



There is no UPA, says
Mamata after meeting
with Sharad Pawar
page 8



1,160 elephants killed in
10 years due to human
interference, says Govt.
page 8



Suspended Opposition
MPs begin sit-in on
Parliament premises
page 9



Mhambrey happy with
Indian bowlers' effort
in Kanpur Test
page 13

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IN BRIEF



Petrol gets cheaper as
Delhi Govt. cuts VAT

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Government on
Wednesday reduced the
Value Added Tax on petrol
to 19.4% from 30%. As a
result, petrol will be cheaper
by ₹8 per litre in the city.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Maurya's Mathura
tweet triggers row

LUCKNOW
Keshav Prasad Maurya, a
Deputy Chief Minister of U.P.,
on Wednesday in a tweet
called for the construction of a
temple in Mathura at a time
when right-wing groups are
demanding the removal of a
Mughal-era mosque located
adjacent to the Krishna
temple in the city.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

PIL against ban on shrines
in police stations rejected

JAIPUR
The Rajasthan High Court has
dismissed a PIL challenging a
recent circular of the police
that had prohibited the
construction of places of
worship in police stations.

STATES ▶ PAGE 3

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Omicron scare grounds international flight plan

New date for normalisation of services will be notified later

JAGRITI CHANDRA

NEW DELHI

The Union Government on
Wednesday cited concerns
over the Omicron variant of
the coronavirus and indefinitely
postponed the full resumption
of scheduled international
flights from December 15.

This means international
flights will continue to operate
on a smaller scale and only with
31 countries with which India has air bubble
agreements.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation said, "In view of the evolving global scenario with the emergence of new variant of concern, the situation is being watched closely in consultation with all the stakeholders and an appropriate decision indicating the effective date of resumption of scheduled commercial international passenger services shall be notified in due course."

The Union Health Ministry said six COVID-19 positive cases were reported from 11 international flights from "at-risk" countries on Wednesday – the first day of stricter testing norms kicking in. This includes four passengers who arrived in Delhi.

The Maharashtra Government has issued strict guide-



Virus scan: Officials collecting swabs from an international passenger in Chennai on Wednesday. ■ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Expensive tests at airport

As stricter COVID-19 testing norms at airports kicked in from Wednesday, passengers from "at-risk" countries had to brace for massive queues, long waiting time for test results

and missed connecting flights.

Their only way out was to pay for the expensive Rapid PCR test that cost up to ₹4,500 – nearly nine times the regular test. ▶ PAGE 10

lines for international passengers, requiring all those arriving from "at-risk" countries to undergo mandatory institutional quarantine for a week.

The State also said that all international passengers must compulsorily undergo an RT-PCR test on arrival, and domestic passengers headed to the State must be allowed to board a flight on

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

GST collections surge in November

At ₹1.31 lakh cr, it is the second highest mop-up since the roll-out of the system

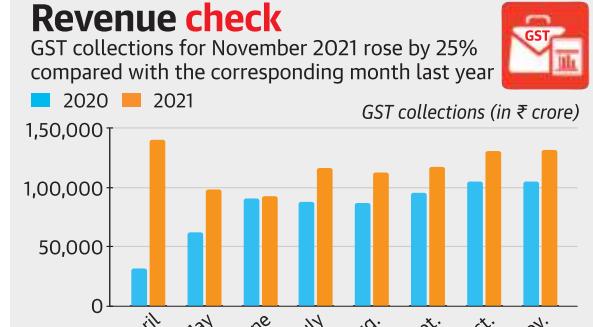
VIKAS DHOOT

NEW DELHI

Gross Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections hit ₹1,31,526 crore in November, the second highest since it was implemented in July 2017, and the second month in a row that collections have crossed ₹1.3 lakh crore.

The revenues for November were 25% higher than that in the corresponding month last year and 27% over the pre-pandemic levels of 2019-20.

Economists, however, said the November collections, reflecting transactions undertaken in October, were



underwhelming in the context of the record generation of e-way bills in October.

Tax collections from import of goods were 43% high-

ember 2020. The Union Finance Ministry also revised downwards GST collections for the first three months of 2021-22, starting with the record revenues of April that were originally reported as ₹1,41,384 crore.

As per the data shared on Wednesday, those collections have now been pared by ₹1,676 crore to ₹1,39,708 crore.

Similarly, the collections for May were revised by ₹4,888 crore to ₹97,821 from the ₹1,02,709 crore reported earlier.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Bombay HC grants Sudha Bharadwaj bail

Pleas of eight co-accused rejected

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday granted bail to human rights activist Sudha Bharadwaj, more than three years after she was arrested in the Bhima-Koregaon caste violence case. The court, however, rejected the bail petitions of eight co-accused in the case.

The co-accused are Rona Wilson, Varavara Rao, Sudhir Dhawale, Surendra Gadling, Shoma Sen, Mahesh Raut, Vernon Gonsalves and



Sudha Bharadwaj

Arun Ferreira. They are all lodged at Taloja Central Jail.

Ms. Bharadwaj was taken into custody by the Pune police on October 27, 2018.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Bengaluru shows nixed, says Kunal Kamra

'Received threats to close down venue'

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

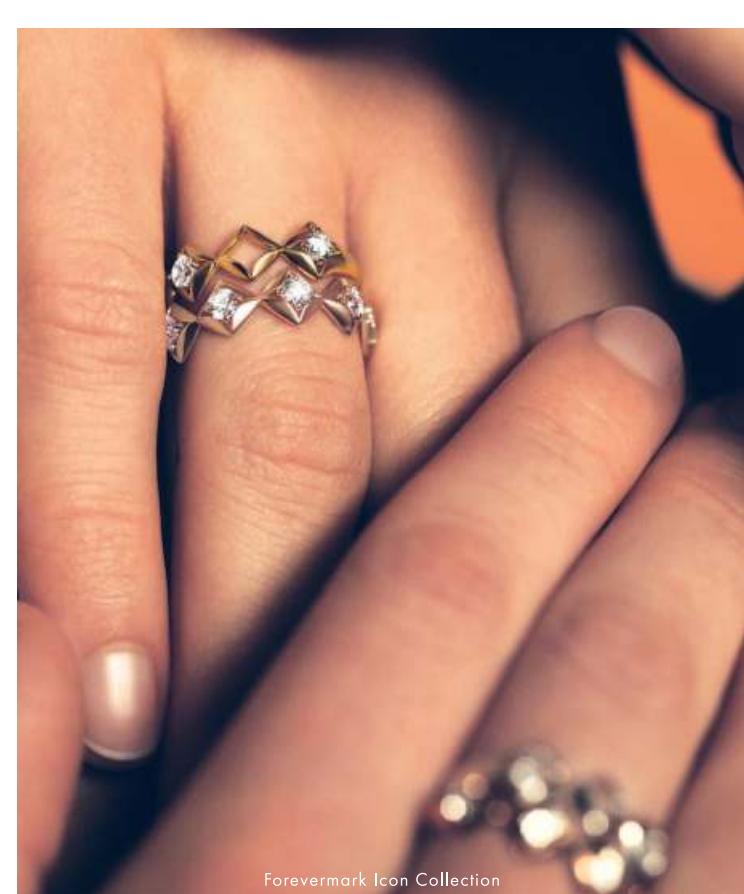
Stand-up comic Kunal Kamra on Wednesday said his shows in Bengaluru were cancelled due to "threats to close down the venue". This comes days after comic Munawar Faruqui was denied permission to perform in the city over threats of protests by Hindutva groups.

"They have been cancelled for two reasons. Firstly, we didn't get special permission to seat 45 people in a venue that can seat more.

Secondly, threats have been made to shut down the venue if I were to perform there," Mr. Kamra said in a tweet.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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Petrol gets cheaper by ₹8 per litre in Delhi as Govt. cuts VAT

New price to kick in today; BJP, Cong. demand VAT reduction on diesel as well

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government on Wednesday brought down the Value Added Tax (VAT) on petrol to 19.4% from 30%. As a result, petrol will be cheaper by ₹8 per litre in the city. The decision was taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

The new rate will come into effect on Thursday, according to an official notification.

"Today we made petrol very cheap in Delhi. VAT rate has been reduced from 30% to 19.4%. Petrol and diesel have become cheaper in Delhi as compared to other cities of NCR. I hope this step will give relief to the people of Delhi from inflation," Mr. Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

But there was no announcement of a cut in VAT on diesel. "The diesel price in Delhi is already the cheapest in NCR at ₹86.67 per litre,



Youth Congress workers during a demonstration against inflation in Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

while the rates in Noida and Gurugram are ₹87.01 and ₹87.11 per litre respectively," a Government statement said. Last year, the Delhi Government had increased the VAT on petrol from 27% to 30%.

Welfare of farmers
The BJP and the Congress hit out at the Delhi Government for not reducing the VAT on diesel and said that the step to bring down VAT on petrol had come late.

Leader of Opposition in

Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri demanded that Mr. Kejriwal reduce VAT on diesel, considering the welfare of farmers and public transport operators.

"VAT on diesel in Delhi is the highest compared to other States. This proves that Mr. Kejriwal is anti-farmer because transporters and farmers use only diesel to run their trucks and tractors," Mr. Bidhuri said.

He said that a reduction in VAT on diesel would also help lower the prices of ve-

getables and other essential items, which would directly benefit the public.

Delhi Congress president Ch. Anil Kumar said that the persistent protests by his party forced Mr. Kejriwal to bring down VAT on petrol. "But unless VAT on diesel is also reduced, Delhiites will continue to suffer because of the soaring prices of essential commodities."

The frequent hike in the prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas had wrecked the lives of the people as it had a cascading effect on the costs of all essential commodities, Mr. Kumar said.

"Mr. Kejriwal tried to delay reducing VAT on fuel as long as possible and now has made a half-hearted effort by lowering it only on petrol," the Congress leader said.

Both parties said that they will force the Government to reduce VAT on diesel as well if the CM does not do it immediately.

'Never thought I'd be a hate crime victim'

Kazeem Sherwani, who was thrashed and abused on a van in Noida, has moved SC

ARNABJIT SUR

NEW DELHI

Resting on a bed at his modest house in south Delhi's Zakir Nagar, 62-year-old Kazeem Ahmad Sherwani still trembles while recalling the incident when he was allegedly waylaid, thrashed and looted by four persons in Noida earlier this year.

"I had read about incidents of hate crimes against Muslims but never thought I would be a victim one day... They (accused) brutally thrashed me and broke my nose with a screwdriver... I still experience body pain due to the incident," Mr. Sherwani, who runs a ration shop, told *The Hindu*.



Not giving up: Kazeem Ahmad Sherwani at his house in south Delhi's Zakir Nagar on Wednesday. ■ ARNABJIT SUR

he started feeling anxious and wanted to get out of the vehicle. "They looked suspicious so I asked them to let me out of the vehicle but suddenly one of the guys shut all the windows and they started assaulting me... they pulled my beard, snatched all the cash I had and started abusing my religion," Mr. Sherwani recalled.

On July 4, Mr. Sherwani, on his way to Aligarh to attend a nephew's wedding, was waiting for a bus at Noida's Sector 37 bus stand around 8 p.m. when a van, carrying four persons, stopped and offered him a lift. "I tried to get into the empty seat in the middle row but they signalled me to move to the back row where two persons were already sitting," he said.

Soon, Mr. Sherwani said

heavily injured and bleeding," he said. He was rescued by a passerby and taken to the Noida Sector 37 police station where he claimed that police officers asked for his basic information but "refused to get him medical help and get his MLC (medico-legal case) done". Thereafter, Mr. Sherwani was taken to his niece, who is a doctor, and treated for his injuries.

Mr. Sherwani claimed that police officers, despite visiting his house, refused to take his written complaint and said he was "politicising a non-issue". He has now moved the Supreme Court, asking for action against the

"erring officers" and seeking compensation for victims of hate crime.

When contacted, a senior police officer from Noida Sector 37 police station refused to comment on the case.

"Before the incident, I used to travel alone everywhere but now I am scared to go out as my attire might attract undue attention," Mr. Sherwani lamented. "Even though the incident has left me traumatised, I will continue to wear a skullcap as it is a sign of my religion and I consider it supreme... I will wear it even if I get killed," he said.

Mr. Sherwani said his neighbours have stood by him after the incident and he hopes the Supreme Court will give him justice.

"Moving a petition was the only option I had and I am sure the judiciary will punish the perpetrators who had targeted me simply because I am a Muslim."

A Division Bench of the apex court has tagged his petition with other writ petitions dealing with hate crimes and will hear the matter on December 3.

HC pulls up civic bodies on rising dengue cases

Complete paralysis in administration'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday pulled up the municipal corporations for their failure to control the spread of dengue, which has doubled this year in the national capital.

"This is a sorry state of affairs in the national capital. It is a disillusion. There is a complete paralysis in civic administration as no one is bothered about the deaths. The officials are living with the attitude that since there is a large population, the disease will come and go," a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Jasmeet Singh said.

WALK-IN INTERVIEW

प्रगत संगणन विकास केंद्र
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वारकरी-इंटरव्यू - WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

सीडीएक समीक्षित बैठक पर नियुक्ति के दिल परिणामों की तरती कर रहा है। / C-DAC looking for result oriented Engineers for appointment on Contract on Consolidated basis.

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इच्छुक और योग्य उमीदवारों को जुलाई 16 दिन से 2021 से द्वारा तक त्रिभेद खानों पर अपने नियुक्ति में वीक्स-डून-इंडरेंस में भाग लेने का अनुरोध है। / Interested and eligible candidates are required to appear for a walk-in-interview being conducted at various states on various dates from Thursday, the 16th December 2021 to Wednesday, the 22nd December 2021.

अधिक जानकारी के लिए कृपया हमारा वेबसाइट देखें। / For more details, please visit our website www.cdac.in.

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NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION ASSAM

NO: NHM-33011/4/2020-SS-NHM /170

Dated: 29/11/2021

Notice Inviting Request For Proposal(RFP) FOR SHORTLISTING OF ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RFP PROCESS FOR ENGAGEMENT OF SUPERSPECIALITY HOSPITAL TO CARRY OUT BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT(BMT) IN CHILDREN BELOW THE AGE OF 14 YEARS.

RFP in two Bid System affixing Court Fee Stamp of Rs 8.25 or IPO of Rs 10.00 in favour of "State Health Society, Assam" are invited from reputed agencies for engagement of superspeciality hospital to carry out BMT (Bone Marrow Transplant) in children below the age of 14 years. The complete RFP documents may be obtained from the website-<http://assamtenders.gov.in>. The participating bidders should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) and have to register in the portal <http://assamtenders.gov.in>. The tender should be submitted on-line in the portal <http://assamtenders.gov.in>, on or before 20/12/2021 up to 2 PM.

RFP Notice may also be seen in the NHM official website-www.nhmassam.gov.in. For any queries related to RFP kindly contact at osd.nhm1.assam@gmail.com on or before 6/12/2021.

The Bidder shall also submit the proof for payment like non-refundable RFP Processing Fee of Rs.200/- in the form of DD/ banker's cheque drawn in favour of "State Health Society, Assam", payable at Guwahati. The Original Demand Drafts for RFP Fee and Court Fee Stamp/IPO along with the hardcopy of RFP proposal only should be submitted to the Mission Director, National Health Mission, Assam, Saikia Commercial Complex, Srinagar Path, Christian Basti, G S Road, Guwahati-781005, Assam on or before the last date and time of submission of the RFP. Important dates of the tender:

Sl.	Scheduled	Start Date	Start Time	End Date	End Time
1	Publication of RFP	30.11.21	3:30 PM		
2	RFP Download	30.11.21	5:00 PM		
3	Pre-Proposal Meeting	14.12.21	3:30 PM		
4	RFP Submission	16.12.21	3:00 PM	20/12/21	Up to 2:00 PM
5	RFP Opening	20.12.21	4:00 PM		

Sd/-
Mission Director, NHM, Assam

NHM/N/2021-22/148

HP / 5284/21-22

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Timings
DELHI

THURSDAY, DEC. 02
RISE 06:57 SET 17:25
RISE 04:24 SET 15:50
FRIDAY, DEC. 03
RISE 06:58 SET 17:25
RISE 05:34 SET 16:34
SATURDAY, DEC. 04
RISE 06:59 SET 17:25
RISE 06:47 SET 17:26

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 23 12
Safdarjung 23 12
Palam 22 14

Delhi Pilm Today
24°C Spell of light rain is possible. Pollution level will be severe. Morning will be cool with moderate fog. Day will be smoky.

Delhi Pilm Tomorrow
26°C The weather will be dry. Day will be comfortable with severe pollution level. A very cool morning with shallow fog and mist.

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THE HINDU
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Nothing in my speech caused religious animosity: Sharjeel

Court reserves order on his bail application and discharge for December 7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI



Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student Sharjeel Imam, arrested for allegedly making inflammatory speeches during the anti-CAA and NRC protests, told a Delhi court on Wednesday that there was nothing in his speech that caused religious animosity.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat was hearing a case filed against Mr. Imam for speeches given by him at two universities in 2019, where he allegedly threatened to "cut off" Assam and the rest of the Northeast from India.

He was arrested under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and for the alleged offence of sedition under the IPC and has now sought bail as well as discharge in the case. Mr. Imam has also approached the Delhi High Court seeking bail in

Mir added: "If a person is to say in regard to a Government policy which directly affects a community 'A' that people of other community 'B' should stand with them otherwise they are not supporting you, then we cannot say that part of the speech promotes animosity between two communities."

Cites Allahabad HC order
He also apprised the judge about the recent Allahabad High Court order granting bail to Mr. Imam in a sedition case registered against him for a speech he made at Aligarh Muslim University in January 2020. "Rest I leave to the great wisdom of the court," he told the court and concluded his argument.

Following this, ASJ Rawat reserved for December 7 the order on his applications seeking bail and discharge and directed Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad to

file detailed written submissions on behalf of the State.

In the last hearing, the prosecutor told the court that violent riots took place pursuant to Mr. Imam's speech. "He tried to create an anarchy by saying that there is no hope left for the Muslim community and that there is no other way left," Mr. Prasad had said.

The alleged inflammatory speeches for which he was arrested were reportedly made at Jamia on December 13, 2019, and at AMU on December 16, 2019. He is in judicial custody since January 2020. Mr. Imam is accused of offences relating to sedition, promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, imputations prejudicial to national integration, and public mischief under the IPC, and indulging in unlawful activities under the UAPA.

Don't remember meeting Anil Deshmukh unofficially: Vaze

Dismissed policeman appears before judicial commission

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Dismissed Assistant Police Inspector Sachin Vaze told a one-member judicial commission on Wednesday that he does "not remember" meeting former Home Minister of Maharashtra, Anil Deshmukh, unofficially.

Mr. Vaze, the main accused in the Antilia explosives case was brought before retired justice K.U. Chandiwala from Taloja Central Jail and cross examined

by advocate Anita Castellino representing Mr. Deshmukh. She asked Mr. Vaze about procedures for police officials to visit Mantralaya. Mr. Deshmukh, who is lodged at the Arthur Road Jail in a money laundering case against him by the Enforcement Directorate, was also present.

When Ms. Castellino asked Mr. Vaze if he had met Mr. Deshmukh only for official purposes, he said "Yes". When she asked him if he ever visited Mr. Deshmukh un-

officially, he said, "Don't remember".

Ms. Castellino sought time to question him further and the next hearing is scheduled on December 13. Meanwhile, the Commission permitted Mr. Vaze a production warrant to meet his lawyers. The Chandiwal Commission was constituted in March 2021, to inquire into corruption allegations made by former Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh against Mr. Deshmukh.

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Election Commission to allot a common election symbol to Chandra Shekhar Aazad's political party for the upcoming Assembly elections in five States.

Justice Prateek Jalan directed the EC to facilitate the process after it said that it had no objection to granting a common symbol to the Bhim Army chief for his 'Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram)' as long as a common symbol is available in all five States and the already

petitioner may opt for any of those and it may be allotted to him. The Election Commission is directed to facilitate this process," said the judge who was hearing Mr. Aazad's petition seeking a common election symbol for his political outfit.

"Make sure that he gets a common symbol, whatever it is... Whatever you find is available in all five States, give it to him," the court told the EC.

"The Commission will inform the petitioner of the symbols which are available in each of the five States and



ment authority issuing a circular that the provisions of the Act be implemented.

The court rejected the petitioner's plea to include Government institutions and State bodies in the definition of "public places" under the Act. "As is well settled through a series of judgments, no direction can be issued to the legislature to frame a law in a particular manner," said the Bench.

'Upheal State's right'
The People's Union for Civil Liberties-Rajasthan said the judgment had correctly upheld the right of the State to maintain public places as secular places.

"The insidious agenda of the petitioner was to legitimise the conversion of public places like police stations and office complexes on the pretext of faith. "There is no provision for such construction in the building plans drafted and approved for the police offices," he said.

Act of 1954
A Division Bench of the High Court, comprising Chief Justice Akil Kureshi and Justice Rekha Borana, ruled that as long as the Act of 1954 stood, no petitioner could raise any objection to the Govern-

Centre attempting to create a rift, says SKM

Punjab, Haryana unions held separate meetings to discuss names for farm panel

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
ASHOK KUMAR
NEW DELHI



+ Don't try to divide SKM:
Rakesh Tikait

ANUJ KUMAR
GAZIABAD

Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) national spokesperson Rakesh Tikait on Wednesday said farmers would not return to villages until law on guaranteed Minimum Support Price (MSP) was enacted. He urged the Government not to spread rumours and try to divide the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM).

It seemed the Government wanted the agitation to end without talking to farmers across the table. "The Government should make it clear if Delhi's doors are closed for farmers. If that is the case, can farmers shut their doors on the Government," he asked.

When the movement was inching towards its conclusion, "the Government shouldn't indulge in jalsaa (forgery)". "We are ready to talk across the table. The SKM was, is, and will be there," he stated.

The last card in the hand of the Government was to break the unity of the umbrella body of farmers' unions. "We are meeting on December 4 to decide the future course," he remarked.

The movement was in its final round and farmers should be prepared for it and reach the morchas in large numbers. "A rumour is being spread that farmers are returning home after the farm laws have been repealed in Parliament. I want to clarify that farmers continue to camp at the Delhi borders as only one issue has been resolved," he observed.

Mr. Tikait alleged that a section of the media was trying to spread misinformation that the demand for law on MSP was new.

ponding formally to the letter sent by it reminding the Government about the pending demands," adding that the platform is awaiting formal written communication on the committee's mandate and terms of reference.

On Monday, Parliament repealed the three contentious farm reform laws as had been demanded by the protesting unions, shifting the focus to their other key demand for a legal guarantee that all farmers will receive MSP of one and a half times the comprehensive cost of production for all their crops.

On November 19, the PM said a committee would be formed "to promote zero budgeting based agriculture, to change crop pattern as per the changing needs of the country and to make MSP more effective and transparent", with representatives from State and

Central Governments, farmers, agricultural scientists and economists.

"We need a committee specifically for drafting a law on MSP. But if you want to add in zero budget agriculture and crop diversity and all sorts of other issues, this committee will become a joke. We have had past experience of such committees," said Yudhvir Singh, general secretary of the Tikait faction of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, who is also an SKM core committee member.

"The committee must be given powers, so that the Government is bound to implement its decisions. Otherwise, it will be an eye-wash."

Several union leaders said an indicator of the Government's interest in dialogue would be its response to their demands regarding cases filed against protesters.

GIFT City emerging as India's first greenfield city

It's operational with more than 200 entities

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

Financial Services Centre (IFSC) where banks, stock exchanges and financial services firms have set up their global operations.

As per the plans, 886 acres will be provided to develop nearly 62 million square feet built-up area constituting 67% commercial, 22% residential and 11% social space.

Further, the entire city project has been divided into a multi-service Special Economic Zone (SEZ) spread over 261 acres and exclusive domestic tariff area (DTA) spread over 625 acres.

"Thanks to the Central

Government's proactive support to develop the country as a hub of international financial services, the GIFT City has emerged as the pre-

ferred location for national and multinational firms," said Tapan Ray, CEO and MD of the GIFT City and former Secretary, Corporate Affairs in the Government of India.

Tax exemptions
The Centre has announced a range of tax exemptions for those starting their international operations here.

As a result, both the BSE and the NSE have set up their international stock exchanges; 17 banks, including 12 domestic and five international, issued licence to operate, 100-plus broking services, depository clearing operations and over 19 companies have begun operations for non-life reinsurance business.

The Centre's IFSC-related

relief measures include tax holiday for capital gains for aircraft leasing companies, tax exemption for aircraft lease rentals paid to foreign lessors, tax incentive for relocating foreign funds in IFSC and exemption to investment divisions of foreign banks.

Since it's a hub of international financial services, the Singapore Arbitration Centre has also been set up for dispute resolution while the International Bullion Exchange will become functional soon.

The latest Global Financial Centers Index, London, dated September 2020 has placed the IFSC at GIFT City right at the top among 15 centres globally, which are likely to gain significance.

PIL on order to ban temples in police stations dismissed

Civil rights groups welcome verdict for upholding secularism

MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan High Court has dismissed a public interest writ petition challenging a recent circular of the police which had prohibited the construction of places of worship in police stations and police office premises. Civil rights groups have welcomed the judgment, saying it had upheld secularism as a constitutional mandate.

The alleged inflammatory speeches for which he was arrested were reportedly made at Jamia on December 13, 2019, and at AMU on December 16, 2019. He is in judicial custody since January 2020. Mr. Imam is accused of offences relating to sedition, promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, imputations prejudicial to national integration, and public mischief under the IPC, and indulging in unlawful activities under the UAPA.

construction of places of worship with public participation in police stations and office complexes on the pretext of faith. "There is no provision for such construction in the building plans drafted and approved for the police offices," he said.

Act of 1954
A Division Bench of the High Court, comprising Chief Justice Akil Kureshi and Justice Rekha Borana, ruled that as long as the Act of 1954 stood, no petitioner could raise any objection to the Govern-

ment for being premature, the symbol sought was also not available for Uttarakhand.

The petitioner's lawyer asserted that there was no preference for any particular symbol and any common symbol may be allotted for the petitioner's political party.

Considering that the petitioner was seeking "any" common symbol for his political party, the court asked the EC to inform him about the symbols available in the five States and facilitate the process after fresh applications are made.



Chandra Shekhar Aazad

dy allotted common symbol for three States is surrendered.

"The Commission will inform the petitioner of the symbols which are available in each of the five States and

Cong.-AAP squabble over Punjab's education system

Delhi's system a bubble of water: Pargat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Ahead of the Assembly elections in Punjab, the ruling Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party were on Wednesday involved in a sharp exchange of words on the 'education system' in the State.

Punjabi Education Minister Pargat Singh accused the Delhi Government of resorting to lies about the so-called successful education system being run by the Aam Aadmi Party.

"If you have such a 'wonderful' system, then why are the posts of principals and vice-principals lying vacant ?" Pargat Singh, Punjab Education Minister

sis of circumstances of both States, the comparison is illogical," he added.

Mr. Singh said Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's visit to a school's store in Punjab was an act of AAP's vested political interest. "I never expected such low and cheap political tactics from Mr. Sisodia. I believe in healthy discussion and fruitful debate," said the Minister.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Sisodia visited a primary school at Makrauna Kalan in Chambaur Sahib. Mr. Sisodia said the teacher told him that the school did not even have a drinking water facility and the staff had to bring water from nearby gurdwara. Mr. Sisodia said in such a situation, if the Punjab Government calls itself number one in the education system, then it is messing with the future of the students.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Three days after the Uttar Pradesh Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) question paper was found to have been leaked, police said the agency responsible for printing them had been given the contract without proper verification.

Sanjay Kumar Upadhyay, a Provincial Civil Service (PCS) official who held the post of Secretary of U.P. Examination Regulatory Authority, was arrested after being found to be complicit in the paper leak, said a senior police officer on Wednesday. He had already been suspended.

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Cong. for presenting united face in Punjab

Rahul Gandhi counsels Channi, Sidhu and Jakhar as party fights to retain power in the State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

As the chaos in the Congress party's Punjab unit refuses to show any signs of abatement, the central leadership on Wednesday has reportedly conveyed to the State leadership to stay united ahead of the Assembly elections, due in early 2022.

Former Congress presi-

dent Rahul Gandhi summoned Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, State president Navjot Singh Sidhu, former party president Sunil Jakhar and in-charge of Punjab affairs Harish Choudhary for talks.

Insiders said the fresh trouble in the unit has been over the process of re-jigging the organisational structure.

Mr. Sidhu has reportedly sent a list of district presidents to the "high command" but there are several senior leaders who have expressed reservation over the process of preparing the list.

Mr. Jakhar expressed displeasure over the process of change adopted by Mr. Sidhu. In a veiled attack, Mr. Jakhar tweeted a few days ago,

"Your monkey, your circus" I follow this dictum – neither suggest anything nor interfere in other's 'show'!"

Sources said Mr. Gandhi met Mr. Jakhar and separately met Mr. Channi, Mr. Sidhu and Mr. Choudhary. A message has been conveyed that party leaders have to present a united face, said sources.

The party, which is fight-

ing to retain power in Punjab, has been struggling to set its house in order even after the high command cornered Capt. Amarinder Singh into resigning from the post of Chief Minister. However, the situation seems to have hardly improved. Mr. Sidhu has been attacking his own Government on many issues on public platforms.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

In Fond Memory

30.09.1931 - 02.12.2015

Dr. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY, B.A., D.Lit.,

Former Member of Parliament (RS)
Former Pro-Chancellor, Annamalai University

**Dr. M.A.M. Ramaswamy Chettiar of Chettinad Charitable Trust,
Chettinad House,
Rajah Annamalaiapuram, Chennai - 600 028.**

DEATH

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved

Dr. R. PALANINATHAN (77)
Retd. Professor, IIT Madras
who left for his heavenly abode on 30th Nov, 2021
Funeral on Fri (03.12.2021), 11am
42/9, Kalaimagal Ngr, 2nd Mn Rd,
Ekkatuthangal, Chennai-32.
P. Ramanathan - 9840333559

DEATH

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SECOND ANNIVERSARY

T.M. Gopalan (84 yrs)
Heavy Vehicles Factory (Retd) & Ex-Ashok Leyland
Passed away on 25th November 2021 at Chennai.
Inscribed by Lalitha, Varichandran/ Krishnan
+91 98407 64798

GITHA RAGHUPATHY
29.09.1952 - 02.12.2019
"Your memory is a treasure. You are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure".
Family & Friends

JHARKHAND EDUCATION PROJECT COUNCIL
J.S.C.A Stadium Road, Jagannathpur, Sector -3, Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004
Phone - 0651-2444502 Fax: 0651-2444506 E-mail: jepranchi1@gmail.com

e-Procurement Notice

Jharkhand Education Project Council invites Zone wise Request for Proposal (RFP) through GeM portal for Selection of agency for establishment of ICT Lab which includes Supply, Installation and maintenance of Hardware, Software & Connected accessories and for providing Computer Education Services (manpower etc.) in 1854 selected Government Schools on BOOT Model. The detail tender documents can be seen in website <http://gem.gov.in> only. The bid number is GEM/2021/B/1717115 for Zone-1 and GEM/2021/B/1717867 for Zone-2. Interested bidder can submit their bid/bids through portal <http://gem.gov.in> only. Last date of online bid submission is 21/12/2021 till 6:00 PM. Pre-Bid meeting for the above bids is scheduled on 08/12/2021 at 12:00 noon at our above office.

Sd/-
Notice Ref No. JEPIC/ICT/52/02/2019/(PartFile)/2212, dated 01/12/2021. (Kiran Kumari Pasi)
PR 258252 Human Resource Development (21-22)_D

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श्रीन-पत्र

इस कार्यालय द्वारा आंगनीति निवादा WRD/BD/GALUDIH/IFB-02/2021-22 दिनांक 01.11.2021 जिसका PR No. 256135 Water Resource (21-22)_D, द्वारा प्रकाशित को जिन्हें संशोधन किया जाता है जिसका विवरण निम्न प्रकार है—

1.	विभाग का नाम	जल संशोधन विभाग झारखंड सरकार।
2.	वेबसाइट पर ई-निवादा प्रकाशन की तिथि	06.12.2021 2.00 बजे अपराह्न तक
3.	ई-निवादा अभियंता डाउन लोड / अपलोड करने की तिथि	06.12.2021 से 20.12.2021 5.00 बजे अपराह्न तक
4.	परिणाम विप्रकरण का मूल्य एवं अग्रहन की राशि जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि	06.12.2021 से 22.12.2021 5.00 बजे अपराह्न तक
5.	ई-निवादा तकनीकी बीड़ खोलने की तिथि समय	24.12.2021 12.00 बजे अपराह्न
6.	ई-निवादा प्रकाशित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम एवं पता	श्री संजीव कुमार, कार्यपालक अभियंता, बराज प्रमंडल, गालुड़ी।
7.	ई-प्रोक्षेमेट सेल का हेल्प लाइन नं	8102918071
8.	ई-प्रोक्षेमेट सेल का हेल्प लाइन नं	06572371765

क्र०	कार्य का नाम	पुप सं०	प्राकलित राशि	कार्य पूर्ण करने का समय
1.	Construction of Tenthudanga Distributor (UGPL), Ex. from K.M. 15.126 of Galudih Left Main Canal.	WRD/BD/GALUDIH/Gr-01	₹ 9,25,03,919.70	550 दिन
2.	Construction of Jonhani Distributor (UGPL), Ex. from K.M. 19.182 of Galudih Left Main Canal.	WRD/BD/GALUDIH/Gr-02	₹ 6,73,12,009.79	550 दिन
3.	Construction of Ramsol Distributor (UGPL), Ex. from K.M. 24.766 of Galudih Left Main Canal.	WRD/BD/GALUDIH/Gr-03	₹ 9,03,65,460.44	550 दिन

नोट:- सिर्फ ई-निवादा स्वीकार होगा। ज्यादा जानकारी के लिए हमारे वेबसाइट कार्यपालक अभियंता, बराज प्रमंडल गालुड़ी।

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LEGAL NOTICE

In the Court of Sh. Shirish Aggarwal- Administrative Civil Judge-cum-ARC(Central), Room No. 28, Ground Floor, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-110054.

SC. No. -192/2021 N.O.H. 13.12.2021

Sh. Satpal Vs. State & Ors.

To:

Sh. Satpal, S/o Late Sh. Ram Lal,

R/o H.No. 3948, Gali Bindia Mill,

Roshan Road, Subz Mandi, Malka Ganj, Delhi

..... Petitioner

FOR SUCCESION CERTIFICATE

UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

To:

All concerned

Whereas in the above noted petition the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the deceased person named in the petition.

As per record standing in the name of Late Smt. Santosh Kumar Sawhney and Late Sh. Sudarshan Kumar Sawhney deceased.

Whereas the 13.12.2021 at 10 o'clock in the morning has been fixed for hearing or the application notice is hereby given to this concerned.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court on this 25.11.2021.

(Shriram Aggarwal)
ACJ/ARC (Central) Delhi

Ref No: Ponlait-e-Tender / Pur. / Polyethylene Pouch Film / 2022-22

Date 01.12.2021

E-Tender for the Supply of Polyethylene Pouch Film for packaging liquid milk to

PONLAIT

www.pudutenders.gov.in

(e-Tender id: 2021_COOP_8833_1)

Last Date for Submission :

22.12.2021 before 04.00 P.M.

Contact: +919888327232

e-mail id: ponlaitmd@gmail.com

e-cell: 0413-2220225

MANAGING DIRECTOR

BETWEEN :

Punjab And Sind Bank

Abids Road Branch,

#/ Metro Estate, Abids,

Hyderabad, ...Applicant

And M/s. Meenakshi Energy Ltd

And others ...Defendants

To, D-4 State Bank of India,

Project Finance SBU,

Volta House, 1st and 2nd floor,

23 JN, Heredia Marg,

IN BRIEF



Freak accident claims three lives in Telangana

HYDERABAD
Two persons were killed in Telangana's Siddipet district when a car fell into a well, while another died in bid to rescue them on Wednesday. According to the police, Akula Prashanth, 26, and mother Bhagyalakshmi were killed when the car fell into well. While rescue operations were on, Narasimulu died when a pipe fixed to drain out water fell on him.

I-T searches at three movie production houses

KOCHI
Officials of the Income Tax Department carried out inspections at the offices of three movie production houses – associated with actors Prithviraj and Dulquer Salmaan, and producer Vijay Babu – in Kochi on Wednesday.

AIADMK decides to retain dual leadership concept

All members can elect top leaders

T. RAMAKRISHNAN
CHENNAI

In a significant development reinforcing the AIADMK's 'dual leadership' concept, the party's executive on Wednesday decided to allow all primary members to elect candidates by a 'single vote' for the top posts of coordinator and co-coordinator.

The posts are now held by former Chief Ministers O. Panneerselvam and Edappadi K. Palaniswami respectively. Until now, members of the general council alone

AIADMK MPs stall debate on Dam Safety Bill in Rajya Sabha

They say it will affect TN's ownership rights over dams, including Mullaperiyar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Dam Safety Bill 2021 was moved in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday but the debate could not be held because of disruptions from the Opposition parties. BJP's ally AIADMK has decided to oppose the Bill whenever it comes up for debate.

This Bill was approved by the Lok Sabha in the Monsoon session. There was a view among the Opposition parties that this Bill must be sent to a select committee, because of its wider implication. The Government, however, is in no mood to concede to the demand. On Tuesday, the Government had deferred a debate on the Bill because of the Opposition walkout. The House was adjourned twice on Wednesday.



Bone of contention: A file photo of the Mullaperiyar dam in Idukki district of Kerala.

day because of the protests and the Bill could not be taken up for debate.

AIADMK floor leader for Rajya Sabha A. Navaneethakrishnan said that the Bill will affect Tamil Nadu's ownership over its dams located in other States. Former Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa too had conveyed her objections

to certain aspects of the draft Bill. "We strongly oppose this Bill and it has to go."

The point of contention are four dams – Mullaperiyar, Parambikulam, Thunakkadavu and Peruvurarpallam – located in Kerala but owned, operated and maintained by the Tamil Nadu Government. The Bill provides

Kerala dam safety chief to visit Idukki dam today

IDUKKI

Chairman of the Dam Safety Authority of Kerala C.N. Ramachandran Nair will visit the Idukki dam for two days from Thursday. An official of the Dam Monitoring and Research Station on Wednesday said top officials of the Irrigation Department and the Kerala State Electricity Board would accompany him.

for a National Committee on Dam Safety whose functions include evolving policies and recommending regulations regarding dam safety standards.

"The national dam safety authority will have the final word: this is a violation of the federal principles," Mr. Navaneethakrishnan said.

HC upholds conviction of Kerala priest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHEE

The Kerala High Court on Wednesday confirmed the conviction awarded by the Thalassery Special Court to Robin Mathew Vadakkumcheril, former vicar of St. Sebastian Church, Kottiyoor, for raping a minor girl. The court also upheld his conviction under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. However, it reduced the sentence of 20-year rigorous imprisonment given by the POCSO Special Court to 10 years.

There was initially an attempt by the survivor's family to hush up the case and save the former priest.

The survivor had stated that it was her own father who had raped her and he was the father of her child. During the trial too, she did not raise any complaints against the accused.

a PhD in LAMM, he said. "When a university that is imparting doctorate degree in LAMM is not accepting a candidate who has a PhD in the subject, why would any other university accept my candidature? The department doesn't have any faculty with a PhD in LAMM. During M.A., we were taught by teachers who had PhD in Linguistics. It seems like a ploy to scuttle my job prospects," he said.

A university spokesperson said Dr. Rahim did his masters and doctorate in LAMM under the Linguistics Department. "However, due to a typographical error and oversight, he was erroneously issued a PhD in Linguistics. He will be issued a doctorate degree in LAMM," he said.

Defamation case
Describing the allegations false, Professor Warsi said he had never met Dr. Rahim in his office or elsewhere. In a university release, he said, Dr. Rahim was trying to divert attention. "I have sought legal opinion and will proceed with a defamation case against him."

Sources said the case was sub judice but Dr. Rahim still chose to raise it when the National Assessment and Accreditation Council team is on the campus.

A student, requesting anonymity, said Dr. Rahim's allegations might be baseless but it has brought some real concerns to light. "It is true that some students try to enter linguistics department through LAMM. But why will somebody spend three to four years doing PhD when he is not eligible to teach the subject or appear in NET/JRF test?"

Asked to return PhD degree for praising PM, says AMU student

University calls it case of human error

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

An Aligarh Muslim University student alleged that he has been asked to return his PhD degree for correction because he praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The university administration, however, called the allegations "baseless and unsubstantiated".

Danish Rahim said he was awarded a PhD degree in Linguistics in March.

Right-wing supporter

"In December 2020, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the university, I praised him in the electronic media for taking everybody along. Before my viva voce, the Chairman called me and said I should not have given such a byte and it seems I support the right-wing. I took it lightly and attended the viva and received the degree. After the COVID wave, in August, I received a letter from the controller that there was an error and that my doctorate degree needs to be rectified to Language for Advertising, Marketing and Media (LAMM)," said Dr. Rahim.

The national dam safety authority will have the final word: this is a violation of the federal principles," Mr. Navaneethakrishnan said.

There was initially an attempt by the survivor's family to hush up the case and save the former priest.

The survivor had stated that it was her own father who had raped her and he was the father of her child. During the trial too, she did not raise any complaints against the accused.

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Five CPI(M) workers arrested by CBI in Periyar murder case

Two Youth Congress activists were killed on Feb. 17, 2019

STAFF REPORTER
KASARAGOD

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) team investigating the Periyar twin murder case arrested five Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] workers, including a branch secretary, on Wednesday.

On Wednesday, the CBI summoned local CPI(M) leaders to the Kasaragod guest house and questioned them, following which the five were arrested. They will be produced at the Ernakulam Chief Judicial Magistrate Court on Thursday. So far, 19 people have been arrested in the case, while two are out

on bail. The CBI team had on March 5 raided the Echilukkam branch committee office of the CPI(M) and seized the minutes of a branch committee meeting convened a week before the murder. The remand report of the local police, which had initially probed the case, had said that the first accused, former CPI(M) local committee member Peethambaran, had hatched the murder conspiracy at the meet.

The CBI focused on the minutes of the meet to zero in on the five accused.

In Karnataka, egg distribution begins in school mid-day meals

Some Lingayat organisations have opposed Govt's decision

STAFF REPORTER
KALABURAGI

Seven districts in north Karnataka started distribution of eggs in mid-day meal on Wednesday, amid protests by a few Lingayat organisations demanding the reversal of the Government's decision aimed at improving nutrition levels in the backward districts.

Support for the decision on inclusion of eggs also came from several quarters.

Many leaders representing various communities and organisations insisted that the Government stick to its decision.

Some even warned of a State-wide agitation and legal battle if the Government stepped back.

A few organisations in Bidar, including the Republic

can Party of India (RPDI), Dalit Vidyarthi Parishat, Ramabhai Bhajna Team, Janwadi Mahila Sangathan and Gonda Vidyarthi Sangathan submitted a memorandum to the Bidar Deputy Commissioner demanding that the Government stay firm on its decision.

Some Lingayat organisations, including the Rashtriya Basava Dal, had opposed the Government's decision.

However, S.M. Jamadar, secretary of the Jagatika Lingayat Mahasabha, said they had no problem as long as an alternative vegetarian item was given to children.

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Point of disorder

Disruption of proceedings, suspension of MPs undermine parliamentary democracy equally

The suspension of 12 Opposition Members of Parliament from the Rajya Sabha for the entire winter session of Parliament, evidently an extreme step by Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu, has turned the spotlight on the use of disruption of proceedings as a parliamentary tactic. The Government and the Opposition should try and work a way out of this situation, but that may not resolve the underlying affliction of perennial conflict between the two sides. A guiding principle of parliamentary proceedings is that the majority, i.e. the Government, will have its way, and the minority, the Opposition, will have its say. This principle has been observed in its violation in India for several years now. As the principal Opposition in the years leading up to 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) so disrupted Parliament that a majority government was rendered dysfunctional for years; since 2014, in power, the BJP has tinkered with parliamentary processes in a way that the Opposition has been pinned down. Bills are passed in a hurry and even amidst din; the scrutiny of Bills by committees and debates are few and far between. Also, the decision to suspend Members for their conduct in the previous monsoon session at the beginning of a new session seems excessively punitive. This is no defence of disruption in general or the behaviour of the particular MPs, but the punishment is only worsening the conflict, and not facilitating debate.

Parliament is the platform where the executive is held accountable to the representatives of the people. That is where people's representatives raise matters of public concern and seek the Government's attention. The trend of weakening that process in the name of efficiency is not merely undermining the spirit of democracy; it is also landing the Government itself in a difficult spot as the mayhem that followed the hurried passage of three controversial farm laws last year shows. Parliamentary debates should not be viewed as a distraction or waste of time; they are a barometer of public mood and must be respected as such, by both the ruling side and the Opposition. Disruption as a brief, momentary reaction to a situation that demands debate is understandable, but as a sustained strategy, it is self-defeating. The absence of the Opposition will only leave the Government even more unchecked. It was the BJP's Arun Jaitley who theorised on the legitimacy of disruptions as a parliamentary instrument. It is time to shun that idea. The Government must make amends to restore the function of Parliament by deferring to parliamentary mechanisms, and also through informal channels of communication with the Opposition.

Road to recovery

Policy makers must boost demand-supportive measures to ensure recovery sustains

The latest GDP and GVA estimates from the National Statistical Office have affirmed that the economy is now on the path to recovery after last fiscal's record contraction. Second quarter gross domestic product expanded 8.4%, rebounding from the year-earlier period's 7.4% contraction. While the statistical advantage from the base effect surely aided the expansion, the economy appears to have gathered just enough momentum for GDP to post a marginal 0.3% growth even when compared with the second quarter of the pre-pandemic 2019-20 fiscal year. The gross value added figures, which capture the extent of activity across the eight major formal sectors of the real economy, too underscore the improvement, with the July-September 2021 GVA figure of ₹32.89-lakh crore registering a 0.5% expansion from the July-September period of 2019. Five of the eight sectors posted growth not just from the year-earlier quarter but also surpassed the pre-COVID-19 performance. Manufacturing, which has the second-largest share of GVA, appears to have regained traction and was the bulwark of GVA, logging a 3.9% expansion from the pre-pandemic second quarter of fiscal 2020. The key employment-providing services categories, however, are yet to fully recover from the pandemic's devastating impact, and along with construction, another major provider of jobs, lagged pre-pandemic levels by a cumulative ₹77,000 crore. With the potential impact of the Omicron variant a big unknown, the outlook here may stay hazy for now.

A disaggregated view of the GDP data also reveals areas of concern that could undermine the recovery. Private final consumption expenditure that measures spending on everything from essentials to luxury goods and the entire gamut of services by all consumers, and has the largest share of GDP at 55%, is still treading water. The uncertainty induced by the pandemic, coupled with reduced or lost incomes, continues to depress demand and is mirrored in consumer spending still remaining 3.5% shy of the pre-COVID level. Government consumption spending, which has often been a reliable alternative source of demand with a capacity to serve as a multiplier, is also well below the fiscal 2020 second quarter, possibly by design as the Centre seeks to consolidate its fiscal position. Unless aggregate demand strengthens, the heartening uptick in business investment, as reflected in the 11% year-on-year jump in gross fixed capital formation, could come to naught with capacity additions remaining underutilised and corporate captains yet again tightening their purse strings. Manufacturing PMI data by IHS Markit has another salutary warning: rising input costs could force manufacturers to raise prices adding to the general inflationary pressures in the economy and undermine the recovery. Policy makers need to ramp up demand-supportive measures including increasing government spending to ensure that the recovery sustains and gains traction.

The TMC is playing T20, AAP a Test match

The party that is more likely to appropriate the electoral space of the Indian National Congress is the Aam Aadmi Party



ASIM ALI

The political expansion spree by West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Mamata Banerjee is proceeding at breakneck speed. Last week, the TMC 'swooped down' on most of the Congress legislative party in Meghalaya, including former Congress Chief Minister Mukul Sangma. The effect was as intended; it created much flutter in political circles over whether an ascendant TMC might soon displace a fast-declining Congress as the principal Opposition party of the country.

In terms of vote share

Such prognostications need to be tempered with a heavy dose of reality. Even now the Congress is a 20% vote-share party and five times the size of the TMC. At the State level, the vote share of the Congress exceeds 30% in 10 Indian States. It is hard to imagine the TMC coming close to this level of a national presence anytime soon, particularly with its current crop of inductions. Outside the Northeast, the entrants comprise a ragtag group of political lightweights – disgruntled local politicians, ageing intellectuals and media-influent celebrities.

This national expansion drive of the TMC is geared towards quickly transforming the party into a national political brand. The objective is to turn Mamata Banerjee from a Bengali leader to a national leader, and thereby the most prominent non-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), non-Congress Party contender for the post of Prime Minister. The party has pitched itself squarely to disaffected Congress voters as a much more capable force than the Congress to take on the BJP. But does the expansion strategy of the TMC represent a serious long-term challenge for the Congress? The answer probably lies in the negative.

In order to understand this we must look at the different routes a

party might take to scale up as a national player, and how the TMC's peculiar route places limitations on its spread. There have been two traditional routes a party takes to expand its national footprint, none of which is available to the TMC, because of its intrinsic limitations.

Social base, ideology

The first one is leveraging a committed social base. The Swatantra Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are good examples of this. The Swatantra Party's distinct appeal among the land-owning dominant castes repelled by the Congress's flirtation with socialistic policies (examples being the Rajputs in Rajasthan and the Patidars and Kshatriyas in Gujarat) allowed it to expand rapidly, perhaps becoming the most prominent Opposition party of the 1960s. Similarly, the BSP built its support base among the Jatav Dalits to establish a significant presence across North India, especially Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

The TMC, however, lacks a distinct social base, especially if one views the party from outside West Bengal. Ms. Banerjee's appeal among women and Muslim voters of Bengal has been nurtured over a period of time with specific welfare benefits targeted at them; hence this appeal might not readily transcend State borders. While her anti-BJP credentials might appeal to many Muslims outside Bengal, these voters would more likely choose the best bet against the BJP in their State rather than plumping for a greenhorn such as the TMC.

Another route is through a distinct ideological platform, a path trodden by the Communists and the BJP. Being a centrist umbrella party, the Congress had always been vulnerable to raids on its ideological flanks. The Communists (as well as an assortment of socialist parties) steadily built themselves up by poaching the Congress voter base from the Left; as subsequently the BJP did through appropriation of upper caste Congress voters from the Right.

But there is little that is recognisably different that the TMC offers in terms of ideology from the Congress, or indeed other regional



RAJEVE BHATT

parties. All these parties follow a similar brand of centre-left politics along with a commitment to secularism. In fact, in terms of ideology, the Congress retains the important advantage over the TMC of not being hamstrung by a regional/linguistic identity. As far as the BJP voters are concerned, the TMC remains a non-starter owing to its strident anti-BJP anti-Narendra Modi rhetoric.

However, these two fundamental constraints – the lack of a social base and a distinct ideological platform – are also shared by the other claimant to the Congress space, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP).

AAP's strategy, the NCP

Yet, the AAP has been able to fashion for itself a new route to expansion – an alternative model of governance. It is the AAP's promise of the Delhi model of governance – free public services and clean governance – that is primarily behind its surge in greenfield States. Even though the TMC has also instituted its own share of successful welfare schemes in Bengal, they have not quite crystallised themselves in the public imagination as a novel and attractive model of governance. This is partly the outcome of the TMC's own national messaging, where it has privileged burnishing its anti-BJP credentials over communicating a positive vision of governance. In contrast, AAP has sought to cultivate a broad buy-in to its model of governance by muting its anti-BJP character.

If there is a precedent for Ms. Banerjee's fast-track route to expansion, it lies in retracing the path taken by the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) under Sharad Pawar, around the turn of the century. This strategy involves three elements.

First, the instrument of expansion is the leveraging of financial resources to co-opt regional elites. The TMC's focus on the North-east is only partly a function of geographical proximity. In Tripura and the Barak valley of Assam, the TMC seeks to build on its Bengal constituency. However, the wider North-east crucially represents the most fertile terrain for the strategy of winning over freewheeling ethnic elites with political patronage, a long-standing pattern in the region. It is not a coincidence that the NCP also found considerable success (outside Maharashtra) only in the North-east. Within five years of its formation, even as its expansion drive was flailing elsewhere, the NCP controlled two dozen MLAs across four different States in the North-east.

In terms of leadership

Second, the rationale for expansion is not made in terms of policy or ideology, but in terms of leadership. The NCP's aspiration to be the principal anti-BJP pole in place of the Congress grounded itself in Mr. Pawar's superior claim over Congress leader Sonia Gandhi to the chair of Prime Minister, who was seen as an inexperienced usurper of foreign origin. Similarly, the TMC claims it has been pushed to take over the national opposition space because a fiery street fighter such as Ms. Banerjee is better suited to the mantle of national leadership than a feckless Rahul Gandhi, Congress leader.

Third, the objective of ultimately occupying national leadership is designed to be achieved more through elite politics than popular groundswell. Mr. Pawar's national aspirations were based on his famed networking abilities across party lines, and not so much on the numerical strength of his party in the Lok Sabha. In this strategy, even a model presence of the party outside the home state, even if caused mainly by defections, is enough to carry its leader to the top office. For the function of the party's national presence here is to build up the credentials of the party leader, and to provide a degree of legitimacy to the elite compromise that eventually makes them the Prime Minister.

Similarly, the TMC understands

it would be hard put to compete with the Congress's numbers even if it sweeps Bengal and some tiny pockets of the North-east, its realistic arena of expansion. Therefore, Ms. Banerjee is also banking on an elite compromise should the BJP fall short of the majority mark in 2024. This is why political operatives such as Prashant Kishore and Yashwant Sinha have been duly assigned to maintain a constant line of communication with regional party bosses. The purpose is not so much to forge a pre-election coalition as to nurture a stream of goodwill for Ms. Banerjee across party lines, which might be put to good use in the event of an indecisive mandate.

A perspective

There are a few downsides to the TMC's national ambitions. The party seems unusually secure in its home State of Bengal, with a battered BJP and a dormant Left providing little opposition. Projecting Ms. Banerjee as a likely prime ministerial candidate would likely play well in Bengal, only adding to its dominant position in the State. There is a long-standing yearning among Bengalis to see one of their own occupy the top chair. Even to this day, Bengalis ruefully remember Jyoti Basu's missed opportunity of 1996.

However, outside Bengal (and Bengali-speaking areas), the party that is more likely to appropriate the electoral space of the Congress is AAP and not the TMC. In line with its long-term plans, AAP is laying down deeper roots in new States – building up a local leadership in place of engineering defections; crafting State-specific narratives instead of blanket anti-BJPism, and privileging coherent planning over headline-generating manoeuvres. In cricketing parlance, the TMC is playing T20 cricket while AAP is playing a test match. Even as the daze of the TMC might cause periodic headaches for the Congress, it is still well placed to see off the TMC challenge much like it did with the NCP. It is the steady encroachment of AAP that the Congress should view as the bigger threat.

Asim Ali is a political researcher and columnist based in Delhi

In border stand-off, a manufactured refugee crisis

This issue concerning the EU, Poland, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine subverts aspects of their foreign, domestic agendas



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN

Tensions have flared in Eastern Europe and on the Belarusian-Polish border with thousands of asylum seekers attempting to enter Poland, which constitutes the external border of the European Union (EU). Belarus is accused of permitting visa-free entry to refugees, in particular Kurds, from the war-torn West Asia and encouraging their passage to the EU border. Since the EU's external border constitutes its only line of defence against unwanted migrants, Poland used water cannon and tear gas to repel the asylum-seekers, and except for the gravely ill, those who breached the border have been pushed back. In freezing conditions, some 15 or more refugees have died. This crisis and escalation of rhetoric between the EU, Poland, Belarus, Russia and Ukraine subserve aspects of the foreign and domestic agendas of all these governments.

For Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko, under sanctions by the EU since last year's election

when he secured a sixth dubious term, this is brinkmanship with both the EU and Russia. Belarus has economic and military alliances with Russia, effectively making it the Russian last frontier against an encroaching North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). While Belarus is entirely dependent on Russia, this does not preclude a client state from proving a difficult partner. North Korea is troublesome for China, Haiti for the United States, and there are other examples nearer home. Mr. Lukashenko even threatened to block the pipeline transporting Russian gas through Belarus to the EU, a threat speedily negated by Moscow.

A focus on the EU
President Lukashenko denies inviting migrants to Belarus, instead blaming the EU for closing its borders. He seeks to pressure the EU with a scenario akin to the 2015 refugee crisis, when the EU gave money and non-financial incentives to Turkey and certain Libyan warlords to restrain the migration exodus. Finding these tactics blocked, he proposed that Germany take in 2,000 refugees while 7,000 others would be repatriated, but this was rejected, and the majority of migrants are refusing to go home.

Politicians in West and East Europe accuse Moscow as instigator

borders. The 2015 Minsk agreement was designed to end the conflict in Donbass through provincial elections, decentralisation and the restoration of socio-economic relations between Kiev and the breakaway self-styled republics, but there has been no constitutional amendment, no elections, and Donbass is subject to an economic blockade.

Moscow has evidently lost hope in Kiev observing the Minsk agreement for substantial regional autonomy. Russian President Vladimir Putin's decree of 2019 allowed Donbass people to claim Russian citizenship, and the latest Kremlin moves to integrate Donbass economically, will turn Ukraine's east, like Crimea, slowly into a de facto Russian region.

Warsaw's stance

Poland seems the unwilling victim of the tactics of Belarus, but the refugee crisis is a godsend for Warsaw when both Poland and the EU are entangled in a bitter dispute over the rule of law after Poland's Constitutional Tribunal invalidated some provisions of the EU Treaty. Contrary to EU's principles, Warsaw promotes 'traditional values' which include homophobic legislation, LGBT-free zones and a ban on abortions. Poland has imposed a ban on journalists and NGOs within three kilometres of

its frontier, and is under criticism from human rights groups and the Council of Europe, but the tension affords Warsaw scope to boost anti-Russian rhetoric and proclaim itself a defender of Europe, despite anti-immigrant tirades being a staple of its far-right politics. The border problem also gives the EU the opportunity to prove its worth to Poland by extending its fulsome support.

The larger issue

The crisis on the Belarus-Poland border is symptomatic of the wider refugee problem. In recent months the United States has turned away Haitians, Thailand Burmese, India Rohingyas and Afghans. More than 25,000 people arrived in Britain by sea this year, causing British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to fulminate against France's failure to stem the refugees of whom 27 drowned recently.

The migrant crisis is not confined to a few countries, has led to wars like the one between India and Pakistan 50 years ago, and requires corrective action at the transnational level. There are now an estimated 26 million refugees in the world and no country has a creditable record on this issue.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary

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highlighting the importance of vaccination. It is left to the public now to cooperate.

MANI NATARAJAN, Chennai

Contempt of court

The report, "Semi-naked man appears at virtual hearing, court fumes" (December 1), goes to show the state of affairs in India. I have never laughed so much in my 62 years after reading a report! I wonder what is in store for the person. Joy K.V., Kodakara, Thrissur, Kerala

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.

House business

The problem with the running of Parliament starts with the ruling party denying an opportunity to the Opposition to raise issues in the August House (Page 1, December 1). But this is a familiar story as whoever occupies the seat of power ensures that this script continues. It is abominable that the ruling and the Opposition parties have cast democratic norms to the wind. The very idea that Parliament is meant to discuss and debate issues is being forgotten. The Opposition should realise

that creating a ruckus is no civilised way to draw the attention of the Chair and the ruling party. The Opposition should end this practice of rushing to the well; one can protest more effectively from one's seat. In the case of the 12 Rajya Sabha members, while the ruckus they created during the monsoon session is condemnable, they could have been suspended for some time; suspension for the entire winter session is a disproportionately punitive action.

KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI,
Hyderabad

If the Opposition decides to stay away from the entire session, it will only reveal their non-cooperation. In general, these should be the terms to follow: discuss without disruption; do not oppose without delegation; determine without degradation; derive without deviation.

A.J. RANGARAJAN,
Chennai

Follow rules, caution
The abrupt emergence of a new variant of the novel coronavirus, Omicron, is hugely challenging for health services. Though people are

quite familiar with precautions in terms of infection prevention, there seems to be an air of carelessness returning. Neither one or both doses of vaccines guarantee 100% protection. Appropriate behaviour has to be followed by one and all. There is a need to bring back restrictions on gatherings.

RAVI BHUSHAN,
Kurukshetra, Haryana

As the reactions of governments around the world show, we could be getting back to square one as lockdowns, travel bans,

quarantine and wearing masks loom large. Booster jabs must be thought of.

PRABHU RAJ R.,
Bengaluru

■ Vaccine equity is the issue of paramount importance. The Indian government must be on the alert and prepare the country's health infrastructure for any emergency situations. Past experiences should help.

PRIYANSHU SHARMA,
Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh

■ It is encouraging that States are alert to the need to follow guidelines besides



A capital functioning from different regions

Distributed development and decentralised governance will pave the way for an inclusive Andhra Pradesh



K.T. RAVINDRAN
& ANJALI KAROL MOHAN

The Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Repeal Bill, 2021, aiming to repeal the earlier laws that stipulated a three-capitals plan for the State, was passed by the Andhra Pradesh (A.P.) Assembly on November 22, 2021. That the current government would like to introduce a comprehensive, complete, and better Bill afresh is indicative of its resolve to utilise decentralisation for an inclusive A.P.

Decentralised development

Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated into A.P. and Telangana under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act of 2014 with the capital, Hyderabad, going to Telangana. Soon after, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs constituted the K.C. Sivaramakrishnan Expert Committee to come up with a strategy for the new capital of A.P. After State-wide public consultations and studies, the committee recommended the trifurcation of primary capital functions. In doing so, it advocated a decentralised model of development as against the 19th century visions of concentrating wealth in select centers to create megacities like Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

The State has three distinct regions with uneven socio-economic development. The Rayalseema region in the south-west, comprising the Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool districts, has dismal development indices. Similarly, the culturally rich Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam to the north-east support vast forest tracts and tribal belts that are deprived of development. In both these areas, deficiency of basic services, inadequate social and physical infrastructure and low employment opportunities pose serious challenges. In contrast, coastal A.P., comprising nine districts, is a better developed region. The regional imbalance is further compounded by a similar spatial imbalance of urban settlements.



Locating the capital at Vijayawada would further the asymmetry as historically, such developments have inhibited the aspirations of other urban settlements. The suggested trifurcation provided an opportunity to correct the regional imbalance and redistribute wealth. However, the then A.P. government chose to ignore the recommendations of the committee and selected an area of Vijayawada, which was specifically classified as unsuitable by the committee. The unsuitability was premised on the area being a part of the floodplains of the Krishna River; supporting fertile agricultural land; and having soil that is not conducive for construction. Instead, the government chose to opt for a green field city – Amravati – as its capital, but not without losing out on the opportunity to correct spatial imbalances in regional development and settlement patterns in the State.

Decentralised development – spatial and administrative – has been advocated by many committees since the 1950s through the 1980s to finally enacted as the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution. The distribution of the capital functions to several locations is one way of decontrolling development. It is neither a new nor a novel idea. Maharashtra, for example, performs its capital functions from Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur. In Madhya Pradesh, while the executive and legislative functions are performed from the capital at Bhopal, the High Court is located at Jabalpur with Circuit Benches at Indore and Gwalior, respectively. Jammu and Srinagar have been performing the capital functions for the State (now Union Territory) of Jammu and Kashmir. While Uttar Pradesh functions from Prayagraj (Allahabad) and Lucknow, Uttarakhand has declared that

would be its summer capital. South Africa has three capitals: Pretoria (executive); Bloemfontein (judicial); and Cape Town (legislative). None of these functions is in Johannesburg, the largest city in the country.

The historically perpetuated regional imbalances in A.P. as well as its elongated shape necessitate a 'multi-nodal region'. In 2019, the then government revisited the decision on Amravati. It appointed yet another committee with a mandate to suggest a "comprehensive development strategy for all-round balanced development of the state, including the Capital". The committee's views were aligned with the earlier committees' views on decentralising capital functions while also recommending a scaling down of the proposed works at Amravati.

Here we would like to draw out the subtle, yet critical, difference between decentralised capitals and decentralising capital functions. While the former assumes three capitals anchored around the functions of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, the latter connotes one seat of capital – symbolically and physically – with the three functions being performed in different locations. Both the committees have recommended the latter. Embedded within this thinking are the objectives of creating pluralisation of services and/or conduits for services and the attendant dispersal of geographic space, one that responds to regional development needs. The second committee too premised its recommendations on the understanding that the State, while well-endowed with natural resources, showcases regional variations that need corrective measures. An emerging imperative therefore was to trigger development in the Rayalseema districts as well as the north-

eastern belt while simultaneously reducing pressure on the coast. In line with these imperatives, the second committee recommended distributed development and decentralised governance. The already functioning Grama Sachivalayams ensuring administration at the lowest level underpinned this recommendation.

Two principles

Guiding the decentralising capital functions recommendation were two foundational principles. First, development interventions should derive from the 'genius' of the geography rather than externally imposed, contextually blind suggestions. Second, while focusing on infrastructural development, there should be 'positive constraints' in order to protect the natural resource base that must be mapped. Deriving from these guiding principles, the committee reiterated the earlier committee's recommendations of decentralising capital functions (as against three capitals). In the proposed decentralised 'capital functions' strategy, the committee recommended that the Amravati-Mangalagiri complex host the Legislative Assembly (winter), Governor's seat and the Chief Minister's camp of office. The Secretariat was proposed at the Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region (VMR), preferably away from the coast and away from Visakhapatnam city, closer to Vizianagram. The High Court was to be located at Kurnool. High Court benches were proposed in the Amaravati-Mangalagiri complex and the VMR. The idea was to trigger a just model of development while taking services to people.

The recommendations of both the committees to distribute capital functions predates the pandemic which has exposed the massive inequalities both at the national and State levels and the fallacies of centralising growth. While the pandemic is a reminder that urbanisation must be a balanced, equitable and inclusive process, floods and droughts are a warning against urbanising the floodplains of our rivers.

K.T. Ravindran, former Chairman of the Delhi Urban Art Commission, was member of both committees, and Anjali Karol Mohan, visiting faculty, NLSIU, Bangalore, was member of the second committee. Mahavir, Professor and former Dean, SPA, New Delhi, contributed to this article. Views are personal

Errors of judgment

There seems to be a palpable error in a recent Allahabad High Court order on POCSO which must be set right



R.K. VIJ

The Allahabad High Court recently held that oral sex with a minor (aged about 10 in this case) is not a case of 'aggravated penetrative sexual assault' under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. This is shocking as Section 5(m) of the Act clearly lays down that "whoever commits penetrative sexual assault on a child below twelve years" is said to commit "aggravated penetrative sexual assault". Section 6 prescribes punishment with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than 10 years but may extend to imprisonment for life.

Though para 16 of the judgment replicated Sections 3 to 10 of the Act, all verbatim, including Section 5(m), Justice Anil Kumar Ojha, in para 17, concluded that "putting penis in mouth does not fall in the category of aggravated (penetrative) sexual assault or sexual assault". There seems to be a palpable error of law which must be set right quickly.

Protecting children

The POCSO was enacted specially to protect children (of any sex) from offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography, realising the fact that a large number of such offences were neither specifically provided for nor adequately penalised. The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Act reinforces the legislative intent, which was made clear by providing neutral definitions and enhanced punishments for various offences of sexual nature. Though Section 42 on 'alternate punishment' was specifically introduced in POCSO to award greater punishment, in case of difference when compared to any other law in force, the Indian Penal Code was also amended to remove anomalies in the quantum of punishment for same or similar offences.

Second, there is no ambiguity about the language used in Section 5 of the Act. Recently, the Supreme Court, while dismissing the requirement of skin-to-skin physical contact in cases of sexual assault, held that where the language of a statute was clear, the intention of the legislature was to be gathered from the language used. In the absence of any ambiguity of language used in Section 5 about the definition of 'aggravated penetrative sexual assault', there was no reason for the Court to deviate from the law and award lesser punishment. The 'rule of lenity',

though not discussed in the judgment, had no application in the case.

Third, it was not a case where the Court had any discretion to award lesser punishment than the minimum 10 years as prescribed in Section 6 of POCSO. Earlier, the Courts had discretion under Section 376 (punishment for rape) of the IPC to award lesser punishment than the minimum prescribed by recording 'adequate and specific reasons'. The Supreme Court, in *State of Rajasthan v. Vinod Kumar* (2012), set aside the High Court order which reduced sentences less than the minimum without recording 'adequate and special reasons'. However, this discretion was taken away by amending Section 376 of the IPC in February 2013. Since the POCSO Act does not provide any discretion in awarding punishment of imprisonment, the High Court was mandated to adhere to the statutory provisions.

Decision to be scrutinised

Four, the High Court did not deliberate on the reasons for not considering the offence as being of aggravated nature. The age of the victim was recorded as about 10 years and did not fall even under the category of marginal difference from 12 years. The Supreme Court has held that recording of reasons by a judge is not a mere task of formality, but an exercise of judicial accountability and transparency. This makes the decision available for further scrutiny at the touchstone of reason and justice. Five, it was not even a case where the provision of minimum punishment of 10 years imprisonment for aggravated penetrative sexual assault was under challenge for being disproportionate (to the objective of protecting children aged less than 12 years) as compared to the gravity of the offence under Article 14 of the Constitution. When no such test of reasonableness was under scrutiny, the Court fell into error by not considering the offence under the applicable relevant sections.

Despite quoting the relevant sections of 'aggravated penetrative sexual assault', the High Court overlooked Section 5(m) of POCSO and convicted the accused for 'penetrative sexual assault' with lesser punishment. Since monitoring of implementation of the Act is the responsibility of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, the State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, and the State government, this decision, which appears to be per incuriam, must be challenged so that the accused is not allowed to escape from the clutches of the appropriate sections of the POCSO Act.

R.K. Vij is a senior IPS officer of Chhattisgarh and views are personal

STATE OF PLAY

A blow to Kerala's exceptionalism

The State is facing a loss of credibility as it records a huge backlog of COVID-19 deaths

C. MAYA

The COVID-19 death reconciliation exercise in Kerala, taking place since October 22, has been a revelation of sorts. The exercise has added 10,678 more deaths to the State's official list of COVID-19 fatalities, accounting for 26.7% of the total 39,955 COVID-19 deaths declared so far in the State (as of November 29). This makes Kerala the State with the second-highest COVID-19 toll in India. These are mind-boggling figures, given that the State Death Authorisation Committee has till date received over 26,000 appeals for inclusion of names in the fatality list, of which less than 7,000 have been included after scrutiny.

The entire exercise has punched holes in the State's pandemic narrative of having one of the best containment strategies, as evidenced by a steady and low case fatality rate.

Such tales of exceptionalism are always looked at with scepticism by epidemiologists and public health experts.

And while the State will be appreciated for undertaking the death reconciliation exercise seriously, the loss of credibility is something that it will find hard to live down.

The question being asked is whether the State administration ever saw the true picture of the impact of the pandemic. This is because even when many vigilant public health experts and clinicians pointed out discrepancies in the reporting of deaths, the wide disparities in the case fatality rate between districts, and the need to pay attention to the fact that many patients were dying at home, the State continued to be in denial.

Some public health experts point out that for a State which prided itself on the robustness of its health system, its infrastructure, and the efficiency and expertise of its human resources, this attempt to project itself as an exceptional story for short-term political gains was immoral. In perpetuating this myth, the State got sidetracked from the only goal that it should have focused on, which was mortality reduction.

"The mortality of severe COVID-19 cases, which are managed by invasive mechanical ventilation in our public hospitals, is nearly 100%, which is unacceptable." There are only two nurses per shift in ICUs for 20-25 patients, he says, adding that if "more attention was paid to training and developing dedicated critical care teams for ICUs, more lives could have been saved."

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DATA POINT



To inoculate all adults by the end of the year, 20.5 million doses need to be administered daily on average in December

Inoculation rate improves

The average rate of daily COVID-19 vaccinations in India increased between November 21 and 30 compared to the previous 10-day period of the month. During the last 10 days of November, 7.6 million doses were administered on average daily in the country compared to the 5.7 million doses administered between November 11 and 20. Between November 21 and 30, the average daily doses administered increased significantly in several major States such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, they decreased marginally in Telangana and Assam. By The Hindu Data Team

Phases	Doses / day (mn)	Cumulative doses by Dec. 31 (mn)
Phase 5 pace (June 21 - June 30)	5.6	1,365.8
Phase 5 pace (July 1 - July 10)	4	1,081.3
Phase 5 pace (July 11 - July 20)	3.9	1,065.6
Phase 5 pace (July 21 - July 31)	5	1,237.2
Phase 5 pace (Aug 1 - Aug 10)	4.9	1,118.2
Phase 5 pace (Aug 11 - Aug 20)	5.7	1,139.9
Phase 5 pace (Aug 21 - Aug 31)	6.2	1,419.2
Phase 5 pace (Sep 1 - Sep 10)	7.6	1,589.4
Phase 5 pace (Sep 11 - Sep 20)	8.8	1,724.9
Phase 5 pace (Sep 21 - Sep 30)	7.2	1,556.1
Phase 5 pace (Oct 1 - Oct 10)	6.2	1,466.6
Phase 5 pace (Oct 11 - Oct 20)	4.7	1,341.1
Phase 5 pace (Oct 21 - Oct 31)	5.9	1,428.8
Phase 5 pace (Nov 1 - Nov 10)	4	1,310
Phase 5 pace (Nov 11 - Nov 20)	5.7	1,404.4
Phase 5 pace (Nov 21 - Nov 30)	7.6	1,476.2
Target pace (Dec 1 - Dec 31)	20.5	1,889.4

■ SEVEN-DAY AVERAGE | The seven-day rolling average of daily doses administered stood at 8.1 million on November 20 after dropping to 3 million on November 6

Seven-day average of daily doses (in million)

OCT. 11, 2021 NOV. 30, 2021

■ SHARE OF POPULATION | Till November 30, 48% of the country's adult population was fully vaccinated, while 83% had received at least one dose. In seven States/UTs, fewer than 40% of adults were fully vaccinated

The map shows the % of adults vaccinated with at least one dose

The map shows the % of adults vaccinated with both doses

% WHO GOT ONE DOSE >85% 75-85% <75%

% WHO GOT BOTH DOSES >60% 40-60% <40%

U.P. M.P. Maharashtra Tamil Nadu West Bengal Gujarat Bihar Karnataka Odisha Rajasthan Telangana Assam A.P. Chhattisgarh Jharkhand Kerala Haryana Delhi Punjab Himachal J&K Uttarakhand Tripura Meghalaya Manipur Goa Chandigarh Arunachal Puducherry Mizoram Nagaland D.N.H. D.D. A.N.I. Islands Ladakh Sikkim Lakshadweep

STATE OF PLAY

The chart shows the avg. daily doses administered between November 11 and 20 (P1) and November 21 and 30 (P2) in all States/UTs. An increase in the average daily doses in P2 compared to P1 is indicated by (●) and a decrease in shown by (○)

Average daily doses (million)

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO DECEMBER 2, 1971

Anti-social activities in Rajasthan

It is not dacoity, robbery, murder or theft which is giving the Rajasthan police a trying time. It is the student and the worker who are turning police officials' hair permanently grey. In 1966 and 1967, there were only nine and four students' agitations respectively. These figures jumped to 69 in 1968, 119 in 1969 and 97 in 1970. Similarly, labour agitations, which were limited to below 25 before 1968, jumped to the century mark in 1969 and 1970. Not far behind these two categories of troublemakers are the politicians, whose agitations were below a dozen in 1966 but have now, in the last two years, reached the half-century level. The problem with handling this type of law-breaker is that the police are practically hamstrung because of political implications and have to tread extremely warily. Too often has police action in such cases resulted in judicial enquiries which have embarrassed the police to no small extent. Consequently, in dealing with students, workers or politicians on the rampage, the police tend to be overcautious, which is not at all conducive to the maintenance of law and order. A case in point is the gherao of the Vice-Chancellor of Jodhpur University by students some time ago. The police refused to break the gherao on the plea that such action would aggravate the situation.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO DECEMBER 2, 1921

The most drunken place

Surat, the old gateway of the English to India and the cradle, so to speak, of the Indian British Empire, it would appear, also the most drunken part of the country. Mr. A.L. Emanuel, I.C.S., in one of his papers read before the East India Association, London, on the city of Surat, speaking of the Kolis, a unique race of hardy seamen, fishermen and labourers of the place, makes the following admissions regarding the original importers of the curse into the historic city. "Only one great fault have these people, over-fondness for the toddy cup, which the countless river side palms under Government control supply, and for the less wholesome factory-made liquor which Government distills for the Indian public-house. Surat has the credit or the discredit of being perhaps the most drunken place in India. Here again, perhaps, we have a trace of fashion set by the old English merchant adventurers; but potations which would be taken as moderate in England would create scandal or alarm in frugal and well regulated India."</

FROM PAGE ONE

Omicron scare grounds international flight plan

Mr. Bhushan said the Maharashtra order was in divergence with the Ministry's SOPs. These guidelines require only passengers from "at-risk" countries to undergo the RT-PCR test, and ask for institutional quarantine only if someone tests positive. Those who test negative have to undergo home quarantine for seven days and take a test on the eighth day. The Ministry of Civil Aviation clarified that passengers transiting through "at-risk" countries, but with their journey originating from a non "at-risk" country would be exempted from RT-PCR test on arrival.

Europe and 10 countries are on the Health Ministry's "at-risk" countries for which there are stricter test-

ing norms. Passengers from "at-risk" countries have a long wait ahead once they arrive at an airport in India. As per the guidelines, they are required to wait until they get their test results before leaving the airport premises.

There was criticism from the aviation industry on the Government's decision to postpone re-opening of full international flights. "We need to learn to live with the virus. Perhaps we could test everyone on arrival for the next one or two years, instead of going from one knee-jerk reaction to another," an airline executive said.

(With inputs from Bindu Shajan Perappadan, Shomojit Banerjee and Nikhil M. Babu)

GST collections record a surge in November

The June tally of ₹92,849 crore was only revised lower by ₹49 crore. In all, the total GST revenues for the year so far have been revised lower by about ₹6,600 crore. Official sources said, these revisions did not constitute a reduction in revenues and were necessitated by extended return filing dates during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emphasising that November's GST kitty was second only to the collections this April, the Ministry sought to differentiate the significance of the former by stressing that April's collections related to year-end revenues.

Similarly, October's Rs. 1.3 lakh crore collection also included the impact of returns required to be filed

Bombay HC grants Sudha Bharadwaj bail

She was produced before additional sessions judge, Pune, K.D. Vadane, who remanded her in police custody for 10 days. On November 22, the public prosecutor filed a report seeking extension of the period for investigation. On November 26, she filed for bail under the Code of Criminal Procedure as the 90-day period from the date of her arrest and production before the magistrate had expired. Judge Vadane, however, extended the period of detention by 90 days.

Advocates Yug Chaudhary and Payoshi Roy, appearing for Ms. Bharadwaj, filed for default bail on the ground that Judge Vadane was not competent to extend the detention by 90 days and for taking cognisance of the offences as he was not a designated special judge un-

Bengaluru shows nixed, says Kunal Kamra

"I guess this is also part of the COVID protocol and new guidelines. I suppose I am seen as a new variant of the virus now," Mr. Kamra added in the tweet.

However, in the case of Mr. Kamra's shows, scheduled from December 1-19, the police have not issued any letter to either the venue owners or the organisers, and there is no clarity as to why the shows were cancelled.

A group of "local residents" held protests in front of the venue, Artkhoj, in J.P. Nagar on Tuesday objecting to Mr. Kamra performing there and the police rushed to the spot and dispersed the crowds, said Srinath Mahadev Joshi, Deputy Commissioner of Police (South). "The venue owner has cancelled the shows and we had nothing to do with it. Since it is an indoor programme, they need not take our permission," he said. "We are not in a position to comment on the matter any further," he said.

representative of Artkhoj told *The Hindu*.

A senior police official said the identity of the protesters was not clear. "The venue has come up in a residential area violating norms, and there have been protests against commercialisation earlier too," an official said, adding that the "residents" objected to a "controversial comedian using filthy language performing in their locality".

Kjeld Shresth, a city-based comic scheduled to perform with Mr. Kamra on December 4 at the venue, said he was at a loss of words and heartbroken.

"I never thought my city was so intolerant of comics. Munawar Faruqui and Kunal Kamra shows have been cancelled. Even my show is cancelled. It has hit home now. The audience and the comics are both feeling utterly helpless. This will have a chilling effect on the comics and they will think twice before making a joke," he said.

There is no UPA now, says Mamata

Bengal CM meets NCP chief in Mumbai to discuss formation of a strong national front against BJP

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Trinamool Congress chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) no longer existed.

Taking a potshot at the Congress, Ms. Banerjee said she, along with others, "is ready to fight against the BJP, but she cannot do anything if someone is not willing to fight".

Ms. Banerjee, who is on a three-day visit to Maharashtra, met Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar at the latter's residence in Mumbai. Speaking after the meeting, Ms. Banerjee said, "I believe that a strong alternative needs to be raised against the fascism growing in the country. It cannot be done alone. Whoever is stronger, wherever, should do it. Sharadji



Power play: NCP President Sharad Pawar with West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee after a meeting in Mumbai ■ PTI

is the senior-most leader with whom I have worked and that's why I have come to hold discussions with him." The Trinamool chief had met Shiv Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut on Tuesday.

Mr. Pawar was, however,

more cautious in his reply on whether the Congress would be dropped from a united front against the BJP. "There is no question of omitting anyone. We are talking about taking everyone along. Whoever is ready to work hard and ready to join hands with others will be taken

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Defeating the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) without the Congress can only be a dream for regional parties, party general secretary K.C. Venugopal said on Wednesday after West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's assertion that the BJP can be defeated if all regional parties come together. "Everybody knows

along," he said.

Asked about the UPA and whether Mr. Pawar should lead it, Ms. Banerjee retorted: "Which UPA are you talking about?" "There is no UPA," she added.

Mr. Pawar, explaining the reason behind the meeting, said they discussed national

the reality of Indian politics. Without Congress, if anybody thinks of defeating the BJP is only a dream," Mr. Venugopal told news agency ANI, without elaborating.

The latest exchange only adds to the sense of tension between the Congress and the Trinamool after the latter's ambitious expansion plans across the country that involved inducting Congress leaders.

politics and the need to form a strong alternative front.

"Her intention is to set up a collective leadership platform by bringing like-minded people to provide strong alternative to the BJP. This platform should be established before 2024 elections..," Mr. Pawar said.

IN BRIEF



Commercial LPG prices increased by over ₹100

HYDERABAD

State-owned oil marketing corporations Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum and Hindustan Petroleum have raised the price of the 19-kg commercial LPG cylinder by more than ₹100 with effect from December 1, even as they left household cooking gas prices unchanged. The revision follows the ₹266 increase the companies had announced last month in the price of the refill.

NIA Court rejects bail plea of Anand Teltumbde

MUMBAI
Special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court on Wednesday rejected the plea for interim bail filed by Anand Teltumbde to be with his mother after the death of his brother Milind Teltumbde on November 13. Milind Teltumbde was among 26 members of the Communist Party of India (Maoist) who were killed in an encounter in the Gadchiroli district.

Order on registration of BS-IV vehicles modified

NEW DELHI
The sales of BS-IV vehicles uploaded on e-Vahan portal before March 31, 2020 can be registered by transport authorities, the Supreme Court has directed in an order. This is provided that the temporary/permanent registration of these vehicles was granted before March 31 last year. The court ordered authorities to scrutinise records carefully to ensure that the sales are genuine.

SC to hear appeal on Nahargarh sanctuary

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Wednesday took on board an appeal filed by the Rajasthan Government against an order of the National Green Tribunal to shut down commercial activities in the notified area of Nahargarh wildlife fort and sanctuary from December 1. The court

+
commercial activities in the notified area of Nahargarh wildlife fort and sanctuary from December 1. The court questioned the idea of having a light and sound show in a protected forest area.

Two militants killed in J&K's Pulwama district

Srinagar
Two militants, including a "commander" of the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and a foreign associate, were killed in an encounter in Rajpora area in Pulwama district on Wednesday. "The militant commander of the JeM, Yasir Paray, who was an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) expert, was killed along with foreign militant Furqan in an encounter," IGP Vijay Kumar said. He termed the killings as a "big success to forces".

1,160 elephants killed in a decade

RTI reply reveals that 741 elephants died from electrocution in the country

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

Keshav Prasad Maurya, a Deputy Chief Minister of poll-bound Uttar Pradesh, on Wednesday in a two-line tweet called for the construction of a temple in Mathura at a time when right-wing groups are demanding the removal of a Mughal-era mosque located adjacent to the Krishna temple in the city.

"Ayodhya, Kashi banya mandir jari hain, Mathura ki tarari hai [A grand temple is underway in Ayodhya and Varanasi. Preparations are on for Mathura]," Mr. Maurya tweeted. His pinned tweet, which triggered a political storm on social media, carried hashtags of "Jai Shri Ram," "Jai Shiv Shambhu" and "Jai Radhe Krishna."

Main accused in Assam lynching dies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The main accused in the mob lynching of a student leader in eastern Assam's Jorhat on November 29 died in an accident while allegedly trying to escape from police custody.

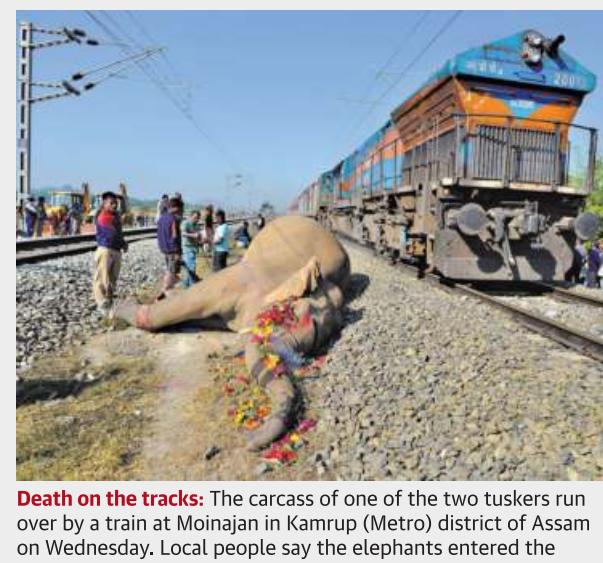
Neeraj Das died when hit by an escort vehicle after jumping off a police van on December 1, the police said.

Big loss

Figures provided by the Union Environment and Forest Ministry on the deaths of elephants across the country

Cause of death	No. of elephants killed*
Electrocution	741
Train hits	186
Poaching	169
Poisoning	64
Total	1,160

(*2009-10 to December 31, 2020)



Death on the tracks: The carcass of one of the two tuskers run over by a train at Moinajan in Kamrup (Metro) district of Assam on Wednesday. Local people say the elephants entered the village to feed on paddy. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

number of elephants poisoned, 32, and Odisha stood second with 15.

The Ministry said in the document that India had a total of 29,964 wild elephants as per an estimate done in 2017. The southern region comprising Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra

man and Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra accounted for the highest population – 14,612 elephants.

A Permanent Coordination Committee has been constituted between the Ministry of Railways and the MoEFCC for preventing elephant deaths due to train hits.

Got convictions in all Godhra cases: SIT

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) which probed the post-Godhra riots of 2002 said on Wednesday that every one of the cases it investigated led to convictions.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwil-

kar, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi said trial court had used the evidence collected by the SIT to reach its conclusions on the guilt of the accused persons.

Previously, the SIT had maintained that it had done an impeccable job of the investigation.

The SIT was

countering allegations made by Zakia Jafri, the widow of Congress leader Ehsan Jafri who was killed by a mob, of its "collaboration" with conspirators. Ms. Jafri alleged a larger conspiracy behind the riots.

The SIT had filed a closure report in February 2012. It had given a clean chit

to Narendra Modi, the current Prime Minister, and 63 others, saying there was "no prosecutable evidence" against them.

A 'protest petition' filed by Ms. Jafri was dismissed by the Magistrate. The Gujarat High Court too had refused to entertain Ms. Jafri.

Winter in northern India to be warmer than normal: IMD

New forecasting system based on colour codes introduced

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

Winter in northern India will unlikely be harsh with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting "normal to above normal" minimum temperatures for December-February.

These elevated temperatures are likely to be prevalent not only in northwest India but also south and northeast India and parts of the Himalayan foothills.

The IMD, however, did not provide by how many degrees, on average, would temperatures be elevated. Overall, winter temperatures have been on the rise. The IMD which started issuing winter forecasts in 2016, except for 2017, had forecast warm winters for all years since then. Warm winters, experts say, are a sign of global warming. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



Warm winters, experts say, are a sign of global warming. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

they would no longer give the actual expected temperature deviation but only colour code regions indicating if they were normal, above or below normal.

"Above normal would mean more than half the standard deviation of a region's temperature," said D.S. Pai, who heads the IMD's climate division in Pune. He said that because all regions had different normal temperatures, it would not be feasible to provide individual temperature deviations.

Cloud cover, said Mr. Pai,

was one of the key factors influencing minimum temperatures as they influenced how the ground heated up. "This doesn't however mean there won't be cold waves."

Maximum temperatures were likely to be "below normal" over most parts of the country except over some parts of northwest India and most parts of northeast India, where normal to above normal

Winter rains over south Peninsular India, particularly Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Rayalseema, Kerala and Mahe and south interior Karnataka, are most likely to be above normal (more than 132% of the Long Period Average).

Low-pressure area
Currently the Andaman Sea is seeing a cyclone precursor, called a low-pressure area. The IMD has forecast it to intensify into a cyclone, called Jawad, by December 3 that is likely to approach the Andhra Pradesh and Odisha coasts.

Centre seeks names for MSP committee

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Moving forward on the Prime Minister's promise to set up a committee to discuss minimum support prices (MSP) for crops among other issues, the Centre has informally asked protesting farm unions to suggest five names to be part of the panel. However, the leaders of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), a joint platform of the unions, say no formal written communication has yet been received.

The move came a day after Parliament repealed the three contentious farm reform laws as had been demanded by the protesting unions.

Their other key demand is for a legal guarantee that all farmers will receive remunerative prices, one and a half times the comprehensive cost of production, for all their crops.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has argued that the farmers' demand on MSP would be fulfilled by the formation of the committee, and urged protesters to go home.

CBSE exam question on 2002 riots causes stir

It violated guidelines, says CBSE

IN BRIEF



e-Shram portal clocks 10 crore registrations

NEW DELHI
The number of registrations by unorganised sector workers on the Centre's e-Shram portal crossed 10 crore on Wednesday, Labour and Employment Minister Bhupender Yadav said. In a tweet, Mr. Yadav said the portal was a symbol of PM Narendra Modi's commitment to the slogan "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas".

India issued 200 e-emergency visas

NEW DELHI
After the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in August, India issued 200 e-Emergency X-Miscellaneous Visas to Afghan nationals who wanted to leave the country for a period of six months, the Government informed the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. Stay visa is granted to 4,557 Afghan nationals in India keeping in view the present situation in that country. India also evacuated its embassy staff along with 112 Hindus and Sikhs from Afghan on a special flight.

Govt. notifies Farm Laws Repeal Act, 2021

NEW DELHI
The Centre on Wednesday notified a legislation to repeal the three agriculture laws against which thousands of farmers have been protesting and nearly 700 have lost lives over a year now. The Farm Laws Repeal Act, 2021 received the assent of the President of India on November 30, said a gazette notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice. This law was passed by Parliament on November 29 without debate in both houses, amid massive protests by Opposition MPs.

Why should we apologise, ask 12 MPs

Suspension will help the Government bring in more controversial legislation, says Opposition

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The impasse between the Opposition and the Government over the suspension of 12 MPs from the Rajya Sabha continued as neither side was willing to concede any ground.

The Government wants the "errant" MPs to apologise unconditionally on the floor of the House. On the first day of the sit-in at the Mahatma Gandhi statue on Parliament premises, the MPs said it was for the Government to apologise for undermining parliamentary democracy.

The Rajya Sabha saw four adjournments on Wednesday, each time after Opposition leader Mallikarjun Kharge sought to raise the suspension issue. The Opposition parties held another round of meeting at Mr. Kharge's residence in the evening to discuss the strate-



Voice outside: Rahul Gandhi and other leaders expressing solidarity with the suspended Rajya Sabha members outside Parliament on Wednesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

gy ahead. The Trinamool was invited, but kept away. According to sources, the suspended MPs will continue their protest and simultaneously, the issue will be raised in the House.

Congress MP Syed Naseer Hussain said, "What should we say sorry for? Parliament

is meant to raise the issues concerning the people of the country. Parliament is meant for debate, discussion and dialogue. Do you think we need to apologise to the Government for asking questions?"

The leaders said the suspension would help the Go-

vernment to bring in more controversial Bills. Suspended CPI(M) Rajya Sabha floor leader Elamaram Karrem said the BJP Government found itself in a tough spot with many of its erstwhile allies and supporting parties deserting them. "Now the Opposition strength is less.

Ensure dignity of House, Speaker asks senior MPs

NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday was adjourned for half an hour during Question Hour as Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) members continued to protest on issues related to Central procurement of paddy in the State. Speaker Om Birla appeared visibly upset and used stern words on the need to run the House and maintain decorum. He asked senior leaders of the House to work out "collective steps" to ensure that the House is run with the required dignity.

Demand for MSP guarantee, ex gratia

Pay ₹5 cr. to kin of dead farmers: MP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Issues related to compensation for families of those who lost their lives in the year-long protests by farmers against the three Central farm laws, a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP) for produce, arrest of activists under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and a call for bringing in a uniform civil code dominated Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, the first day that such mentions could be made in the current session.

Congress leader Manish Tewari said the Government should provide ₹5 crore as compensation to each of the families of the farmers who died during the agitation and accept the other demands of the tillers, including a legal guarantee of the MSP for certain crops.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha during the Zero Hour, the MP from Punjab's Anandpur Sahib said it was because of the historic farmers' movement that the three "black farm laws" had been taken back. "I would like to demand that a list of those farmers [who died in the agitation] be prepared and their families given ₹5 crore compensation each. The farmers' demand of [legal guarantee for] MSP and other demands should be met. The Government should do justice to them," he said.

Nishikant Dubey of the BJP, raising the issue of uniform civil code, referred to the Allahabad High Court asking the Centre last month to consider setting up a panel for implementing the mandate of Article 44 of the Constitution, which speaks about a uniform civil code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.

"Even after 75 years of Independence, we have not been able to bring in a uniform civil code. I urge the Government to soon bring a law for that," he said.



lated to agriculture and contract farming.

Detention of students

Kunwar Danish Ali of the BSP raised the issue of some students of universities such as Jamia Millia Islamia in detention under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, and demanded that they be released. Earlier, he sought to raise the issue of MSP guarantee but the Chair asked him to stick to the issue he had given notice for.

"Especially, students of Jamia Millia Islamia, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Aligarh Muslim University, who did much to raise awareness and shed light on important issues, have been put in jail misusing the UAPA. These students should be released from jail immediately," he said.

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the mandate of Article 44 of the Constitution, which speaks about a uniform civil code for the citizens throughout the territory of India.

"I would like to demand that a list of those farmers [who died in the agitation] be prepared and their families given ₹5 crore compensation each. The farmers' demand of [legal guarantee for] MSP and other demands should be met. The Government should do justice to them," he said.

Manan Beniwal of the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party demanded that the cases filed against farmers during the agitation be taken back.

All these demands have been consistently made by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha over the past few months even after the Government repealed the three laws re-

Bill to regulate IVF clinics passed in Lok Sabha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2020, that proposes the establishment of a national registry and registration authority for all clinics and medical professionals serving in the field.

Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, while moving the Bill for passage, said several suggestions of the Standing Committee have been considered by the Government to improve the legislation. The Bill seeks to regulate and supervise Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) clinics and

ART banks, prevent misuse, adopt safe and ethical practice and so on.

"Many such ART clinics have been running without regulation. A need was felt for regulation of such clinics as there are implications on health of those who undertake the procedure," Mr. Mandaviya told the House.

Opening the debate, Congress's Karti Chidambaram said this law is Victorian as it does not include lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender people (LGBTQ) or single men for exercising the right. He also urged the Government to consider supporting poor childless parents to take ART's help.

U.P. reports most UAPA arrests

1,321 held under the Act in 2020 nationwide

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of arrests under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967, followed by Jammu and Kashmir, and Manipur, according to data tabled by the Government in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Uttar Pradesh recorded 361 UAPA arrests, Jammu and Kashmir 346, and Manipur 225 in 2020.

Minister of State for Home Nitinand Rai said in a written reply that as per the Na-

tional Crime Record Bureau's report, "the number of persons arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the years 2019 and 2020 are 1,948 and 1,321 respectively". In another reply, Mr. Rai said that since 2016, 7,243 were arrested under UAPA. Of those, only 212 were convicted and 286 were acquitted.

For more details, please see NAWADCO's website www.nawadco.org.in or Ministry's website www.minorityaffairs.gov.in. Applications to be submitted within 28 days.

Sd/-
CEO
NAWADCO

HIMACHAL PRADESH NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT SOCIETY (HPNRMS)

Forest Road, Solan (HP) Pin Code 173212

(Registration No. 398/2006 dated 27/04/2006 registered under the Societies Act XXI of 1870)

PH. No.: 01792-223004, FAX No. 01792-220064,
email: hpnrms@gmail.com,
website www.hpnrms.org/www.hpidp.org

ADVERTISEMENT NO. : 7/7/2021/HPNRMS

APPLICATION FOR POST OF SUBJECT MATTER SPECIALIST

World Bank assisted "Integrated Development Project (IDP) for Source Sustainability & Climate Resilient Rain-fed Agriculture" has placed demand for Subject Matter Specialist – Communication and Forestry (one position each) to Himachal Pradesh Natural Resource Management Society (HPNRS). HPNRS invites application from the interested candidates which should reach this office through e-mail (hpnrms@gmail.com) on or before 5.00 pm on 15-12-2021. The posts are to be filled purely on CONTRACTUAL BASIS initially for a period of one year. The contract may further be renewed on yearly basis if the performance of the appointee is satisfactory and depending upon the requirement in the Project and services will be co-terminus with the Project period.

The application forms along-with details of Terms of References (ToR) are available on the website www.hpnrms.org and www.hpidp.org under the tab "Advertisement". Interested candidates, fulfilling all the eligibility criteria may download application Performa from the above given sites and submit the application (pdf form only) on prescribed Performa format with duly self attested copies of requisite certificates/documents within in the stipulated time through e-mail (hpnrms@gmail.com). Only the shortlisted candidates will be called for an interview. Canvassing in any form will lead to disqualification and rejection of candidature. The number of vacancies is liable to increase or decrease as per requirement and the process can be terminated at any stage without assigning any reason thereof.

Conservator of Forests
-cum-Executive Officer
HPNRM Society, Solan

HP / 0525/2021-2022

No. KMSCL/EP/1764/2021 Dated : 01.12.2021

e-TENDER NOTICE (Running Contract)

Online bids are invited for the supply and installation of the following equipment for various Government healthcare institutions across Kerala

Sl. No.	Tender No.	Description	Online Pre-Bid Meeting	Last date of Online submission
1.	T425/2021	Neuro Navigation System, EMG/ NCV/EP System, Intra Oral Digital Radiography System, Automated Field Analyzer (Perimeter High End), Retinal Camera for Ophthalmology, DR Screening, Orthopedic OT Table, Electro-Hydraulic, Operating Microscope Co-Observer tube and Tilttable Binocular	07.12.2021 10:30 am	23.12.2021 05:00 p.m.
2.	T426/2021	Hand Held Pulse Oximeter, Portable Echo machine - Pediatric & Neonatal, Automated Elisa Processor for TTD Screening, Fully automated CLIA Analytical Reagents on Rental Basis, JABP Machine	08.12.2021 11:00 am	23.12.2021 05:00 p.m.
3.	T427/2021	Research Microscope, Binocular Microscope LED, Various Types, Embedding station (Fully Automated), Multi Stainer Workstation, Neonatal Ventilator - HFOV, Endo Bronchial Ultrasound System (EBUS), Fibre Optic Video Bronchoscope	13.12.2021 11:00 am	27.12.2021 05:00 p.m.
4.	T428/2021	HDR Brachytherapy Unit, Advanced Electrosurgical Unit with Bipolar Cut & Coagulation, Laser System 60W, Endo Hydraulic C Arm Compatible Urology OT Table, ARGON Plasma Coagulation System with Cautery	14.12.2021 10:30 am	27.12.2021 05:00 p.m.

State Public Sector undertakings and MSMEs registered in the State or registered outside the state shall not be eligible for contracts in India are exempted from remittance of tender document cost and EMD subject to the submission of valid documents provided all the offered products are manufactured by them. Tender documents and all other information related to tender and bidding process can be downloaded from the website www.etenders.kerala.gov.in.

Sdr/- Managing Director (Tender Inviting Authority)

V.O.CHIDAMBARAN PORT TRUST CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT TUTICORIN - 628004.

No. : E(C)/ F.59/PD/Cement Bulk Terminal/E 761/ 2020. Date: 01.12.2021

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDER CUM e-AUCTION (through e-Tendering mode)

National Waqf Development Corporation Limited (NAWADCO),

(Under the aegis of Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India)

Registered Office: Central Office, C.I.N.-U7499DL2013GOI262924, with the mandate to develop Waqf properties in India. Applications are invited from suitable candidates for the following posts in NAWADCO, on contract basis initially for a period of one year :-

S.No.	Name of Post	Number of Post
1	Company Secretary	1
2	Executive Assistant (PS to MD/CEO)	1
3	Legal Executive	1
4	IT Executive	1
5	Architectural Assistant	1
6	HR / Admin. Assistant	1

For more details, please see NAWADCO's website www.nawadco.org.in or Ministry's website www.minorityaffairs.gov.in. Applications to be submitted within 28 days.

Sd/-
CEO
NAWADCO

Employment Notification No. 05/2021 for Jobs in NAWADCO dated 02.12.2021

National Waqf Development Corporation Limited (NAWADCO), has been established under the aegis of Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India registered under the Companies Act 1956 (Corporate Identity Number, CIN-U7499DL2013GOI262924), with the mandate to develop Waqf properties in India. Applications are invited from suitable candidates for the following posts in NAWADCO, on contract basis initially for a period of one year :-

S.No.	Name of Post	Number of Post
1	Company Secretary	1
2	Executive Assistant (PS to MD/CEO)	1
3	Legal Executive	1
4	IT Executive	1
5	Architectural	

IN BRIEF



MP urges BCCI to cancel South Africa tour

NEW DELHI
YSRCP chief whip in the Lok Sabha Margani Bharat Ram has expressed concern that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is pushing ahead with the Indian cricket team's tour of South Africa despite the prevalence of the Omicron variant. He urged that the tour be cancelled.

Train passenger traffic yields ₹15,434.18 crore

NEW DELHI
The Railways has earned revenue of ₹15,434.18 crore from passenger services in the first two quarters of the current year as against ₹15,248.49 crore earned from these services in the entire 2020-21 amid curtailed services due to the pandemic. In the pre-pandemic year 2019-20, the revenue generated from the sale of passenger tickets stood at ₹50,669.09 crore, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

Curriculum must include wisdom of Vedas: panel

Standing committee submits report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
School textbooks should incorporate the "ancient wisdom, knowledge and teachings about life and society from the Vedas and other great Indian texts", according to a parliamentary panel on education.

History textbooks should also give greater importance to unknown freedom fighters, women heroes, the empires of the Deccan and the history of the northeastern region, and the Sikh and Maratha communities, added the panel.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports submitted its report on reforms in the content and design of school textbooks to the Rajya Sabha on November 30. The panel held consultations with a wide range of stakeholders, including the State and Central institutions responsible for drafting textbooks and curricula, as well as education experts and civil society representatives.

A major chunk of the panel's final observations related to history textbooks. "The committee during its interaction noted that many of the historical figures and freedom fighters of [the] Indian freedom struggle have been portrayed in an incorrect manner as offenders. Therefore, the committee is

Tighter curbs prove costly for flyers

To cut waiting time at Delhi airport, many opt for Rapid PCR test which costs 9 times an RT-PCR test

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

As stricter testing norms at airports for international arrivals kicked in on Wednesday, passengers from "at-risk" countries had to brace for massive queues, long waiting time for test results and missed connecting flights. Their only way out was to pay for the expensive Rapid PCR test that cost up to ₹4,500 – nearly nine times the regular test.

"I reached Delhi on Wednesday morning from Spain via Amsterdam. The Delhi airport was in complete mayhem. I had booked an RT-PCR test online, but I still had to stand in a long queue at the airport and then I was told that I would have to wait up to 48 hours for the test result," a young woman passenger told *The Hindu*. She ultimately opted for the Rapid PCR test for which results take about an hour and ended up paying ₹3,900. Yet, it took her two hours to complete various formalities and exit the airport.

"What a money-making racket. If the report can be



Travel blues: Passengers arriving at the T3 Terminal of the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

delivered in one hour, why six hours for others," she asked.

According to the latest guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, all passengers arriving from "at-risk" countries have to undergo an RT-PCR test on arrival and have to wait for the report before exiting the airport and catching a connecting flight. Most airports

offer passengers RT-PCR tests and Rapid PCR tests. While the former costs ₹500 a test, the latter costs ₹3,000 at the Bengaluru airport, ₹3,900 at the Delhi airport and ₹4,500 in the Mumbai airport.

The waiting time for the former is up to six hours, which can get extended if there is a rush, and the latter up to an hour and a half. But

the chaotic scenes awaiting international passengers, particularly those from "at-risk" countries, mean most are forced to dig deep into their pockets.

"I arrived this morning from London and it was a scary and anxious stay at the airport. All they are concerned about is RT-PCR [tests] and absolutely no compliance to general rules like social distancing and ensuring everyone wears a mask. Horrifying," said Pra-chi Saraswat on Twitter.

"Flying with KLM from Copenhagen to Kolkata with 5.5 hours gap between arriving in Delhi at 1:10 a.m. and departing at 6:30 a.m. With current RT-PCR rule who is going to help me board the connecting flight?" wrote traveller Sravasti on the microblogging site.

More data on jabs for children sought

CDSCO awaits information on administration of Covaxin for 2-18 age group

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has sought additional information on administration of Covaxin for children.

Previously, the interim phase 2 and 3 clinical trial data of Covaxin on healthy volunteers aged two to 18 submitted by Bharat Biotech was deliberated at a meeting of the Subject Expert Committee.

The committee recommended the grant of market authorisation for this age group for Restricted Use in Emergency Situation, subject to various conditions, said Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Bharati Pawar, in reply to a question in Parliament on use of Covaxin for children.

The statement comes close on the heels of a study conducted between March 2020 and July 2021 and published recently in *The Lancet Respiratory Medicine*. The study said that school-age children with asthma and previous hospital admission and two or more courses of oral corticosteroids were markedly at increased risk of COVID-19 hospital admission and



Shot in the arm: Bharat Biotech has given trial data on vaccination for children to expert panel. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

should be considered on priority for vaccination. The national incident cohort study was done in children aged five to 17, who were included in the linked dataset of Early Pandemic Evaluation and Enhanced Surveillance. "These findings can be used for informed deliberations on prioritising CO-

nstruction and law Secretaries of the States to know the status of disbursement of funds for the judiciary in each State.

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana has been vocal in pushing the proposal for establishing the National Judicial Infrastructure Corporation to uniformly improve judicial facilities and access to justice.

Funds disbursement

The court said the Centre should meet with the fi-

VID-19 vaccination for children. Consideration needs to be given to extending the offer of vaccination to younger children also," noted the study.

The Global Asthma Report 2018 estimated that 6% of Indian children have asthma. Some estimates suggest that the total number of asthma patients in India could be in the range of 1.5-2 crore.

On booster doses

Ms. Pawar said that while there were countries which were providing booster doses, "in India, the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation and National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 are deliberating and considering scientific evidence related to dose schedule of vaccines as well as the need and justification for booster dose".

SC pushes for council on judicial infrastructure

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday orally said courts cannot wait on the whims and fancies of the Government, but need a proper mechanism for funding the development of judicial infrastructure?

The statement comes

on it would be that they are in the know of things. The composition can be of the Union Minister for Law and Justice, the Secretary, Finance, etc. The States can also be represented," the Bench told the law officer.

Funds disbursement

The court said the Centre should meet with the fi-

nance and law Secretaries of the States to know the status of disbursement of funds for the judiciary in each State.

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana has been vocal in pushing the proposal for establishing the National Judicial Infrastructure Corporation to uniformly improve judicial facilities and access to justice.

India joins G20's Troika with Indonesia and Italy

It is set to take over presidency in 2022

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday joined the G20 'Troika'.

With this move, India has started the procedure for taking over the G20 presidency next year. Troika refers to the top grouping within the G20 that consists of the current, previous and the incoming presidencies – Indonesia, Italy and India.

"India will assume the G20 presidency on December 1, 2022 from Indonesia, and will convene the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.



the G20 before convening the G20 Leaders' Summit scheduled for October 30-31 that was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi where India had raised the issue of Afghanistan's future following the takeover by the Taliban.

Indonesia took over the G20 presidency on Wednesday. In the coming months, Indonesia will hold rounds of discussion at various levels among the members of

Ensure code of ethics is followed on social media'

Panel seeks more Govt. monitoring

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

chitecture of regulation". During the COVID pandemic, more and more people have resorted to these platforms due to closure of cinema halls. The committee is conscious that the information and content portrayed on such platforms can impact viewers, including minor children," it said.

"At the same time, the committee acknowledges that OTT platforms offer freedom to the individual user to decide what to watch, a freedom that should not be abridged by the heavy hand of Government," the panel said.

Referring to the latest 'The Information Technology Guidelines for Intermediaries and Digital Media Ethics Code' Rules, 2021 notified in February this year, the panel said it hoped that the new rules and guidelines would go a "long way in ensuring transparency and accountability for social media platforms with a robust oversight mechanism in the hands of the citizens."

It also hoped that the MIB along with the Ministry of Electronics and Information and Technology will work in tandem to ensure that the code for ethics is followed on digital media also.

The report said that any regulation must have checks and balances to ensure that it is neither misused nor violative of Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution.

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 13416

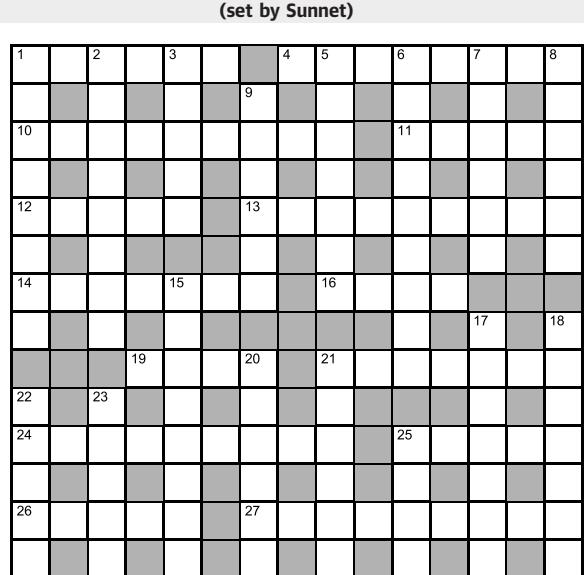
Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

H	O	M	A	G	S	A	N	C	I	Y	
A	E	R	M	D	O	N	A				
R	E	A	L	O	U	D	B	E	G	U	
E	C	V	R	E	A	O	U				
V	I	U	K	E	S	T	T				
I	L	U	K	E	S	T	T				
L	U	K	E	S	T	T					
U	K	E	S	T	T						
K	E	S	T	T							
E	S	T	T								
S	T	T									
T											

TH CROSSWORD

13417

(set by Sunnet)



ACROSS

- 1 Hit and walked out (6)
- 4 Walk across to smash top serve (4,4)
- 10 Some quit dancing after acquiring some sprains and twists (9)
- 11 Improve a meeting (5)
- 12 Beer with a drop of orange (5)
- 13 Engraver's dash does not start at the origin (5-4)
- 14 May possibly become disheartened and leave an insect (4-3)

FAITH

Pleasing, truthful words

Citizens of Ayodhya were delighted at Dasaratha's decision to celebrate Rama's coronation soon. The people expressed their approval of the decision by elaborating on Rama's many auspicious qualities, said Navalpakkam Vasudevachariar in a discourse. Lauding the way Rama addressed people, they said that Rama was a smita bhaashi – He always spoke with a smile on His face. He was a poorva bhashi – He never waited for someone to come and talk to Him. He took the initiative and went out of His way to speak to others. Rama was not interested in unnecessary arguments. And yet, if someone said something unjust, He would be the first to protest. But He would not do this in a harsh manner. His gentility in speech would never be abandoned, even while He pointed out to them the error in their statements.

He never made compromises when it came to telling the truth. In His Speech He was like Brihaspathi. And those who had had a contrary opinion would go away convinced of the validity of what Rama was saying. Rama spoke the truth, and also spoke without hurting anyone. His speech was gentle. He was well versed in the art of governance, and was quite capable of ruling all the three worlds. His anger was never unjust. He punished only those who deserved to be punished. Everyone would be pleased to have Rama as their king, for He had an abundance of desirable traits. Everyone, young and old, prayed for Rama's welfare. Dasaratha's subjects said that Rama deserved to be king.

Rama's eyes were like lotuses, and this showed that He was the Paramatma. In the Bala Kanda of Valmiki Ramayana, the bard says that when Parasurama was about to fight Rama, he saw the latter's lotus-like eyes, and realised that He was face to face with Lord Vishnu Himself.

Vulnerable should put off travel: WHO

The agency warns against blanket travel bans, says 'evidence-informed, risk-based approach' needed

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GENEVA

The WHO said on Tuesday that those not fully vaccinated against COVID-19, including people over 60 years of age, who are also vulnerable to the disease should put off travel to areas with community transmission.

The World Health Organization also said blanket travel bans would not stop the spread of the Omicron variant.

The new COVID-19 variant of concern, which the WHO says poses a "very high" risk globally, has prompted many countries to shut borders.

"Blanket travel bans will not prevent the international spread, and they place a heavy burden on lives and livelihoods," the WHO said in a travel advice statement on Omicron.

"In addition, they can adversely impact global health efforts during a pandemic by



Primary defence: People line up to get vaccinated against COVID-19 at a hospital near Johannesburg. • AP

disincentivising countries to report and share epidemiological and sequencing data."

The WHO said that as of Sunday, 56 countries were reportedly implementing travel measures aimed at potentially delaying the importation of the new variant.

"Persons who have not

been fully vaccinated or do not have proof of previous SARS-CoV-2 infection and are at increased risk of developing severe disease and dying, including people 60 years of age or older or those with comorbidities that present increased risk of severe COVID-19 (e.g. heart disease, cancer and diabetes) should

WHO members agree to forge a pandemic accord

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GENEVA

World Health Organization member states agreed on Wednesday to start building a new international accord on how to handle future pandemics and ensure there can be no repeat of COVID-19.

At a special meeting in

Geneva, the 194 WHO member states unanimously adopted a resolution launching the negotiating and drafting process for a new international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response.

The process will present its final outcome in 2024.

be advised to postpone travel to areas with community transmission," the agency said.

Toxic mix'

Elsewhere, the WHO advised countries to apply an "evidence-informed and risk-based approach" when implementing travel measures.

"Globally, we have a toxic mix of low vaccine coverage, and very low testing – a recipe for breeding and amplifying variants. That's why we continue to urge countries to... ensure equitable access to vaccines, tests and therapeutics all over the world," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

EU plans €300 billion infra fund to counter China's BRI

It aims at mobilising public and private investments by 2027

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

BRUSSELS

The European Commission announced on Wednesday a plan to mobilise €300 billion (\$340 billion) in public and private infrastructure investment around the world, a move seen as a response to China's Belt and Road

strategy by name – but EU chief Ursula von der Leyen called it a "roadmap for major investment in infrastructure development around the world."

The money to be made available will not come from EU and member state coffers, and the plan will need funding from international institutions and from the private sector if it is to get anywhere near its target.

China launched its global investment strategy known as Belt and Road, a flagship project of President Xi Jinping, in 2013. Beijing has said it had invested \$139.8 billion by 2020, including \$22.5 billion last year alone.

Officially, it aims to develop land and sea infrastructure to better connect China to Asia, Europe and Africa for trade and development,

and it has found many partners around the world.

The West, however, sees it as a tool for China to influence poorer countries. They criticise Beijing for inciting emerging economies to take on too much debt, and allege the secretive tender process is prone to corruption.

China argues that it respects its partners' sovereignty while providing loans that benefit joint projects, while critics say Beijing's contractual terms ignore abuses of human, labour and environmental rights.

The EU strategy is an offshoot of a plan by G7 countries to offer developing countries an alternative to Belt and Road Initiative, presented in June at the industrial powers' summit in Cornwall.

CNN suspends Chris Cuomo for helping brother Andrew

He helped the ex-NY Governor combat sex abuse charges

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NEW YORK

CNN said on Tuesday it had indefinitely suspended prime-time anchor Chris Cuomo after the release of legal transcripts that revealed how he helped his brother Andrew, then the Governor of New York, combat allegations of sexual misconduct.

At the start of the pandemic, the brothers soared to new heights of popularity: Andrew Cuomo earned praise for his frank daily briefings as the coronavirus ravaged New York, and their live exchanges on CNN were peppered with banter.



Chris Cuomo

But after months of battling claims that he had harassed about a dozen women including former staffers, Andrew Cuomo resigned from office in August. "The New York Attorney

General's office released transcripts and exhibits on Monday that shed new light on Chris Cuomo's involvement in his brother's defence," a CNN spokesperson said. "The documents raise serious questions."

The spokesperson said while CNN had "understood the need to put family first and job second" in aiding Mr. Andrew, it said the transcripts "point to a greater level of involvement in his brother's efforts than we previously knew." As a result, we have suspended Chris indefinitely, pending further evaluation."

Taliban urge U.S. to release frozen funds

They call for an end to blacklists, sanctions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

DOHA

The Taliban renewed its call for the U.S. to release billions of dollars in frozen funds after two days of talks in Doha as aid-dependent Afghanistan grapples with economic crisis.

The Afghans also called for an end to blacklists and sanctions in meetings led by Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi and Tom West, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan.

It was the second round of talks between the two sides in Qatar since the U.S. exit.

The two delegations discussed political, economic, human, health, education and security issues as well as providing necessary banking and cash facilities," tweeted Afghan Foreign Ministry spokesman Abdul Qahar Balkhi.

"The Afghan delegation



Amir Khan Muttaqi

assured the U.S. side of security and urged that Afghanistan's frozen money should be released unconditionally, blacklists and sanctions must end and human issues be separated from political ones."

Washington seized nearly \$9.5 billion in assets belonging to the Afghan central bank. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank also suspended activities in Afghanistan, withholding aid as well as \$340 million in new reserves.

Afghanistan faces fiscal shock: UN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KABUL

Afghanistan's GDP could contract 20% within a year, the UN predicted in a new report on Wednesday, saying that the withdrawal of international aid after the Taliban's return to power is an "unprecedented fiscal shock."

For decades now Afghanistan's economy has been undermined by war and drought.

But it was propped up by billions in international aid – much of which was frozen when U.S.-led international forces withdrew and the Taliban returned to power in August.

"The sudden dramatic withdrawal of international aid is an unprecedented fiscal shock," United Nations Development Programme Asia Director Kanji Wignaraja said, as the agency released its Afghanistan Socio-Economic Outlook 2021-2022.

China is trying to drive Australia to its knees: U.S.

'Beijing engaging in economic warfare'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SYDNEY

U.S. President Joe Biden's top Pacific envoy on Wednesday accused China of trying to "drive Australia to its knees" through a barrage of sanctions that amounted to "economic warfare".

China has been angered at Australia's willingness to legislate against overseas influence operations, to bar Huawei from 5G contracts and to call for an independent probe into the origins of the novel coronavirus.

Australian barley, coal, copper ores, cotton, hay, logs, rock lobsters, sugar, wine, beef, citrus fruit, grains, table grapes, dairy products and infant formula have all been subject to Chinese sanctions.

He said that under President Xi Jinping, China has become "more risk acceptable, more assertive, more determined to basically take steps that other countries would view as coercive".

Russia orders some U.S. staff to fly home

REUTERS

MOSCOW

Russia said on Wednesday it was ordering U.S. Embassy staff who have been in Moscow for more than three years to fly home by January 31, a retaliatory move for what Moscow said was a U.S. decision to limit the terms of Russian diplomats.

The step, the latest in an escalating diplomatic row, comes after Russia's Ambassador to the United States said last week that 27 Russian diplomats and their families were being expelled from the United States and would leave on January 30.

"We ... intend to respond in the corresponding way," U.S. Embassy employees who have been in Moscow for more than three years must leave Russia by Jan. 31," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova told a briefing.

The RIA news agency cited her as saying that new U.S. rules meant Russian diplomats who had been forced to leave the United States were also banned from working as diplomats in the United States for three years.

U.S. Supreme Court may uphold abortion law

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

v. Wade ruling legalising the procedure nationwide.

The Court, which has a 6-3 conservative majority, is hearing oral arguments in the southern State's appeal to revive its ban on abortion starting at 15 weeks of pregnancy. Lower courts blocked the Republican-backed law.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
KARNATAKA STATE MEDICAL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED
PHI Building, Opp. to SJP Polytechnic, K.R. Circle, Sheshadri Road, Bangalore – 560 001. Phone: +91-80-29619801
Email: latha.mdksmcl@gmail.com

TENDER NOTIFICATION

- Ref: 1. Tender Notification No: HFW/KSMSCL/EQPT/Covid-19/VTM Kit / 89/2021-22 Date: 01/12/2021.
2. Tender Notification No:HFW/KSMSCL/EQPT/Covid-19/AREK Kit / 88/2021-22 Date: 01/12/2021

Nation wide Tender is invited through Gem Portal and Invitation for Quotation (IFQ)under KTTP Act 1999 and Rules 2000 for the following tenders:

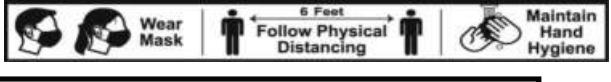
1. Tender for Supply of Novel corona virus(covid-19) sample collection Kits (VTM) for Covid-19. (GEM).
2. Tender for Supply of Automated RNA Extraction Kits (AREK) for Covid-19. (IFQ)

The tenderers who have registered under Gem Portal may participate through Gem Tendering. The tenderers who are interested can participate in the IFQ through e-mail KSMSCL website https://www.ksmscl.kar.nic.in bidders may participate through IFQ e-mail ksdliwscovid19-procurement@gmail.com KSMSCL Website system.

Details regarding EMD, Terms and Conditions and other information are available in the Tender Document, which can be downloaded from the KSMSCL website https://www.ksmscl.kar.nic.in from 01/12/2021 the eligible tenderers shall submit their through IFQ for above mentioned tenders. Further information may be obtained from this office.

SD/- Managing Director, KSMSCL, Bangalore.

HAVE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19? CALL APTHAMITRA ON 14410



GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU HIGHWAYS, (Construction & Maintenance) CIRCLE SALEM TENDER NOTICE

T.N.No. 7/2021-22/HDO Dated: 30.11.2021

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu, Percentage tender through online only will be received up to 06.01.2022 - 3:00PM by the Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Salem Circle for Deposit Work pertaining to Dharmapuri (H) C&M Division.

Details of works, approximate value of works, EMD, availability of tender documents, receiving date and all other details are available in the Government website https://tntenders.gov.in from 06.12.2021 onwards. If any Changes/Corrections in the tender, it will be published in the above Government website only.

DIPR/3766/Tender/2021

Superintending Engineer (H), C&M, Salem Circle.

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (C) DR-4X JAGRITI SPS, NEAR KARKAR DOOMA CROSSING SHAHDARA, DELHI - 110092 Email: eecdr9ram@gmail.com PH: 011-20824111 NIT No. 02 (2021-22)

S. No. Name of Work Amount put to tender (Rs.) EMD Tender Fee's DL To release of tender pre-completion solution I.D.No. Last date/time of receipt of tender through E-procurement solution

01 P/L 800 mm dia ring main including construction of same as well for carriage of treated effluent from STP Kondli to Smriti Van Lake and for nearby DDA and MCD Parks Rs. 11,94,78,571/- Civil: Rs. 5,97,65,845/- E&M: Item Rate D/B 2020-21/Misc-II(PT)971 Dated: 23.12.20

1500/- 29.11.2021/2021_ DJB_21176_1 27.12.2021 at 3:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 696 (2021-22)

(R.K. KAUSHIK)

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER(SDW)-IV

(R.G. SARASWAT)

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER(C) DR-4X

(R.G. SARASWAT)

Executive Engineer (SDW)-IV

Executive Engineer (C) DR-4X

MARKET WATCH

	01-12-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	57,685	1.09
US Dollar	74.91	0.29
Gold	46,848	-0.78
Brent oil	71.29	0.72

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	707.95	+2.10
Asian Paints	3138.15	-5.50
Axis Bank	679.60	+23.95
Bajaj Auto	3249.55	+9.25
Bajaj Finserv	17382.95	+145.60
Bajaj Finance	7038.70	+41.45
Bharti Airtel	722.25	-6.00
BPCL	368.75	-1.25
Britannia Ind	3535.25	-10.25
Cipla	928.15	-43.15
Coal India	155.55	+3.55
Divis Lab	4752.20	+126.60
Dr Reddys Lab	4606.35	+69.50
Eicher Motors	2438.30	+67.85
Grasim Ind	1679.60	+17.15
HCL Tech	1156.70	+18.05
HDFC	2703.65	+30.55
HDFC Bank	1504.65	+11.10
HDFC Life	693.85	+13.05
Hero MotoCorp	2448.20	+1.10
Hindalco	424.90	+12.15
Hind Unilever	2344.85	+27.30
ICICI Bank	727.70	+13.35
IndusInd Bank	933.65	+50.65
Infosys	1714.90	+2.25
Indian Oil Corp	117.70	+1.25
ITC	221.90	+0.75
JSW Steel	637.20	+28.80
Kotak Bank	1953.35	+8.55
L&T	1786.00	+21.25
M&M	834.70	+0.80
Maruti Suzuki	7273.25	+205.45
Nestle India Ltd.	19397.80	+245.25
NTPC	127.70	+0.45
ONGC	142.25	+0.15
PowerGrid Corp	207.20	+0.45
Reliance Ind	2467.00	+61.60
SBI Life	1164.80	+4.30
State Bank	475.30	+14.75
Shree Cement	26092.00	+10.25
Sun Pharma	745.35	+8.25
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	772.80	+5.80
Tata Motors	475.25	+16.65
Tata Steel	1082.55	+11.35
TCS	3577.80	+48.65
Tech Mahindra	1587.60	+46.15
Titan	2360.20	+15.30
UltraTech Cement	7322.60	+111.15
UPL	690.50	+8.80
Wipro	634.80	+2.45

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.71	75.03
Euro	84.58	84.94
British Pound	99.39	99.85
Japanese Yen (100)	65.84	66.12
Chinese Yuan	11.72	11.78
Swiss Franc	81.22	81.58
Singapore Dollar	54.78	55.02
Canadian Dollar	58.58	58.86
Malaysian Ringgit	17.70	17.80
Australian Dollar	53.40	53.64

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Railway ministry scraps tender for private trains

NEW DELHI
The Ministry of Railways has scrapped the tender inviting bids from private operators to run trains on select routes following muted response, Parliament was informed on Wednesday. The bids were invited to induct 151 trains over 12 clusters via public-private partnership (PPP).

Srinivasan Swamy elected AFAA chairman

CHENNAI
Srinivasan Swamy was elected chairman of the Asian Federation of Advertising Associations (AFAA) on Wednesday for a term of four years. Mr. Swamy, the chairman of RK Swamy Hansa Group, has held leadership positions in several industry bodies.

Manufacturing PMI signals Nov. output growth at 9-month high

Producers fret over rising input costs; jobs inch up for second time in 20 months

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector recorded the strongest production expansion in nine months in November, with the survey-based IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) climbing to 57.6, from October's 55.9.

The November PMI signals the strongest improvement in the health of the manufacturing sector for 10 months, with factory orders rising for a fifth straight month and at the fastest pace since February. The long-run PMI average for India is 53.6.

There was a fractional im-



Home base: The domestic market drove growth as new export orders rose at a slight pace. ■ M.A. SRIRAM

provement in hiring by goods producers, which marked only the second expansion in jobs over the past 20 months. The survey also suggested that the domestic market drove sales growth as

'new export orders rose at a slight pace that was weaker than in October'.

"The overall level of positive sentiment slipped to a 17-month low," IHS Markit said. Cost inflation pressures for

producers remained 'intense', broadly at the same rate as October which had marked a 92-month high.

"The key threat to the outlook, in addition to potential new waves of COVID-19, is inflationary pressures," said Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit.

"For now, companies are absorbing most of the additional cost burdens and lifting output charges only moderately. Should raw material scarcity and shipping issues continue to feed through to purchasing prices, substantial increases in output charges could be seen and demand resilience would be tested," she added.

Exports dip widening trade deficit to a record \$23.27 bn

Imports exceed \$50 billion for a third straight month

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India's merchandise exports slipped below the \$30-billion mark for the first time in eight months in November to \$29.88 billion, even as imports rose sharply, taking the monthly trade deficit to a fresh high.

Imports outpaced exports, jumping 38% from pre-COVID levels compared with the 16% increase in exports, though they moderated slightly month-on-month to \$53.1 billion from \$55.4 billion in October.

The trade deficit widened to a fresh record of \$23.27 billion, from \$19.9 billion in the previous month. This is almost 83% higher than the



November 2019 levels. The previous highest monthly trade deficit of \$22.6 billion was recorded in September.

'Worrying deficit'

The trade deficit from April to November 2021 is now close to \$122 billion, 7.5% over the same period in FY20. The sharp 16% sequential slide in exports led to a flare-

up in the trade deficit to a record-high, and the three months since September have now recorded a deficit of \$65 billion, which is worrying, said ICRA chief economist Aditi Nayar. Imports, she pointed out, had exceeded \$50 billion in each of these months.

"Holidays in the festive season have substantially dented the momentum in merchandise exports in November, bringing them down to the lowest level of FY22. We are cautiously optimistic that export momentum will revive, although the uncertainty engendered by the Omicron variant poses a concern regarding the immediate outlook," she said.

India-China trade deficit was \$30 bn in April-Sept.

Exports stood at \$12.26 bn, says Patel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

India's trade deficit with China stood at \$30.07 billion during April-September 2021, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

India's exports to China during the April-September 2021 period were \$12.26 billion, while imports aggregated to \$42.33 billion, according to data given by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

She said the imports from China had increased from \$60.41 billion in 2014-15 to \$65.21 billion in 2020-21, exhibiting an increase of 7.94% over six years. However, the imports were static between

Imports from China were static between 2019-20 and 2020-21

ANUPRIYA PATEL

MoS, Commerce and Industry

2019-20 and 2020-21, she said. "The government has made sustained efforts to achieve a more balanced trade with China, including bilateral engagements to address the non-tariff barriers on Indian exports to China," Ms. Patel said.

Schemes like the production-linked incentive scheme will help promote domestic manufacturing capacities and attract investments and reduce dependency on imports from China, the Minister said.

Maruti said total domestic sales declined 18% to 1,17,91 units from a year earlier.

Mahindra, Tata Motors, Toyota report growth in dispatches

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

With the semiconductor shortage continuing to impact production, top passenger vehicle makers Maruti Suzuki India and Hyundai Motor India on Wednesday reported a decline in wholesales in the domestic market in November.

However, Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors along with Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) posted increases in their respective domestic passenger vehicle wholesales last month.

Maruti said total domestic sales declined 18% to 1,17,91 units from a year earlier.

"The shortage of electron-

ic components had a minor impact on the production of vehicles during the month," the carmaker said in a statement.

"The shortage primarily affected the production of vehicles sold in the domestic market. The company took all possible measures to minimise the impact."

Similarly, Hyundai Motor India said domestic sales slid

24% to 37,001 units.

On the other hand, M&M said domestic passenger vehicle (PV) sales rose 7% to 19,458 units.

"Our growth in SUVs continues with an 8% increase in November," M&M's CEO - Automotive Division, Veeyaj Nakra said. "The demand remains strong across our product portfolio of SUVs, pickups, and small commercial vehicles," he added.

Tata Motors said domestic PV sales climbed 38% to 29,778 units.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor reported domestic wholesales rose 53% to 13,003 units in November compared with a year earlier.

'Cyberattacks hit 26,000 Indian sites in 10 months'

Hidden servers help veil identity: MoS



tempts from time to time to launch cyberattacks on Indian cyberspace... attackers are compromising computer systems located in different parts of the world and use masquerading techniques and hidden servers to hide the identity of actual systems from which the attacks are being launched," the Minister said in his reply to the lower house.

Power demand growth slowed to 2.2% in Nov.

Funds to be infused over 5-7 years'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

India's electricity demand grew 2.2% in November, slower than the 4.1% increase in October, a Reuters analysis of government data showed, helping the energy-hungry nation tide over a crippling coal shortage that caused widespread power cuts.

Surging power demand and high global prices in October left utilities scrambling for coal, India's dominant fuel for power generation, despite record supplies from state-run Coal India. Average daily coal-fired power generation in November was down 2.8% from October.

It will infuse funds into Ramcharan Co. for investment in areas from environment to energy management systems and

renewable energy devices with high storage capacity made from sodium silicate, it said in a statement.

TFCC International has had investments in West Asia and South Asia, and is now looking at investments in India in the areas of environment solutions, renewable energy and low-cost housing. The investment in Ramcharan Co. is its first in the country.

Ramcharan Co. has been, of late, into deep-tech, end-of-life chemicals converting unsegregated waste into energy and manufacturing new-generation energy storage devices.

(With PTI inputs)

NMDC ore output rises, sales dip

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Mining major NM

Mhambrey happy with Indian bowlers' effort

Picking up 19 wickets on the Kanpur surface wasn't easy, says the bowling coach

NZ IN INDIA

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

New Zealand justified its status of World Test champion by achieving what very few travelling teams have – to bat out the last day of a Test in India. Still, Paras Mhambrey, India's newly appointed bowling coach, was extremely happy with his bowlers' effort in the series-opener at Kanpur.

"I think we are happy, honestly. If you look at the outcome of the game – yes, we wanted to win the Test match, we were so close. But looking at the wicket, it was not that kind of a surface," Mhambrey said on Wednesday, two days ahead of the series-decider scheduled to begin at the Wankhede Stadium.

"We knew in the (last day) morning that this is not the kind of surface where you turn up and run through a side. We knew it was going to be hard work. Especially



Gutsy show: Saha braved a sprained neck to score a crucial half-century in the first Test, but is a doubtful starter for the next. • AFP

there was no bounce, the ball was keeping low.

"Unfortunately, a couple of edges didn't carry. Had that happened, it would have been a different result."

Agonisingly short

India fell agonisingly short of picking the last wicket as the first of the two Tests was

drawn. While Mhambrey was in a way glad to not be a part of the 'who will Virat Kohli replace at Wankhede?' decision-making process, he conceded that Wriddhiman Saha remains uncertain due to his neck sprain.

"The physios are in touch

constantly with the head coach Rahul (Dravid) and obviously Virat (Kohli) now and as we get closer to the game, we will take a call and see what condition he is in," Mhambrey said.

With Saha having hurt his neck midway through the match, K.S. Bharat, the back-up wicketkeeper, donned gloves on day three

Rain may have a say

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Unseasonal rain forced both the teams to cancel their training session on Wednesday, two days ahead of the series-decider between India and New Zealand. In fact, the rain may hamper the return of Test cricket to Wankhede Stadium after five years.

With weather unlikely to let teams train at the match venue, both the teams have rescheduled their Thursday's training

sessions at Mumbai Cricket Association's indoor academy at Bandra-Kurla Complex.

The weather forecast is for steady rain for Thursday and Friday and intermittent showers over the weekend.

If the weather doesn't improve, it will drastically hinder the possibility of a result, a must for both the teams in order to improve their chances of making the cut for the World Test Championship final.

and five.

"But obviously with whatever he (Saha) has been through, I think (it was) a fabulous effort to bat the way he did."

"It was painful, we realise that but he put his hand up and (said) the team wanted it and he delivered it for the team, really happy to see that."

Sindhu, Srikanth start well
Doubles pairs lose their openers



Cruising through: Srikanth had it easy against Popov. • AP

BWF FINALS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BALI

Former champion P.V. Sindhu and K. Srikanth registered straight-game victories to make impressive starts to their campaigns at the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals here on Thursday.

Lop-sided match

World champion Sindhu saw off Denmark's Line Christoffersen 21-14, 21-16 in a lop-sided Group A women's match after former

World No. 1 Srikanth beat France's Toma Junior Popov 21-14, 21-16 in his opening match of Group B.

The results:

Men: Group A: Lakshya Sen bt Kento Momota (Jpn) 1-1, retd.

Group B: K. Srikanth bt Toma Junior Popov (Fra) 21-14, 21-16.

Doubles: Group A: Kim Astrup & Anders Rasmussen (Den) bt Satwikairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty 21-16, 21-5.

Women: Group A: P.V. Sindhu bt Line Christoffersen (Den) 21-14, 21-16.

Doubles: Group B: Nami Matsuyama & Chiharu Shida (Jpn) bt Ashwini Ponnappa & N. Sikki Reddy 21-14, 21-18.

IN BRIEF



Mendis' six-for sparks Windies' collapse

GALLE
Ramesh Mendis led the Sri Lanka fightback with a six-wicket haul to bowl out the West Indies, but the home team was 46 for two at stumps on day three, trailing by just three runs.

The scores: Sri Lanka 204 & 46/2 vs West Indies 253 (Kraigg Brathwaite 72, Jermaine Blackwood 44, Ramesh Mendis 6/70).

Vihari props up India-A

BLOEMFONTEIN
India-A reached 198 for five in 50 overs in reply to South Africa-A's 297, with Hanuma Vihari batting on 45, at the end of the second day of the second 'Test' on Wednesday.

The scores: South Africa-A 297 in 105.5 overs (Marco Jansen 70 n.o., Navdeep Saini 3/67, Ishan Porel 3/49) vs India-A 198/5 in 50 overs (Prithvi Shaw 42, Ishan Kishan 49, Hanuma Vihari 45 bat).

WGR: Justin Rose

will be keen to arrest his dip in form. Rose, the 2013 US Open champion, is close to falling out of the top-50 in the WGR.

Major winners

The field also features other major winners in Hideki Matsuyama, Brooks Koepka, Patrick Reed, Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas.

Proceeds from the tournament support youth from underserved communities through education programs.

The TGR Foundation, a Tiger Woods Charity, is the primary benefiting charity.

(The writer is in Nassau on invitation from Hero MotoCorp)

Al Bayt Stadium opens its doors

It will host the opening game of the Qatar WC next year

2022 FIFA WC

SANTADEEP DEY
DOHA

With less than a year to go for the 2022 edition of the FIFA World Cup, Qatar on Tuesday threw open the doors of the Al Bayt Stadium on the occasion of the Arab Cup opener between the host nation and Bahrain.

The stadium, which will host the opening game of Qatar 2022, pays homage to Middle Eastern hospitality, and has been modelled on the *bayt al sha'an* – traditional nomadic tents in the Gulf region. The venue's lightweight canopies aid its artificial cooling technology to ward off the desert heat.

While His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, declared the tournament open, FIFA president



Bird's eye view: The Al Bayt Stadium is modelled on the traditional nomadic tents in the Gulf region.

Gianni Infantino watched the light and sound show during a grand opening ceremony. "Let's celebrate football and unite the world together," said Infantino.

Lusail Stadium, the venue of the final and the only arena yet to be unveiled, will be inaugurated in January.

(The writer is in Qatar at the invitation of the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy)

during the showpiece next year, hosting nine matches up to the semifinals.

American Collin Morikawa, who won the Open Championship (his second major win) earlier this year, starts as a favourite.

A title win here could see Morikawa rise to the top spot

Morikawa favourite in a strong field

McIlroy and Cantlay expected to provide stiff competition

HERO GOLF

ASHWIN ACHAL
NASSAU

The Hero World Challenge, which was cancelled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, makes its return to Albany Golf Club here on Thursday.

The \$3.5 million prize money golf tournament features a strong field, which includes 14 of the top 20 in the official World Golf Ranking (WGR) list. Tournament host Tiger Woods, who discussed his February car crash at a pre-event press conference here on Tuesday, will not compete in the tournament.

American Collin Morikawa, who won the Open Championship (his second major win) earlier this year, starts as a favourite.

A title win here could see Morikawa rise to the top spot



Time to roar: McIlroy will be keen to put the Dubai disappointment behind him. • AP

in the WGR.

Rory McIlroy will look to put the disappointment of a sixth-place finish in the recent DP World Tour Championship behind him.

The Northern Ireland golfer was primed to finish on top at Dubai, sitting on a one-stroke lead with five holes left in the final round,

but a bad break saw him slip down and lose the title to Morikawa.

Morikawa makes his maiden appearance at Albany.

Patrick Cantlay, who has won the ZOZO Championship, The Memorial, the BMW Championship and the Tour Championship this year, enters full of confidence.

Tiwari's strike puts India in the semifinals

The hosts' defence holds tight to play a significant role in the victory

JUNIOR WC

Y.B. SARANGI
BHUBANESWAR

India followed the 'team first' mantra in letter and spirit to beat a formidable Belgium 1-0 and enter the semifinals of the men's hockey Junior World Cup at the Kalinga Stadium here on Wednesday.

The Indian defence, which had let the team down against France, held tight to play a significant role in the quarterfinal victory. The midfield, led by 'Player-of-the-match' Vishnukant Singh, and forward line complemented well to complete a fine performance. India withstood the pressure well in the opening quarter.

The home backline, led by Sanjay and Yashdeep Siwach, stayed focused and maintained its structure to deny Belgium an early advantage. Good tackling and timely interception were the other highlights of the host's solid defending.

India's perseverance in launching counterattacks



Decisive flick: Sharda Nand Tiwari slots home India's match-winner against Belgium. • PTI

paid off when it got a penalty-corner in the 20th minute. A beautiful variation, with Sanjay turning the ball to Sharda Nand Tiwari and the latter flicking high into the right corner, resulted in the all-important goal.

The atmosphere turned electric, thanks to the few thousand select spectators, and it made a real difference.

The home boys grew in confidence to defend heavily.

They went into the halftime with a psychological advantage.

The home side survived the second and third penalty corner attempts in the final period. The two goalkeepers, Prashant Chauhan and Pawan who were brilliant under the bar, hugging each other spoke a lot about the team spirit.

India will face Germany, while Argentina will meet

France in the semifinals.

The results (quarterfinals):

Germany 2 (Christopher Kutter 5, Masi Pfandt 60) drew with Spain 2 (Ignacio Abajo 11, Eduard de Ignacio-Simo 59) (Germany bt Spain 3-1 in shoot-out); Argentina 2 (Joaquin Kruger 24, Franco Agostini 59) bt Netherlands 1 (Miles Bokkens 25); France 4 (Timothée Clement 14, 24, 60, Mathis Clement 31) bt Malaysia 0; India 1 (Sharda Nand Tiwari 21) bt Belgium 0.

France in the semifinals.

The results (quarterfinals):

Germany bt Britain 2-1 (Peter Gojowczyk lost to Dan Evans 2-6, 1-6; Jan-Lennard Struff bt Cameron Norrie 7-6(6), 3-6, 6-2; Kevin Krawietz &

Tiwal 6-4); Argentina 2 (Joaquin Kruger 24, 26, 6-2; Franco Agostini 59) bt Netherlands 1 (Miles Bokkens 25); France 4 (Timothée Clement 14, 24, 60, Mathis Clement 31) bt Malaysia 0; India 1 (Sharda Nand Tiwari 21) bt Belgium 0.

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Text & Context

NEWS IN NUMBERS



U.P. tops UAPA arrests

361 The number of persons arrested under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in 2020 in Uttar Pradesh. This was the most number of such arrests for any State last year. In 2019 too, U.P. topped the list with 498 arrests. With 225 and 396 arrests in 2020 and 2019, respectively, Manipur was a close second on the list. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Assam, and Tamil Nadu are ranked high on the list. In total, 1,321 people were arrested in 2020 under the Act in India. Of them, 116 were acquitted.

Sugar debt

4,445 In ₹ cr., the amount due to be paid by sugar mills to farmers during the 2020-21 season (October-September). The maximum arrears were from Uttar Pradesh. During the 2020-21 season, ₹92,804 cr was to be paid to sugarcane farmers. As per the data presented in the Lok Sabha by MoS for Food, Sadhvini Nirajan Jyoti, ₹88,359 cr has been paid and ₹4,445 cr is pending. Dues worth ₹3,752 cr are to be cleared by sugar mills in Uttar Pradesh followed by ₹394 cr in Maharashtra. PTI

Germany's COVID spike

446 The number of COVID-19-related deaths recorded on Wednesday by Germany, the highest since mid-February. Hospitals have warned that the country could have 6,000 people in intensive care by Christmas, above the peak of last winter. The overall death toll has crossed 1,00,000. The Robert Koch Institute, Germany's state infectious disease agency, reported 67,186 new cases on Wednesday, up 302 from a week ago. The Government agreed on Tuesday to take action to counter the fourth wave of COVID-19. REUTERS

Omicron spreads

24 The number of countries which have recorded the Omicron variant of COVID-19 as of Wednesday, according to WHO. Ghana, Nigeria, Norway, Saudi Arabia and South Korea are among the latest countries to report cases of the variant. Britain has reported 22 cases. Australia said at least two people visited several places in Sydney while likely infectious and Denmark said an infected person took part in a concert full of people. Japan reported its second case of the new variant and said it would tighten travel restrictions. REUTERS

First men's pair

1 The World No. 11 doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have become the first Indian men's doubles pair of shuttlers to qualify for the season-ending BWF World Tour Finals. Satwik and Chirag had lost in the semifinals but made the cut after the Japanese pair of Akira Koga and Taichi Saito also lost in the final four at the Super 1000 tournament. Earlier, Lakshya Sen became the youngest Indian to qualify for the \$1.5 million meet, which will include K. Srikanth, P.V. Sindhu and the women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

Examining the federal nature of the Central Bureau of Investigation

How does withdrawal of general consent by States impact CBI? What has the Supreme Court observed and what lies ahead?

THE GIST

ABHILASH M.R.

The CBI has filed an affidavit in the Supreme Court on the withdrawal of 'general consent' to the agency by several States. The agency said that such widespread withdrawal of consent is rendering its functioning redundant with regard to investigation of corruption charges against Central employees and other undertakings within the territorial jurisdiction of various States.

According to Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946 under which the CBI functions, the State's consent is required to extend CBI investigation beyond Union Territories.

The predicament of withdrawal of consent by a number of States may lead to the legislative move of creating a federal agency with manifest powers and autonomy while retaining the process of appointment of the CBI chief.

The story so far: A Supreme Court bench has referred a case, in which the CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation) had filed an affidavit on the withdrawal of 'general consent' to the agency by several States, for consideration of the Chief Justice of India. Eight States – West Bengal, Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram – have withdrawn consent to the CBI for launching investigations in their territory, leading the Bench to point out that the situation is "not a desirable position".

What is the CBI's complaint? According to the agency, such widespread withdrawal of consent is rendering it redundant with regard to investigation of corruption charges against Central employees and undertakings working within the territorial jurisdiction of various States.

The fundamental impediment lies in the law that does not clearly envisage the CBI as a federal police force

While the States' responses were primarily an act of politico-legal ring-fencing against the politics of the Central Government employing its agencies, the withdrawal of general consent by a number of States has left the CBI handicapped. The CBI is said to be bearing the brunt of the States' ire on its fraternal agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Income Tax Department.

Has the agency's job been affected? The withdrawal of general consent does not affect pending investigation (*Kazi Lendup Dorji v. CBI*, 1994) or the cases registered in another State in relation to which investigation leads into the territory of the State which has withdrawn general consent; nor does the withdrawal circumscribe the power of the jurisdictional High Court to order a CBI investigation. However, without the States' general consent, the CBI offices get disrobed of their general status as Police Stations. In other words, the CBI gets handcuffed by the State governments with



its freedom of action available only in the aforesaid occasions and in cases in which such a State gives specific consent in relation to an offence to be investigated.

What does the law say? According to Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946 under which the CBI functions, the State's consent is required to extend CBI investigation beyond Union Territories. The general consent given by the States enables the CBI to investigate corruption charges freely, as "police" is Entry 2 in the State List under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.

The legal foundation of the CBI has been construed to be based on Entry 80 of the Union List which provides for the extension of powers of the police force belonging to one State to any area in another State but not without its permission. In the *Advance Insurance Co. Ltd* case, 1970, a Constitution Bench held that the definition of "State", as

contained in The General Clauses Act, includes Union Territories as well and hence the CBI, being a force constituted for Union Territories as recognised under the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946, can conduct investigation into the territories of the States only with their consent.

What happens next? As the Supreme Court is currently hearing many cases including the appeal against the decision of the Calcutta High Court in the *Vinay Mishra* case (2021) by which the High Court refused to interfere with the ongoing CBI investigation, the Court in due course is not barred from reading down the requirement of States' consent *qua* investigation on officials of Central establishments, while retaining the need for consent with regard to other aspects of policing. However, whether the Supreme Court will go to the extent of rendering an interpretation contrary to the letter of the

statute is left to be seen. The fundamental impediment lies in the law that does not clearly envisage the CBI as a federal police force. The predicament of withdrawal of consent by a number of States may lead to the legislative move of creating a federal agency with manifest powers and autonomy while retaining the process of appointment of the CBI chief by a committee consisting of the constitutional trio, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice of India preferably by consensus. In case of such a legislation, Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act may give way to a clearer legal provision which guarantees fair investigation and prosecution.

The United Nations Convention against Corruption to which India is a signatory also requires firm impartial steps to combat corruption at all levels.

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Restricted jurisdiction: A view of CBI Headquarters, in New Delhi

THE HINDU

EXPLAINER

A new wave of anti-CAA protests in Assam

Why have the anti-CAA protests emerged again? Why do groups in Assam oppose the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019?

RAHUL KARMAKAR

The story so far: The repeal of the three controversial farm laws has stimulated the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act groups in Assam. They have announced a slew of protest programmes from December 10, coinciding with the death anniversary of Khageswar Talukdar revered in the State as the first "martyr" of the six-year Assam Agitation against "illegal immigrants".

What is the CAA and why are Assam groups opposed to it?

Passed by Parliament on December 11, 2019, the CAA prescribes preferential citizenship for non-Muslims who fled religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan and took refuge in India till December 31, 2014. This stirred sentiments in the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled Assam, where indigenous groups have harboured the fear of being outnumbered by migrants from Bangladesh and settlers from elsewhere in India. Groups such as the All Assam Students' Union (AASU), which had spearheaded the 1979-85 Assam Agitation, and activist-turned-MLA Akhil Gogoi's Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti



Anger still burns: Protestors burn machinery to block a road during an agitation against the Citizenship Amendment Bill, in Guwahati, in 2019. ■ PTI

(KMSS) said CAA would make the State a dumping ground for Bangladeshis. Besides, they said CAA violated the Assam Accord of 1985 which set March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date for detecting, detaining and deporting foreigners – irrespective of religion – living in the State illegally.

What happened in December 2019? Assam was the first State to oppose the CAA with the regional Asom Gana Parishad temporarily pulling out of the alliance with the BJP after the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill was tabled in the Lok

Sabha in January 2019. A series of protests since then culminated in a wave of violence when the Rajya Sabha passed the bill on December 11 that year. Protestors ran amok in Guwahati and other places, setting vehicles and public property on fire.

At least five people were killed as the police and armed forces personnel fired to disperse mobs.

Anti-CAA groups hit the streets elsewhere in the country but the intensity of the protests gradually reduced in Assam before the COVID-19 lockdown struck in March 2020.

Who is leading the renewed movement?

The 2019 protests were led simultaneously by the AASU and the KMSS. The relaunch of the movement to mark the second anniversary of the Parliament passing the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill appears to be headed the same way. The Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), a political party born of the anti-CAA movement a year ago, has joined the bandwagon. "The farmers showed what we can achieve by agitating relentlessly and making sacrifices. They have inspired us to not make any compromise on the CAA," AJP president Lurinjyoti Gogoi said. The AASU has also announced a series of protests.

The KMSS is part of the Coordination Committee Against CAA, an umbrella organisation that includes the CPI (Marxist) and the Liberal Democratic Party. Deben Tamuli, the committee's chief coordinator said they would chalk out the strategy of carrying the movement forward after a demonstration-cum-protest on December 12.

Are other north-eastern States protesting?

The other north-eastern States have been relatively quiet on the CAA except for

Meghalaya where groups such as the Khasi Students' Union and the Federation of Khasi-Jaintia and Garo People have vowed to go all out to make the Centre repeal the Act that "goes against the sentiments of the indigenous people and threatens their existence in the State". Leaders of these groups said their anti-CAA protest will continue alongside the movement for the implementation of the Inner-Line Permit (ILP) in Meghalaya. The ILP is currently applicable in four northeastern States – Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland. It is a temporary travel document an Indian has to be armed with to enter these States.

Elsewhere in the country, organisations such as the New Delhi-based Rights and Risks Analysis Group have called upon the Centre to repeal the CAA and instead enact an all-encompassing refugee law.

"The CAA has been an absolute failure. It does not protect even the refugees belonging to religious minorities from neighbouring countries who had entered into India prior to December 31, 2014," the group said in a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

THE GIST

The passing of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in 2019 stirred sentiments in the indigenous groups of Assam who have harboured the fear of being outnumbered by migrants from elsewhere in India which led to widespread protests against the Act till the lockdown in March 2020.

The 2019 protests were led by the AASU and the KMSS. The relaunch of the movement to mark the second anniversary of the Parliament passing the CAA appears to be headed the same way.

Other north-eastern States except for Meghalaya have been relatively quiet on the CAA.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

A judicial pushback to a draconian legal regime

The Delhi court ruling is a way forward in finding a balance between civil rights and the imperatives of anti-terror laws

THE GIST

■ The UAPA is perhaps one of the most abused laws in India today because of Section 43(D)(5) of this Act, which prevents the release of any accused person on bail if, on a perusal of the case diary, the court is of the opinion that "there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is *prima facie* true".

■ If an individual is not able to secure bail from the courts, they will languish as under-trials in prison, for the duration of the case, no matter how many years it takes. But under Section 43(D)(5) of this Act, for the grant of bail, it only looks at the plausibility of one side's evidence – that is, the Prosecution's.

■ It is here that the Delhi High Court's judgment becomes important. The court's judgment notes that as the UAPA is meant to deal with terrorist offences, its application must be limited to acts that can reasonably fall within a plausible understanding of "terrorism". The criminal offences described must be specific in their terms to avoid bringing the innocent within their net.

*On December 1, while considering the case of an undertrial who has been charged under Sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), among other laws, the Supreme Court observed that the period of deprivation of personal liberty pending trial or appeal cannot be unduly long. Deprivation of personal liberty without ensuring speedy trial is not consistent with Article 21 of the Constitution, the court said. In this piece dated June 18, 2021, Gautam Bhatia argues how Section 43(D)(5) of the UAPA is particularly perverse as it binds the court to examine only the prosecution's side of the case, which has not been challenged by the cross-examination, and requires that bail be denied as long as the prosecution's case be *prima facie* true. As a result, individuals are deprived of their constitutional right to liberty for years on end. Edited excerpts:*

The judgment of the Delhi High Court granting bail to activists Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal, and Asif Iqbal Tanha – they have been in jail for over a year (without trial) for their alleged role in the 2020 Delhi riots – is significant for many reasons. Most importantly, it brings to a close many months of jail time for three people who are yet to be proven guilty of any crime, something that should be anathema to any civilised justice system. What is also significant, however, is that the judgment represents an important judicial pushback to the authoritarian legal regime under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The root of the issue
Ostensibly designed to check and address terrorism, the UAPA is perhaps one of the most abused laws in India today. The root of the problem lies in Section 43(D)(5) of this Act, which prevents the release of any accused person on bail if, on a perusal of the case diary, or the report made under Section 173 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure, the court is of the opinion that "there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is *prima facie* true".

Broadly speaking, India follows the adversarial system of criminal justice, where two sides to a dispute attempt to persuade the court that their version of events is true. At the heart of the adversarial system of justice is the testing of evidence through cross-examination. The best way for a judge to unearth the truth – or the closest approximation of it – is to consider which side's evidence is left standing, and appears more persuasive, after the rigours of cross-examination.

Production of evidence, and

cross-examination, involves witnesses, recoveries of incriminating objects, tests of handwriting or voice samples, and many other elements. It constitutes the bulk of a criminal trial. In India, with our overburdened courts and creaking justice system, criminal trials take years. In high-profile cases such as the Delhi riots case, where the record is bulky, and the witnesses number in their hundreds, trials can take many years – even a decade or more.

Importance of bail

For this reason, bail becomes of utmost importance. If an individual is not able to secure bail from the courts, they will languish as under-trials in prison, for the duration of the case, no matter how many years it takes (there are cases of people being found innocent in terrorism cases after even 23 years in prison). Bail, thus, becomes the only safeguard and guarantee of the constitutional right to liberty.

In ordinary circumstances, when considering the question of bail, a court is meant to take into account a range of factors. These include whether the accused is a flight risk, whether he or she might tamper with the evidence or attempt to influence witnesses, and the gravity of the offence. But it is here that Section 43(D)(5) of the UAPA plays such a damaging role. As we have just seen, under the classical vision of criminal justice, truth can only be determined after the evidence of both the prosecution and the defence has been subjected to the rigours of cross-examination. However, as lawyers and scholars such as Abhinav Sekhri and Anjana Prakash have also pointed out, Section 43(D)(5) short-circuits that core assumption. For the grant of bail, it only looks at the plausibility of one side's evidence – that is, the Prosecution's.

It binds the court to look at only the case diary or the police report, which has not been challenged by cross-examination, and requires that bail be denied as long as the unchallenged prosecution case appears to be *prima facie* true. The perversity of Section 43(D)(5), thus, is that it forces the court to make an effective determination of guilt or innocence based on one side's unchallenged story, and on that basis to deprive individuals of their freedom for years on end.

The effect of Section 43(D)(5), as one can see, is that once the police elect to charge sheet an individual under the UAPA, it becomes extremely difficult for bail to be granted. Even outlandish or trumped-up cases can sound convincing until people have a chance to interrogate and challenge them.

Finer points of the judgment

It is here that the Delhi High Court's judgment becomes important. The Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anup Jairam Bhambhani correctly note that even though Section 43(D)(5) departs from many basic principles of criminal justice, there are other fundamental principles that remain of cardinal significance. These include, for example, that the initial burden of demonstrating guilt must always lie upon the prosecution; and also, that criminal offences must be specific in their terms to avoid bringing the innocent within their net. On this basis, the court's judgment notes that as the UAPA is meant to deal with terrorist offences, its application must be limited to acts that can reasonably fall within a plausible understanding of "terrorism".

"Terrorism" is a term of art, and not a word that can be thrown around loosely. Thus, to attract the provisions of the UAPA, the charge sheet must reveal factual, individualised, and particular allegations linking the accused to a terrorist act.

The judgment then finds that even if the police's claims are taken to be true, no such allegations exist. At the highest, the accusations against the activists involve calls for protests and *chakka jams* (road blockages).

There is no act, overt or covert, attributed to the activists that could constitute a terrorist offence. And, importantly, inferences or hypotheticals drawn by the police do not count at the stage of granting bail. Coupled with the significance of the right to protest and to dissent under our constitutional scheme, the judgment therefore holds that even *prima facie*, a case under the UAPA has not been made out, and therefore, there is no question of the application of Section 43(D)(5).

The Delhi High Court's judgment indicates a pathway forward in the quest for finding a balance between citizens' civil rights and the imperatives of anti-terrorism legislation such as the UAPA.

A position under which citizens can be jailed for years on end just on the basis of police reports and case diaries, with courts precluded from granting them bail, is completely inconsistent with democracy, and redolent of authoritarian or tyrannical states. However, the court's analysis shows how even within – and consistent with – the terms of the UAPA, there is an important role for a conscientious judiciary to play. By scrutinising the police case on its own terms, and according a strict interpretation to draconian legislation such as the UAPA, courts can ensure that civil rights are not left entirely at the mercy of the state.

Gautam Bhatia is a Delhi-based lawyer

THE DAILY QUIZ

A quiz on International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, observed on December 2 by the United Nations' Member States.

1 In which UN declaration is there an article that states "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.?"

2 According to the UN, more than 150 million children are subject to child labour i.e. 10% of the children around the world. Name the movement founded by Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi in 1980 that campaigns for the rights of children.

3 Which 1865 amendment to the United States Constitution abolished slavery and involuntary servitude?

4 To which recipient of the Bharat Ratna is this quote attributed? "Slavery does not merely mean a legalised form of subjection. It means a

state of society in which some men are forced to accept from others the purposes which control their conduct?"

5 In 1804, which country, then known as Saint-Domingue, became the first sovereign nation in the Western Hemisphere to unconditionally abolish slavery in the modern era?

6 Who played the title role in the acclaimed Stanley Kubrick-helmed 'Spartacus' about the famous leader of a slave revolt in antiquity?



◀ Name this author and her 1852 work that is considered one of the best anti-slavery books of all time. ■ NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

Please send your answers to the dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Previous day's answers: 1. Reshma Gandhi, 2. Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe, 3. Please Please Me, 4. Cricket, 5. Bhuvan Shome, 6. It is the only painting that Van Gogh sold during his lifetime.

Early Birds: Aman Kashyap| Mohammad Kiron Karim| Vikas Mishra| Munaf Mahmood| Sriram Kalingaray



KEYWORD

Public Choice

PRASHANTH PERUMAL J

Public choice refers to an economic approach towards the study of politics. American Nobel laureate James Buchanan, a prominent member of the Virginia school of political economy, characterised the public choice approach to politics as the study of "politics without romance."

Public choice theorists assume that politicians and bureaucrats who run the government of a country are self-interested individuals who primarily look after their own selfish interests. This is in contrast to the general assumption that public servants work to satisfy the interests of the general public. Economists when studying the broader economy have traditionally assumed that individuals in general strive to serve their own selfish interests. Public choice theory simply applies the same assumption that economists make about individuals to the case of politicians and bureaucrats who run the government.

It should be noted that public choice theorists do not assume that all individuals are driven purely by narrow self-interest. They only argue that self-interest is the predominant motive that drives people.

Over the years, public choice theorists have conducted extensive research on the public policy implications of viewing politics through the lens of economics. One of their most significant contributions in this regard is the concept of government failure.

It is generally argued that the government, which is basically run by politicians and bureaucrats, should step in and address market failures that arise in the economy. This is said to be essential to uphold the interests of broader society and rein in special interest groups. So, many would say that government regulators have a crucial role to play in reigning in monopolies that may harm consumers.

Public choice theorists, however, have argued that the risk of market failure should first be weighed against the risk of government failure before favouring any regulation of the marketplace. Politicians and bureaucrats, they say, are self-interested individuals just like any of us, and hence they may act to serve their own personal interests rather than the interests of the general public. The concept of regulatory capture, wherein regulators are captured by special interest groups that they are supposed to regulate, has been well documented by many economists. Widespread corruption in government also backs the public choice view that people who run the government do it to serve their own selfish interests.

Public choice theorists also look into how self-interested behaviour of people affects the outcomes of elections and other political processes. For instance, the fact that the power of a single vote to influence an election is essentially zero means that voters have very little incentive to educate themselves about candidates and their policies before voting. In fact, they have every reason to be ignorant of politics.

Public choice theory also predicts trends in public finance, which refers to how governments collect and spend tax money. It points to two important features of public finance in particular. One, ordinary citizens must pay taxes to their government whether they like it or not, or end up in jail. In other words, they cannot refuse to pay taxes if they are unhappy with the services provided by the government. This essentially means that taxpayers can expect very little accountability from the government. Even if tax revenues are spent on wasteful schemes, taxpayers still must pay taxes.

At the same time, when spending tax revenues, politicians and bureaucrats who run the government are not actually spending money that is theirs. They would in no way derive any direct reward by spending the money in the best possible way. So they are likely to invest little effort in determining the best way to spend tax revenues.

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