ COURTESY AIFF

Group matches to know if it can qualify for its maiden AFC U-23 Asian Cup.

Earlier in the match, Apia tried to hurl the first attack in as early as the fifth minute but his long-range could not pose any threat to the Kyrgyz defence. Two mi-

nutes later, Rahul, from the left flank, outran Kumarbait Uulu with sheer pace, but eventually Adilet Kanybekov neutralised his effort.

The central Asian outfit sprung into life three minutes later when forward Alykulov Maksat was denied

by Narendar inside the 18-yard-box, five minutes later, the youngster cancelled Tapayev Temirbolot's right-footed curler.

Rahim shielded off Artukov Daniil before rolling it to an onrushing Vikram whose left-footed effort flew away

from the target in the 21st minute.

The forward played another pivotal role a minute later as he passed the ball to Amarjit, but the Manipuri midfielder skied his effort after four minutes.

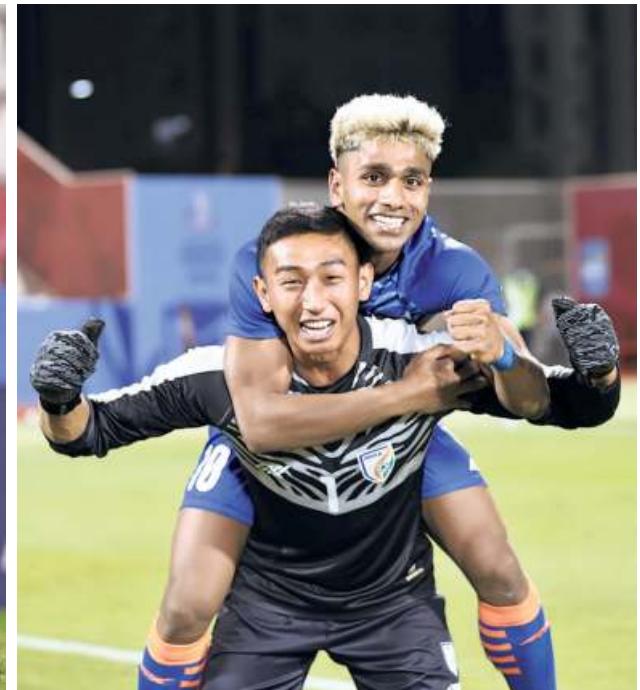
Borubaev Gulzhigit beat

the offside trap to outpace Asish Rai from the left, but Dheeraj came up with a spectacular save after the half-hour mark to keep the score unscathed.

Kyrgyz Republic resumed with more intent and came close to breaking the deadlock in the 50th minute but Maksat skied his effort.

India's best possible chance seven minutes later when Deepak Tangri put an acrobatic bicycle kick from handshaking distance, only to be thwarted by Kyrgyz

goalkeeper Tokotaev Erzhan.



## CSK salutes Neeraj's gold-medal feat

Presents him ₹1 crore and a No. 8758 jersey

## GENERAL

S. DINAKAR  
CHENNAI

The passion, the perfection, and the quest. Then the throw of fire, fury and history.

Gunning for the yellow metal, Neeraj Chopra, running with rhythm and speed and hurling the javelin with power and effort, struck gold on the biggest stage of them all – the Tokyo Olympics.

His spectacular feat struck a chord with Chennai Super Kings (CSK), an immensely successful and popular cricketing franchise.

In recognition of Neeraj's incredible feat of becoming the first Indian to win a track and field medal at the Olympics – that too a gold – CSK presented Neeraj with ₹1 crore and immortalised 8758 [Neeraj's gold winning throw was 87.58m] by handing him



**Super hero!** CSK CEO Viswanathan, and chairman R. Srinivasan with Neeraj in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

a jersey with the magical number inscribed on it in New Delhi on Sunday.

Talking to *The Hindu*, CSK

all sports, was a good tennis player himself in his younger days."

Viswanathan added, "India Cements has sponsored many sports such as tennis, ball badminton, badminton, and hockey in the past."

## A benchmark

He said, "Neeraj's achievement was phenomenal, a benchmark. He is an inspiration for the nation. It was natural that India Cements would recognise it and the number associated with the feat."

Neeraj said, "Thank you so much for your support and the prize."

"The last two months have been hectic. I never thought I would get so much love after winning the gold medal."

Gold glitters. So does Neeraj Chopra. And CSK acknowledged the epic achievement.

## IPL: BCCI keeps ₹90 crore as salary cap

New franchises need to pick players between Dec. 1 and 25



**In focus:** The mega auction, expected to be held in January, will generate a lot of interest. ■ SPORTZPICS/IPL

SHAYAN ACHARYA  
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has informed the franchises that a salary cap of ₹90 crore has been set for the teams for the next season.

"For two retentions, it will be ₹24 crore. In case a team retains only one player, it will lose ₹14 crore from its purse," one of the BCCI sources confirmed. If any franchise wants to retain uncapped players, it will be deducted from its purse.

The new entrants – Ahmedabad and Lucknow – can choose three players from the pool after the existing eight teams pick their retainers.

As per the email, if a team

retains four players, a total of ₹42 crore will be deducted from their purse, while a three-player retention would lead to a deduction of ₹33 crore.

"For four retentions, it will be ₹24 crore. In case a team retains only one player, it will lose ₹14 crore from its purse," one of the BCCI sources confirmed. If any franchise wants to retain uncapped players, it will be deducted from its purse.

In case of four retentions, it could be either three Indians (capped or uncapped) and one foreign player or two Indians and as many foreigners as the maximum.

## Nihal Sarin stays in second spot

Harikrishna posts another win

## CHESS



**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI**

In-form Nihal Sarin maintained his joint second position following a draw with Russia's Pavel Ponkratov to reach three points after four rounds of the ₹425,000 FIDE Grand Swiss chess tournament in Riga, Latvia, on Saturday. France's Alireza Firouzja stayed ahead of the pack at 3.5 points.

It was a day of mixed fortunes for the 15-member Indian contingent.

P. Harikrishna posted his second straight victory, S.P. Sethuraman drew with Boris Gelfand while D. Gukesh and K. Sasikiran continued their unbeaten run.

Among the women, fourth seed D. Harika stayed unbeaten after drawing with China's Zhu Jiner to share the second spot.

**The results (fourth round, involving Indians): Open:** Nihal Sarin (3) drew with Pavel Ponkratov (Rus, 3); Vladimir Fedoseev (Rus, 2.5) drew with D. Gukesh (2.5); Vladislav Arte-

## Pele remembers fellow legend Maradona



**Memories:** Pele and Maradona had often vied for the title of best footballer in history. ■ REUTERS

ANI  
SAO PAULO

Brazilian football great Pele remembered fellow legend Diego Maradona as the mercurial Argentine was recalled all around the world on his 61st birth anniversary on Saturday.

Three-time FIFA World Cup winner Pele took to Instagram and wrote: "God gave him the genius. The world gave him its love. Today is Diego's Birthday. Forever, on this day, anyone

who loves football will remember what he used to do with the ball."

"As for me, personally, I have the chance to fondly remember the beautiful friendship we had."

"These memories are a real gift."

Pele and Maradona had often vied for the title of best footballer in history.

The Brazilian and Argentine were jointly named best player of the 20th century by FIFA in 2000.

## Argentina celebrates Maradona's birthday

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BUENOS AIRES

Argentina kicked off a week of celebrations to mark the birthday of the late super star Diego Maradona.

Former Argentina players from the World Cup-winning teams of 1978 and 1986 and members of Maradona's

age-group team, nicknamed The Little Onions (Los Pollitos), took part in a match here on Saturday.

The match took place on the pitch where Maradona made his professional debut on 20 October 1976. All the players wore No. 10 jerseys with the name of Maradona.

## Akash makes last eight

## BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BELGRADE

Akash Kumar (54kg) staved off a stiff challenge from Puerto Rico's Caleb Tirado to enter the quarterfinals of the AIBA men's World championships here on Sunday.

Akash, who received a walkover in the last round, clinched it 5-0 to make the last-eight stage in his debut appearance.

On Saturday, five-time Asian medalist Shiva Thapa (63.5kg) sailed into the pre-quarterfinals.

Thapa, a former bronze-medallist at the global showpiece, prevailed in a unanimous verdict against Sierra Leone's John Brown.

However, Govind Sahani (48kg) lost a dramatic pre-quarterfinal to Georgia's Sakhil Alakhverdov. Alakhverdov fought on despite a bloodied face after sustaining a cut above his left eye.

**The results:** **54kg:** Akash Kumar bt Caleb Tirado (PRI) 5-0; **63.5 kg:** Shiva Thapa bt John Brown (SLV) 5-0; **48kg:** Sakhil Alakhverdov (Geo) bt Govind Sahani 5-0.

miev (Rus, 2.5) drew with K. Sasikiran (2.5); Samuel Sevian (USA, 3) bt R. Praggnanandhaa (2); Sergei Movsesian (Arm, 1.5) lost to P. Harikrishna (2.5); Sanan Sjigirov (Rus, 2.5) bt Arjun Erigais (1.5); Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 2) bt Surya Shekhar Ganguly (1); Maxim Matlakov (Rus, 1.5) drew with Rauan Sadhwani (1.5); S.P. Sethuraman (1) drew with Boris Gelfand (Isr, 1.5); Jonas Buhjl Bjerre (Den, 2) bt B. Adhiban (0.5). **Women:** Zhu Jiner (Chn, 3) drew with D. Harika (3); Padmuni Rout (2) lost to Alina Kashlinskaya (Rus, 3); M. Anna Sargsyan (Arm, 2.5) drew with Vantika Agarwal (2.5); R. Vaishali (2) bt Meruot Kamalitdenov (Kaz, 1); Divya Deshmukh (1) drew with Sophie Millett (Fra, 1).

THE HINDU

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## MOSAIC of cultures

■ ARCHANA SUBRAMANIAN

The inauguration of the IE Tower, attended by His Majesty Felipe VI, King of Spain, and António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, marked a milestone for IE University.

Located in the Five Towers business hub in the north of Madrid, the tower has spaces for technological immersion, virtual reality and artificial intelligence, 64 classrooms with flexible configurations, and 30 spaces that encourage interaction, innovation, and creativity, as well as open areas to promote social and cultural life.

It also has a Venture Lab to accelerate the creation of start-ups, a FabLab to develop architecture and design projects, and an auditorium with a seating capacity for 600 people.

In this interview, Santiago



Iniguez, President of IE University, speaks about the university's future plans. Excerpts:

**Is the IE Tower a conscious effort to attract students?**

Fundamentally, it is an effort to provide the best possible learning environment to the students who come here.

The idea is to provide an integrated space for students, faculty and others so that they can interact, regardless of their courses/degrees, their nationalities, or their rank. The purpose is to attract people from every corner in the world and provide a true cross-cultural experience, so it's a sort of a good Babel.

**How does a culturally diverse campus help the university?**

This diversity is a part of the learning experience. We

do not believe in the concept of a melting pot. What we want and encourage is a sort of mosaic of cultures.

We believe it's important to be respectful of each other's ways of living and thinking and understanding especially when we have people from many different minds and cultures.

**With the golden jubilee two years away, what are your plans for IE?**

As a university, we plan to develop activities to achieve a scale similar to a small Ivy League university. With courses ranging from Business Studies, Design, Public Affairs, Law, Sciences and Technology, we want to make a mark in each field.

I feel that, in the near future, the School of Technol-



**C** Universities have to not just adapt to this new environment, but also stay ahead in order to be able to transform and become catalysts of change.

SANTIAGO INIGUEZ,  
President of IE University

**From the UN**  
António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations, described IE Tower "as a symbol of the towering importance of education in today's fast-changing world. It will be a home for world-class learning, cutting-edge ideas and practical answers to the many challenges facing humanity."

ogy will be the fastest growing, given the growing demand for well-prepared graduates in this sector. We will also see micro credential certificates growing as also blended programmes.

We will probably expand our liquid learning methodology that combines classroom-based teaching with the best of technology in order to enhance the learning process.

**Tell us why students from India should pick your college.**

Indian students can have an edge by learning Spanish, which will allow them to explore opportunities in Latin America, Africa and Europe.

Indian students fit well with our culture. We find that they are very respectful of diversity because their culture is very diverse. They lead initiatives, become entrepreneurs, and play a leading role in our academic community. We are lucky to have some faculty members from India.

**In your opinion, how has the pandemic changed higher education?**

A broad look at education – and not from the perspective of different segments – shows changes in terms of the mission of universities. This generation comes with a very solid commitment to, say, sustainability and inclusion. This has to be taken into account by the faculty, programme designers and university managers.

Universities have to not just adapt to this new environment, but also stay ahead in order to be able to transform and become catalysts of change.

Second, technology has



affected the way we understand the learning process. It is friend, not a foe, and is not going to replace classroom interaction.

And there's always what I call 'animal feedback'. We need to see, touch, and even smell each other. We are rational animals, and we need that sort of feedback.

What technology provides is an experience that goes beyond the senses by using synchronous methodologies that were not developed in ordinary classes earlier.

*The reporter was part of a media contingent taken on tour by IE University.*

## Admissions 2022

भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान बैंगलोर  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT BANGALORE



### Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

Five-year fulltime programme

Last date to apply:  
January 19, 2022 05:00 pm IST

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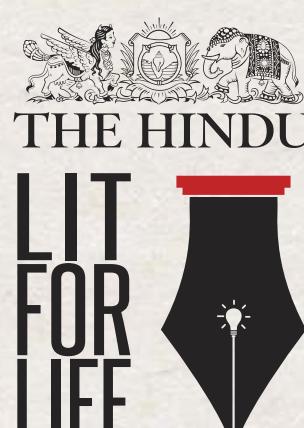
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