

Ministry: 4 found with South Africa Covid strain, one with Brazil variant

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

FIVE PERSONS who returned recently to India have been detected with the infectious Covid-19 variants found in South Africa and Brazil, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

Dr Balram Bhargava, Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), said the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortium (INSACOG) had detected the South Africa variant, associated with the faster spread of novel coronavirus infection, in four persons in January, while another person had been detected with the infectious Brazil variant of SARS-CoV-2 virus earlier this month.

"All travellers and contacts have been tested and quarantined," he said.

Of the four who were found to have the South Africa variant, known as 'B.1.351', one had returned from Angola, one from Tanzania, and two from South

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BJP top brass in huddle over farm protest fallout in 40 LS seats in Jat belt

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

WARY OVER the farmer agitation spreading across the Jat belt, the BJP top brass Tuesday held talks with party leaders from Haryana, Rajasthan and Western Uttar Pradesh, resuming their attempts to find ways to end the stalemate.

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EXPRESS NETWORK
45 KILLED AS BUS PLUNGES INTO CANAL IN MP'S SIDHI DISTRICT
PAGE 8

AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION - PART IV

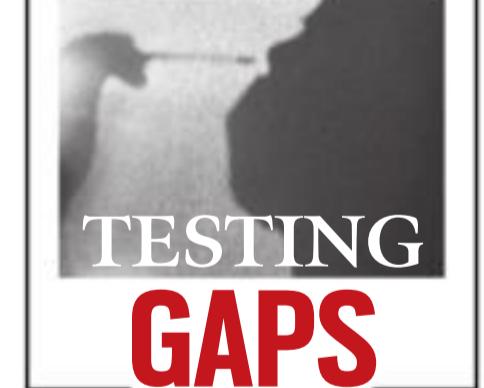
Bhagalpur is latest on testing radar: 1,400 entries with gaping holes, string of zeroes

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, FEBRUARY 16

LAST WEEK, Bihar set up 10 teams to conduct a state-wide probe based on the findings of an investigation by *The Indian Express* on how Covid testing data was allegedly fudged and inflated to meet targets in three districts. But the state government insisted that there were "irregularities" mainly in just one – Jamui.

New records accessed and tracked by *The Indian Express* show otherwise.

Data compiled by four Primary Health Centres and two government hospitals in Bhagalpur show 1,438 entries for RT-PCR tests with 10 zeroes listed as their numbers and in-



In December, the referral hospital in Bhagalpur's Pirpaiti had zeroes listed against mobile numbers for 534 entries

complete addresses, making it virtually impossible to trace them. The data, from December 13, 2020 to January 5, 2021, do not show results of the tests conducted.

There is more.

One of those hospitals, a referral facility at Pirpaiti, had 10 zeroes listed as mobile numbers for 534 entries across a fortnight from December 13 to 31, 2020.

In fact, there is not a single valid mobile number for any entry for this period at this hospital.

At the PHC in Biharpur, one mobile number has been provided for 138 consecutive entries for RT-PCR tests conducted between December 29, 2020, and January 5, 2021 – this number

did not accept incoming calls.

With Bhagalpur emerging as one of the districts hard-hit by Covid with nearly 10,000 cases, the civil surgeon in charge of the district said that an inquiry is "already" being conducted on the "anomalies".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

facing that charge for allegedly sharing a Facebook post on the Delhi Police during the farmers' protest.

In his order, ASJ Rana noted:

"The law of sedition is a powerful tool in the hands of the state to maintain peace and order in the society. However, it cannot be invoked to quieten the disquiet under the pretence of muzzling the miscreants", a Delhi court observed while granting bail to two men

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

BUSINESS AS USUAL

BY UNNY

Look out for something more inflammable and costly than this – the citizenship act.



INSIDE

BIPLAB ON SHAH'S BJP 'PLANS': NEPAL LODGES OBJECTION
PAGE 6

ARUN JANARDHANAN & MANOJ CG

CHENNAI, NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

THE CONGRESS-LED government in Puducherry appeared to have lost majority on Tuesday after a second MLA of the party resigned in two days.

Late in the evening, the Centre removed the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) of the Union Territory, Kiran Bedi, with whom the government has had a long-running battle.

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, a former president of the Tamil Nadu BJP, was given additional charge of Puducherry.

The ruling Congress-DMK al-

Toolkit case: Transit bail for Muluk, HC order on Jacob today

Toolkit does not talk of violence or taking over Red Fort: Jacob's counsel

OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 16

THE BOMBAY High Court on Tuesday granted transit anticipatory bail to Shantanu Muluk in the Greta Thunberg toolkit case, and reserved its order on a similar bail plea by advocate and activist Nikita Jacob.

While issuing the non-bailable warrants against Jacob and Muluk, who work for a UK-based NGO Extinction Rebellion, Delhi Police on Monday accused them of creating the toolkit tweeted by Thunberg on the farmers' protest.

On Tuesday, a single-judge bench of Justice Vibha V Kankanhadi of the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court granted 10-day transit anticipatory bail.

Jacob has been booked under IPC Sections 124(A) for sedition,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Police probing Muluk's presence in Tikri on R-Day

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

DELI POLICE officers probing the toolkit posted on Twitter by Swedish activist Greta Thunberg on the farmers' protest are tracking records that allegedly point to the presence of one of their suspects, Shantanu Muluk, at the protest site in Tikri on the Delhi border on January 26, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

Police sources said they believe Muluk came to Delhi to take videos and photos of the protest site and use it for the toolkit. On Tuesday, Muluk, an activist from Bengaluru, triggering outrage and allegations that they had violated procedures.

"With the help of call detail records and other technical surveillance, we have come to know that Shantanu was at the farmers' protest site in Tikri on January 26. He was in Delhi for around a week," a senior officer told *The Indian Express*.

Asked about the police claim, advocate Satej Jadhav, who rep-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Puducherry Cong govt on the brink, Bedi removed as L-G



Bedi, CM clashed often

INTERVIEW WITH CM NARAYANASAMY
PAGE 7

Soundararajan, a former president of the Tamil Nadu BJP, was given additional charge of Puducherry. The ruling Congress-DMK al-

liance and the opposition AIADMK-BJP alliance now have 14 MLAs each in the House that has a current effective strength of 28. While the Opposition demanded the government's resignation on Tuesday, Chief Minister V Narayanasamy said he retained majority support.

The 33-member Puducherry Assembly includes three nominated MLAs. Of its current active strength of 28, the Congress has 10 MLAs and the DMK three, and the ruling coalition is supported by an Independent.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Deep under the city, giant machine builds Mumbai's Coastal Road

LAXMAN SINGH &
SANJANA BHAKERAO
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 16

THE COASTLINE at the southernmost tip of Mumbai is changing at the speed of 3 metres per day under one of the biggest green recreational open spaces in the city.

Maval, India's biggest Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM), has been at work 20 metres – the height of a 5-storey building – under Priyadarshini Park at Nepean Sea Road for nearly a month.

From there, Maval, named

Chhoti Chowpatty at Marine Drive, close to the landmark Chowpatty beach at Girgaum.

From January 11, when Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated Maval, the TBM has so far drilled 30 metres of the tunnel deep under Mumbai's most expensive real estate. The TBM of diameter 12.19 metres is said to be the biggest machine of its kind in the country. It weighs 2,300 tonnes, and is 80 metres long.

About 50 metres of the TBM is still in the launching shaft where the staff of L&T, labourers and engineers, are at work.

Officials at the site said that in another fortnight, the TBM



Project aims to connect South Mumbai to Worli end of Worli-Bandra Sea Link. Ganesh Shirsagar

would have burrowed enough to disappear into the tunnel which it is drilling.

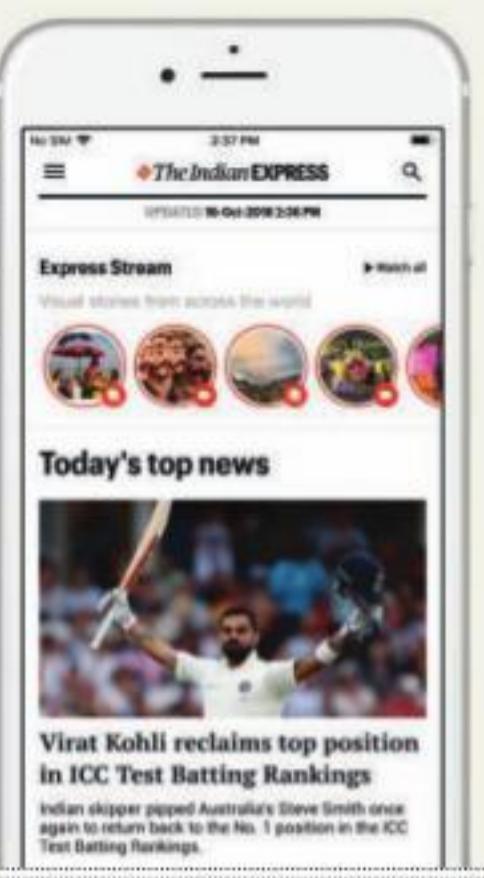
Priyadarshini Park was developed on reclaimed land, and 80-100 metres of the park falls in the intertidal sea area. The tunnel will meet the sea on the other side of Malabar Hill, at Walkeshwar. From there, it will hug Marine Drive under the sea for about half a km, before opening to a connecting road overland, 4 km to Nariman Point. At the Priyadarshini Park end, the tunnel will connect to a road to Haji Ali.

The project is set to change the coastline in South Mumbai,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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EXPRESS **AUDIO**Express Investigation:
How Bihar fudged its Covid-19 testing data

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

We look at why testing data was fudged in Bihar, the concerns it raises, and whether it should change our understanding of Bihar's Covid-19 situation.

FROM PAGE ONE

Bhagalpur

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Dr Dina Nath, the civil surgeon, said: "We have already been conducting an inquiry and have detected such anomalies. Our officials have been in the field investigating the matter. We will soon submit a report to the State Health department."

Over the last month, *The Indian Express* visited six PHCs in Jamui, Sheikhpura and Patna, and accessed their testing records for January 16, 18 and 25. It tracked down 885 entries at these PHCs, and spoke to several staffers to find that basic data protocol was bypassed in the rush to meet daily targets.

On Friday, the findings were raised in Rajya Sabha by the RJD, prompting House Chairman and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu to point out that the matter is "important" and "is a subject for inquiry". On the same day, the Centre asked Bihar to send a detailed report while the state set up probe teams and suspended nine Health personnel from Jamui.

Records from Bhagalpur indicate the scale of the problem.

Consider the key findings from data compiled by staff at PHCs in Biharpur, Jagdishpur,

Narayan and Goradih, the Sadar Hospital in Kahalganj, and the Referral Hospital in Pipraita.

■ Referral Hospital, Pipraita: The list of zeroes for mobile numbers includes 70 entries on December 13, 76 on December 14, and 79 on December 17.

■ PHC, Jagdishpur: 10 zeroes as mobile numbers for 348 entries – 35 consecutive entries on December 19, 33 for December 15, and 29 on December 17.

■ Sadar Hospital, Kahalganj: 10 zeroes for 239 entries – 91 on December 14, and 64 on December 15.

■ PHC, Biharpur: 10 zeroes for all 161 entries for RT-PCR tests between December 16 and 30, with a maximum of 43 entries on December 17.

■ PHC, Narayanpur: 10 zeroes for 131 consecutive entries for tests between December 16 and 28, including 50 entries on December 17.

■ PHC, Goradih: 10 zeroes for all 25 entries on December 30.

Bihar has so far tested 2.20 crore samples with over 2.61 lakh positive cases and 1,527 Covid-related deaths. At present, the state has 588 active cases.

Staff members at two of the PHCs in Bhagalpur, speaking on condition of anonymity, echoed Health personnel on the ground

in Jamui and Sheikhpura: there was "too much pressure" to meet targets from block health managers and medical officers in charge, especially after a dip in cases since October.

State officials told *The Indian Express* that with "irregularities" coming to the fore, and Covid levels dipping, district-level officials have been told not to set any more testing targets. "Now that data fudging has been reported, we have been asked to get ID for those getting tested. Unlike before, there is no pressure to meet a daily target now," said a PHC official in Bhagalpur, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Bihar norms

found several gaps in Covid testing data compiled by Primary Health Centres and other facilities in at least four districts, including alleged large-scale fudging of contact details essential for tracing the entries.

"The department has been seriously considering the linking of Covid vaccination to Aadhaar and had already raised this with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, but a final call is yet to be taken. But for now, a valid ID card has been made mandatory for Covid testing," a senior

Coastal Road

again transported back to Priyadarshini Park for boring the

official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said.

Officials also said that with the government doing away with testing targets last week, following the findings of the investigation that data was allegedly fudged at PHCs to meet those numbers, testing has come down drastically.

Official figures show that the state tested 76,878 samples on January 9, and 62,539 on February 12. On February 13, after *The Indian Express* first reported on the loopholes, the number had dipped to 47,282. A day later, it had fallen to 30,940. "There is no pressure of a target now, and the civil surgeon has directed us strictly to ask for a valid ID card for testing," said a PHC staffer in Bhagalpur.

"You have to take Aadhaar card or PAN card or Voter ID or any other relevant identity proof at the time of taking samples," states an unofficial advisory issued by senior officials.

"This is urgent. Also do testing on demand only. Must be followed in all cases from now onwards. Be careful."

northbound traffic tunnel. The entire process of completing the tunneling will take about two years," Vishal Thombare, executive engineer with the Coastal Road department, said.

A huge Slurry Treatment Plant has been set up close to the launching shaft of the TBM. It separates the stones, soil, and water round the clock. At the site, cranes, diggers and dumpers are continuously at work, handling material for reclamation and construction.

Hundreds of workers, mostly migrants from Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, are working in two shifts. Work is expected to be complete in July 2023; however, officials hope to be able to get it done sooner, given there are no hurdles such as land acquisition or shifting of the population.

Additional Municipal Commissioner Ashwini Bhide, who is looking after the Coastal Road project, told *The Indian Express*, "We need seamless connectivity from the southern tip of the city to the northern side. This project is going to provide exactly that kind of fast connectivity. With this road, in terms of time, there would be an almost 70 per cent reduction. One will be able to reach from Princess Street flyover to Worli in 10-12 minutes with 35 per cent saving on fuel consumption to cover over 10 km."

She added, "This project will add more open spaces and continuous promenade from Priyadarshini Park to Worli. So far, 22 per cent of physical work has been completed, and most of it was done in the last six to seven months after the court stay was vacated."

He said that the Brazil variant ('P.1 lineage') has spread to 15 countries. 'P.1 lineage variant emerged independently in Brazil in early January 2021 and is attributed to a large re-spike of cases in Brazil, particularly in Manaus. It also has mutations in the receptor-binding domain of spike protein and has increased transmissibility. This variant has spread to 15 countries," Bhargava said.

Dr V K Paul, Member, NITI Aayog, said the emergence of the two variants was a matter of concern. "This virus has not gone away. It is still affecting our population and can raise the number of cases. This is a concern....we already have a UK variant in our country. Hopefully, these variants will not cause a catastrophic situation in the country. But it just shows that vigil to contain these disease must continue," he said.

According to the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, the South Africa strain accounts for at least 80 per cent of new cases identified during the country's second wave of the pandemic.

On February 7, on the basis of a study conducted by a team at the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, the South African government announced a temporary hold on the rollout of the University of Oxford/ AstraZeneca vaccine manufactured by the Serum Institute of India following reports that the vaccine only offered "minimal protection" against mild and moderate cases of Covid-19 infections.

However, a day later, the World Health Organisation said it was "important to note" that primary analysis of data from Phase III trials had revealed that "in the context of viral settings

without this (South Africa) variant" the AstraZeneca/ Oxford vaccine offers protection against severe disease, hospitalisation and death. "This means it is vitally important now to determine the vaccine's effectiveness when it comes to preventing more severe illness caused by the B.1.351 variant," it said.

Bhargava said the South Africa and Brazil variants have mutations that are different from the UK variant detected in December last year. "These two variants are different from the UK variant. In the UK variant, we saw mutation in the spike protein. In these two, the mutation is in the receptor-binding domain (RBD); therefore, the virus is able to bind to human ACE2 receptor in lungs with ease," he said.

"The B.1.351 emerged independently in South Africa and was first reported in mid-December 2020. This has multiple mutations, including in the receptor binding domain of spike protein. The majority of cases in South Africa are due to this variant strain, and this has spread to 44 countries," Bhargava said.

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Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said that all returnees from South Africa and Brazil will be tested and their samples will be sent for genome sequencing. He said that with the UK variant, "100 per cent RTPCR test and genome sequencing was conducted on all the positive samples. This strategy has worked well and the same strategy will be adopted for flights from Brazil and South Africa".

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wrong."

Disha, one of the founders of Fridays For Future India, was picked up from her house in Bengaluru on Saturday and "formally" arrested in Delhi. On Monday, Prem Nath, Joint CP (Cyber Unit), said that an SHO from a police station in Bengaluru was informed about the Delhi Police's arrival and was present at the time of arrest.

"We acted against Disha because she had deleted a WhatsApp group which she created to coordinate among various members. Her arrest was made in the presence of her mother and local SHO. Due procedure was adopted in arresting her and a medical test was conducted before presenting her before the court on Sunday," said JCP Nath. Disha has denied the charges in court.

His statement in Parliament came a day after the Chinese Defence Ministry announced the start of the disengagement process on the north and south banks of Pangong Tso, in both Houses of Parliament. "Both sides will cease their forward deployments in a phased, coordinated and verified manner," he had said.

As part of the process, Chinese troops will pull back from Finger 4 to east of Finger 8 on the Pangong north bank – they had come in 8 km west of Finger 8 which India says marks the LAC. Indian troops will be stationed at Dhan Singh Thapa Post near Finger 3. For the time being, the stretch separating them will be a no-patrolling zone.

Toolkit case

153(A) for promoting enmity between different groups, and 120(B) for criminal conspiracy.

Venegonkar submitted that on February 11, the Delhi Police had recovered material from Jacob's residence, and that she was present at her residence and had recorded her statement. "When we went to her house, we investigated and interrogated her there. After sunset, we could not have further interrogated her," he said, adding that when they turned up the next day (February 12), she was absconding.

Appearing for Jacob, senior counsel Mihir Desai, however, said his client, who has practised in the HC for nearly 6-7 years, had apprehended arrest and therefore filed for transitory pre-arrest bail on February 12.

Arguing that "the toolkit does not talk about any violence or taking over of Red Fort etc.", Desai submitted that it was prepared only to support farmers and "there are nearly 50 persons in this case and one person happens to be Khalistani and their (Delhi Police) argument".

He belongs to some organisation called 'Poetic Justice' and how will one know that the person is Khalistani? It is not a banned organisation under UAPA," Desai said.

Venegonkar submitted that Jacob was part of a larger group that was formed in December to support the farmers' protest. "This toolkit document was created much earlier before the riot [January 26 violence] happened in Delhi mentioning step by step what action needs to be taken. Authorship lies with Disha Ravi and two others -- whose names I cannot take -- with affiliations to Khalistani movement."

Justice Naik said that while he would not decide on the merits of the case, "but to understand the nature of the offence a little background is necessary".

After Desai informed the court that the Aurangabad bench of the HC has granted transit anticipatory to Muluk, Justice Naik said he would want to know if the question of maintainability was discussed before that bench and sought to peruse that order. Justice Naik said he would pass an order on Wednesday.

Desai sought that in the meantime, Jacob may be protected from arrest. The counsel for the Delhi Police said, "No prudent officer will take that step. In any case, a woman will not be arrested after sunset."

The Delhi Police have also written to Zoom to get details of the participants of an alleged meeting between members of the pro-Khalistan 'Poetic Justice' Foundation, and Muluk and Jacob, on January 11. Police sources said they are also planning to write to WhatsApp to get details of the group that was allegedly created in December by Disha and her associates.

According to police, Disha and Mumbai lawyer Nikita Jacob were the editors of the toolkit while an email account created by Muluk was the admin of the Google document.

Police chief Shrivastava said: "The January 26 violence was a conspiracy. Police showed intelligence and restraint... violence was averted. The conspiracy was to spread rumours, fake news and instigate riots. When the toolkit was discovered, the police registered a case and are conducting the investigation."

Asked on what basis police were linking the toolkit to pro-Khalistani groups, he said, "At this stage, I can't comment... We are at an initial stage of the investigation. Many people are being questioned for their role in the violence."

According to police, Disha and Mumbai lawyer Nikita Jacob were the editors of the toolkit while an email account created by Muluk was the admin of the Google document.

A senior police officer told *The Indian Express*: "The document was meant for activists and some influencers. Greta accidentally put it online. After the document was out in public, Disha feared she would get in trouble and requested Greta to delete it. We have examined their chats and confirmed this."

According to police, Greta deleted the toolkit and was then given an edited version which she posted on Twitter after a few hours.

Police sources claimed that one of the edits made was the "removal" of US activist Pieter Friedrich's name. "We suspect this was done because creators of the toolkit felt using his name as a resource in the document could lead to trouble. We have come to know that at least four people edited this document on several occasions in January," the senior officer said.

On Monday, Special Cell (DCP) Manishi Chandra had said that Friedrich has been on the radar of the security establishment since late 2006. "He was noticed in the company of Bhajan Singh Bhinder who has been a very leading proponent of the K2 (Kashmir Khalistan) desk of ISI," the DCP said.

Friedrich had, however, told *The Indian Express* that he has "co-authored two books with Bhajan Singh". "Had I ever seen him even hint at support for Khalistan, I would have run the other way -- but he didn't," he said.

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Sugarcane season: Crowd begins to thin at Ghazipur



The protest site at Ghazipur wears a relatively deserted look, Tuesday. *Gajendra Yadav*

ASHNA BUTANI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

WITH SUGARCANE planting season set to begin in Uttar Pradesh villages, a number of protesters from Ghazipur have left for their homes, though those left behind insist this is temporary and the protest will return to its former size once planting is over.

Signs of the thinning crowd are evident at a langar started by Kar Sewa, Amritsar, which currently feeds around 4,000-5,000 protesters. Kamaldeep Singh (28), a farmer from Muzaffarnagar, who volunteers at the langar, said, "Earlier, around 15,000-16,000 people would come to eat here."

"The weather has changed and people are preparing for summer. Many have also returned to their villages so they can attend mahapanchayats. However, many have left behind their tractors; their ration. They keep coming back and the numbers keep fluctuating."

Harpreet Singh (35), a farmer from Lakhimpur Kheri district, said many people from his village are going to arrive at the site in the next few days. "I am also going back for the mahapanchayat. It is important to attend because many important things are discussed there, such as the future of this protest. We are now discussing our plans for the

Meanwhile, Singhu farm leaders insist: Stir not dying down

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

FARMER UNIONS at Singhu border have said that protesters are ready to brave the summer until their demands are met and arrangements are being made for the change in season. The unions also reiterated that they will block rail routes on February 18.

"There is a narrative that the protest is going dull and that the sites are being cleared. We would like to clarify that meetings are being held in dozens of villages across Punjab and Haryana. The youths are holding their separate gatherings. Calls have been made from religious places as well.

There is an entire wave and it will not die down," said Major Singh Punewal from Kul Hind Kisan Sabha.

Farm leaders said protesters are arranging for generators to ensure fans and other electrical items work in summer, and that meetings are being held in "Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Odisha, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, among other states" for more mobilisation.

The leaders said rail routes leading towards Delhi will be blocked at the border for four

hours, while similar protests will take place in other states at different rail routes.

"The demand for repealing the laws remains the same. We are also demanding MSP. There should be no doubt about the fact that farmers are here to stay. Many mahapanchayats are being organised in villages to discuss the issue. Financial assistance in terms of donations is also there," said Deep Singh from Kisan Ekta Morcha.

Farmer unions celebrated Basant Panchami at Singhu border to mark the contributions of Sir Chhotu Ram, who helped in the passage of key farmer reforms during British rule.

Farmer leaders from Haryana meanwhile demanded the dismissal of "anti-farmer ministers" in the state.

They also said that the Samyukt Kisan Morcha legal cell is currently helping farmers facing action following Republic Day violence. "For those in jail, we are helping with blankets or any items required through the legal cell. The lawyers are looking and scrutinising all aspects of the case. The farmers are being taken care of. We are looking at a long drawn process," said Major Singh.

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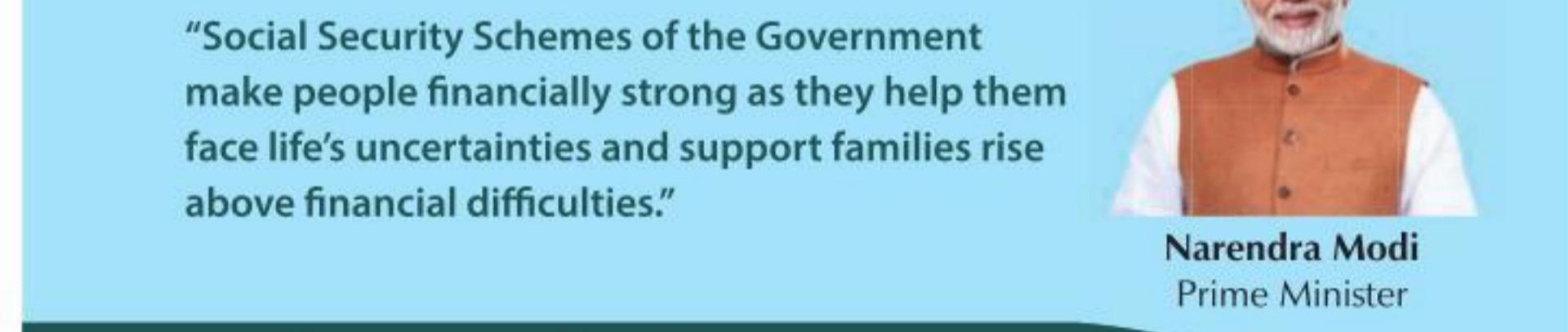
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Narendra Modi
Prime Minister

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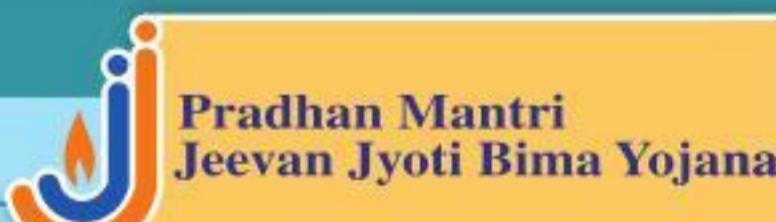
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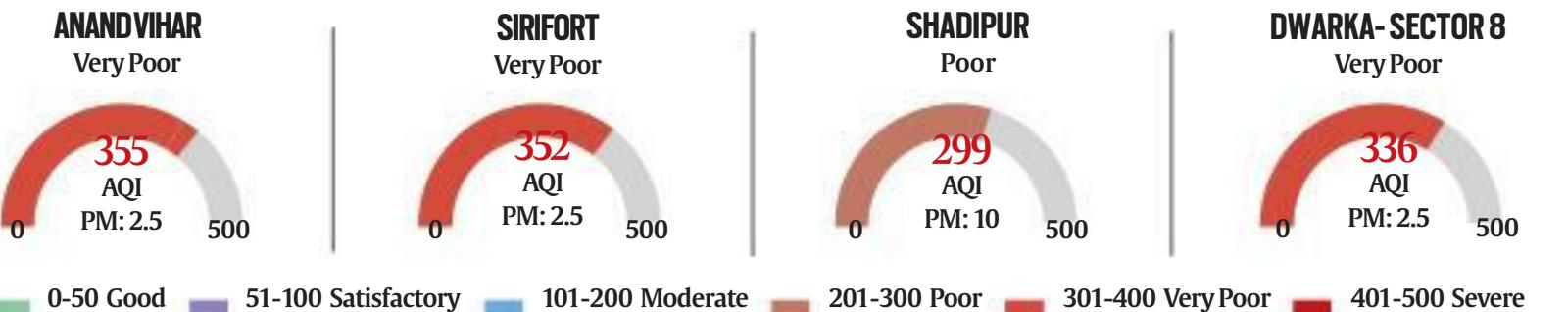
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ALSO POINTS TO ROLE OF BANNED SIKH OUTFIT, CANADA-BASED ORGANISATION

Toolkit FIR claims bid to wage economic warfare on India and Indian companies

ARANYASHANKAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

violent" as "a result of the said investigation by elements behind this document and its toolkit".

The Cyber Cell also blamed the "secessionist banned organisation, Sikhs for Justice, based in the United States of America" as having contributed to the violence on January 26, saying it had "declared a reward of USD 2,50,000 for waving secessionist flag at the India Gate on Republic Day".

It also noted that the toolkit was "promoting" campaign material by Poetic Justice Foundation, "a Canada-based organisation that openly and deliberately shares posts on social media that tend to create disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities".

It also said that the documents in the toolkit "specifically mention targeting certain regions of India to instigate enmity and divide" and "detailed plans have been made by conspirators to instigate certain communities against one another".

"After the violence on January 26 various social media handles are being used to spread rumours and fake news/videos to promote enmity between different groups, wantonly give provocation with intention to commit riots and bring into hatred or contempt or to excite disaffection towards the Government of India," the FIR read.

It said that the rally "which was initially agreed to by the farmers' unions as a peaceful march, turned

MoS praises police handling of NE Delhi riots and Jan 26 tractor rally

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

ON TUESDAY, Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy praised the Delhi Police for handling the January 26 violence this year and Delhi riots last year with "professionalism and dedication".

The minister gave a speech at the 74th Delhi Police Raising Day Ceremony, where he said that the two incidents were part of a "larger conspiracy to defame the country".

"There are many anti-India elements that want to spread instability. Delhi remains their focal point. The riots and illegal protests that took place in February 2020 were a part of this scheme, but the way Delhi Police handled it is an example for other police forces," Reddy said.

Reddy was the chief guest at the ceremony, where he took the salute with Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava.

"Anti-India elements challenged the law and order situation on Republic Day and destroyed public property. Despite their anti-national activities,



At the Raising Day Parade, Tuesday. Praveen Khanna

provocative behaviour and attacks on our police personnel, the Delhi Police showed restraint, patience, discipline and handled the situation... I feel sad that more than 500 personnel were injured but also feel happy that police officers didn't let any civilian die," said Reddy.

The parade consisted of contingents from the Anti-riots

Squad, Armed Police, Women Police, Dog Squad, Mounted Police and Traffic Squad.

Reddy gave out 75 medals to personnel for meritorious service. Karol Bagh police station in Delhi won the 'Best Police Station' title and was awarded a trophy. Seelampur and Moti Nagar police stations bagged the second and third position.

Shrivastava also praised his force for their handing of the anti-CAA protests. He said, "Delhi Police registered a record 755 cases in the riots and conveyed in no uncertain terms its intention of investigating the riot cases freely and fairly. Intensive use of technology in identification and arrest of culprits was the hallmark of the investigation."

Custody of Deep Sidhu extended by 7 days

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

A DELHI court Tuesday extended by seven days the police custody of actor Deep Sidhu in connection with the violence on Republic Day at Red Fort during the farmers' tractor parade against the Centre's new laws.

Sidhu was produced before Metropolitan Magistrate Bhujali after the expiry of his police custody. Police sought extension of his custodial interrogation, saying it was required for further investigation and to identify other accused persons in the case.

The court had on February 9 sent Sidhu to police custody for seven days after police alleged he was one of the main instigators of the violent incidents at Red Fort.

Police had alleged there are videos where Sidhu can be seen at the site of the incident. "He was instigating the crowd. He was also one of the main rioters. Several social media accounts need to be searched to identify the co-conspirators. Also his permanent address is given as Nagpur but several places need to be visited in Punjab and Haryana to unearth further details," the police had alleged.

"He can be seen coming out with the person who hoisted the flag and congratulating him. He came out and gave speeches in loud hooters and provoked the crowd there," police said.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

ON THE first anniversary of its third stint in office, the AAP government on Tuesday said it is set for the uphill task of cleaning the Yamuna, which passes through Delhi, within the next three years.

In a video message, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said his government will continue to serve the city round-the-clock. He also listed initiatives taken by the government to help people tide over the distress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Kejriwal thanked the people of Delhi for voting the AAP to power with a stupendous majority in 2020. The AAP had bagged 62 out of 70 seats in the Delhi assembly.

"One year ago today you all gave your son another opportunity to serve everyone. It has been a very tough year but all the citizens of Delhi have worked together," he said.

Referring to the initiatives taken after the outbreak of the pandemic, Kejriwal said the home isolation model, plasma bank and oximeter distribution have been widely praised. "The Delhi government ensured food for all during the Covid-19 pandemic and we also distributed free ration to all during the pandemic. The Delhi government also arranged free transport for the migrant labourers who were stuck in Delhi. Amid all these limitations the Aam Aadmi Party government maintained free electricity and water schemes," he added.

"Many people who have been attached with governance for a long time think it is impossible but we will make it happen. After a year we will show you the status of the clean Yamuna project. We will clean the Yamuna river and set an example to the world," Jain said.

Last month, the proceedings of the two-member Yamuna monitoring committee set up by the National Green Tribunal in 2018 had concluded.

The committee stated that unless the flow of freshwater in the river is brought to the required amount, there is no chance of its revival.



CM Kejriwal said in a video message that his government will continue to serve the city round-the-clock

ing the Yamuna within three years. The AAP had in its poll manifesto promised to clean the river by 2025.

"CM Kejriwal has given clear instructions to complete the clean Yamuna project as soon as possible and we are working day and night for this. He had asked us to complete this clean Yamuna project within five years, out of which one year has already been exhausted. But we will clean it up within three years from now."

"Many people who have been attached with governance for a long time think it is impossible but we will make it happen. After a year we will show you the status of the clean Yamuna project. We will clean the Yamuna river and set an example to the world," Jain said.

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Mishra (centre) on his way to meet the family of Rinku Sharma on Tuesday. Abhinav Saha

At meeting with murder victim's family, Kapil Mishra talks jihad, terror

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

VISITING THE family of 25-year-old Rinku Sharma, who was stabbed to death in Mangolpuri last week, Delhi BJP leader Kapil Mishra called the murder "jihad" and an organised conspiracy to target those collecting funds for the Ram Mandir.

Bhopal MP Pragya Thakur also visited the family later in the day and assured them that the government is with them.

While police have so far maintained the murder was the fallout of an old business rivalry, the Vishva Hindu Parishad and Delhi BJP leaders claim Sharma was killed for being part of the temple donation drive.

"This is jihad... he was targeted, picked and killed as he worked with enthusiasm for religion. They entered his house and killed him and were not satisfied with it, so they again went to the hospital to beat him. This is not just any other crime; this needs to be understood how a terror incident is understood," Mishra claimed.

Mishra's claim of the accused targeting Sharma at the hospital has not been corroborated by the police.

"Those who have murdered him must be hanged but also the masterminds behind the incident should be found — those who brainwashed that if people come

to demand (Ram Temple) donations, they should be killed," he claimed, adding that he has started the process of transferring Rs 1 crore to the family's account.

Mishra and vice-president of the Delhi BJP youth wing, Vaishali Poddar, have started a crowd-funding exercise to collect the amount.

With the families of the accused saying they fear retribution, police have increased deployment in the area, where the VHP had been holding protests. The families, though, have left saying they fear for their safety.

The victim's younger brother, 19-year-old Mannu, who is with the VHP's youth wing, said at the meeting with Mishra: "The Hindu family is united."

As Mishra left the house and headed to his car, a man arrived with a sword in his hand, but was stopped by police and his sword was taken away.

The man claimed he was one Dinesh Thakur, founder and president of Bharat Mata Wahini.

"I had a sword to save our dharma, just like Maa Bhagwati kept. If the victim would have kept a sword, he would not have been killed. I demand that Hindus be allowed to keep swords," he said.

He later went away driving a gypsy. Additional DCP (Outer) Sudhanshu Dhama said, "Our team removed the man from the locality. We are looking into the matter and will take legal action."

SHUT ON JAN 18 DUE TO BIRD FLU OUTBREAK

Repairs on Red Fort nearly done, set to reopen soon

DIVYA A &
ANANYA TIWARI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

THE CALL to reopen Red Fort will be taken soon as repair work on the entrance area is nearly complete, officials at the Archaeological Survey of India told The Indian Express.

The Red Fort was shut on January 18 due to the outbreak of Avian Flu detected there by the district administration and Delhi's disaster management authority. The order was continued "till further notice" on February 1 citing the same reason. Around 60 birds have been found dead at

the monument since January.

On January 26, hundreds of people part of the tractor rally carried out by farmers had stormed the Red Fort and vandalised the entry security counters and porta cabins used by officials.

Machines, CCTV cameras, metal detectors, glass windows and security equipment at the entrance of the Red Fort, where visitors deposit their baggage and are cleared by the security, were ransacked. Two of Lahori Gate's brass finials, which had gone missing, have been found in the wreckage.

On the monument's first floor, said Union Culture Minister Prahlad Patel after a recce, an un-



The Red Fort suffered damage during the tractor rally by farmers on January 26. Praveen Khanna

der-construction interpretation centre had suffered massive damage across its 6-7 blocks.

The centre is being developed by the Dalmia Bharat Group, which had won the contract for the Fort's maintenance, development and operations in April 2018 under the 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme.

As per sources at the ASI told The Indian Express, "The major focus right now is to mitigate the bird flu there. People should not be fearful. The area is closed as per regulations so that the infection can be disposed of and controlled."

Dr Rakesh Singh, the animal husbandry officer at the north district, said, "Avian flu was detected in the samples collected around a month ago. Sanitation

and sterilisation work is going on inside. Though no new incident has been detected of dying birds, only after two consecutive negative results can it be declared infection-free. The round two of testing is set to happen soon."

As per sources at the ASI told The Indian Express, "The major focus right now is to mitigate the bird flu there. People should not be fearful. The area is closed as per regulations so that the infection can be disposed of and controlled."

As of now, personnel of the Delhi Police and the CISF have barricaded all entry points to the monument. No visitors are permitted inside the grounds.

DELHI GOVERNMENT SETS A PRECEDENT IN COVID MANAGEMENT

Several exemplary initiatives and steps by the Delhi government made the fight against Corona in Delhi easier

There have been various instances of good governance and great governments throughout history. But such recognition does not come without its own trials and tribulations. They are especially tested on their ability and skill in handling disasters or challenges faced by the countries across the world. Perhaps the most formidable challenge to humanity at present is Coronavirus, which has impacted the entire world. There are very few governments in the world that have faced this unprecedented crisis with great skill, sincerity and patience. While the impact and fear of this pandemic is diminishing today, India is being praised all over the world for its handling of the pandemic. And in this concerted effort of the nation, the contribution of Delhi government is unforgettable. The sudden lockdown announced in the last week of March, not only impacted the health sector, but also challenged the governments on all fronts of everyday life. The attention of the entire country and the world was focused on Delhi, which with its dense population of nearly 2 crore people was especially vulnerable to the pandemic. In this dire situation, the Arvind Kejriwal led Delhi government courageously confronted and skillfully handled the combined onslaught of challenges like Coronavirus transmission, migration, hunger, unemployment and education. Each new initiative and scheme launched by the Delhi government to combat each challenge during lockdown became a precedent for the entire world. As the impact of the pandemic first began being felt in Delhi, the government started implementing ideas for the poor and destitute. The Delhi government immediately began providing free cooked food to nearly a million people during the lockdown. Not only this, the Kejriwal led government distributed dry rations free of charge, to millions of people trapped



within the confines of their homes during lockdown. For those who were impoverished but did not have ration cards, a new scheme was launched to register them online so that they could avail free ration. Financial assistance was provided to those employed in the public transportation sector as well as to construction workers. The biggest challenge was handling the mass migration of workers from Delhi. People come to Delhi to work from all over the country and with transportation closed, it became an especially onerous task to send them back to their homes. The entire nation was looking towards Delhi, but the earnestness and systematic manner with which the Delhi government overcame this challenge sets a wonderful example for good governance. In times of crisis, the public looked up to the government, and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal must be applauded as he never let the public feel disheartened during the pandemic. Perhaps this is the reason that in that era of great turmoil, when news of tragedy and misery was pouring in from across the country, the Delhi Government was gearing up to meet the challenges ahead.

The Delhi government skillfully handled the combined onslaught of challenges like coronavirus transmission, migration, hunger, unemployment and education

Delhi has conducted the highest number of COVID testing, equivalent to more than half the population of Delhi being tested

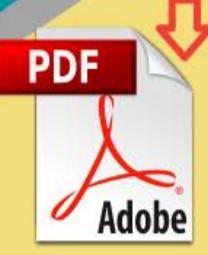
This is an excellent illustration of the Delhi government's farsightedness. While even the governments of developed countries were unable to comprehend how to fight against Corona, the Delhi government launched several brilliant and effective initiatives during this period. The country's largest COVID care center was established in the capital. Many new hospitals were also opened in this period. Delhi was the first in the country to successfully deploy home isolation. The help of various agencies was taken to

ensure that such patients living in their homes did not have any problem with doctors or other medical facilities. Free oximeters were also provided to each patient. Delhi's home isolation model even received tremendous praise from the Central government. Similarly, when the rest of the governments were in a dilemma about plasma therapy, the Delhi government started it immediately after getting assurances from doctors and experts. Plasma banks were also established. There was a time when an entire area was sealed off whenever a patient was infected. Delhi demonstrated for the first time that it is unnecessary to seal the entire city for fear of infection. In November, a record eight and a half thousand patients were found infected on a single day. But the Delhi government overcame this critical situation very efficiently. First, the speed of testing was accelerated. Presently, 1 crore tests have been conducted in Delhi which is equivalent to more than half the population of the state. It is the highest in the country. The 4-T measures initiated by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal were also later adopted in other states.

17 Feb Current Affairs

Q. In which state has the state government decided to build the dacoit museum?

- A - Rajasthan (Ajmer)
- B - Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal)
- C - Bihar (Patna)
- D - Gujarat (Vijayanagar)



LAUNCH OF 'SWITCH DELHI' CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Delhi government is amongst the first state governments in India to notify an electric vehicle policy

The Delhi government's focus has been on establishing connectivity in every part of Delhi along with bringing an environment-friendly transport system. To fulfill this, Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government became one of the first state governments to draft an ambitious Electric Vehicle Policy and then in August 2020 the government notified this. The Delhi government launched the Electric Vehicle Policy under which it aims to waive off the registration fee, road tax, and provides an incentive of upto 1.5 lakh for new cars. Through this policy, the government aims to generate employment to give a boost to Delhi's economy and reduce pollution levels in the national capital. The Delhi EV policy envisages that 25% of all new vehicle registrations should be Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) by 2024. Under this policy, the Delhi government will give an incentive of up to Rs 30,000 for two-wheelers, autos, e-rickshaws and freight vehicles while for cars, it will provide an incentive of up to Rs 1.5 lakh. To expedite electric vehicle adoption, CM Arvind Kejriwal launched 'Switch Delhi' campaign on February 5. The CM appealed to people to buy electric vehicles to combat pollution in the city. The Delhi

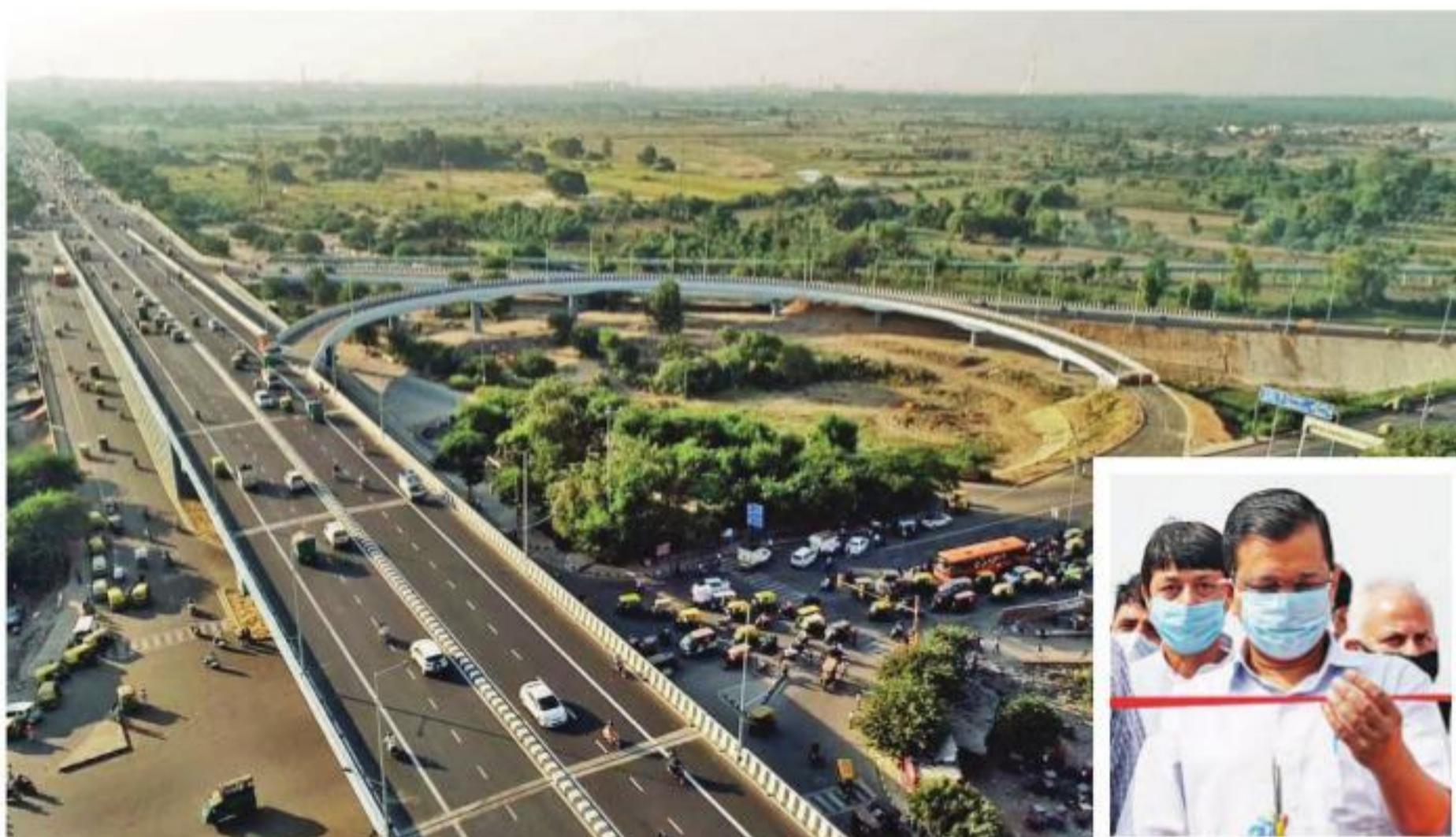
government has also planned to hire only electric vehicles for governmental purposes in the next six months. The Delhi government asked delivery chains and big companies, resident welfare associations, market associations, malls and cinema halls to promote electric vehicles and set up charging stations at their premises. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also appealed to the

CM Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government asked delivery chains and big companies, resident welfare associations, market associations, malls and cinema halls to promote electric vehicles and set up charging stations at their premises

In the 'Switch Delhi' campaign, awareness will be created about the benefits of electric vehicles and how it can contribute to making Delhi clean and pollution-free

clean and pollution-free. Appeal was made to the people to take part in the campaign to promote the replacement of polluting petrol and diesel vehicles with electric vehicles and make a contribution towards a pollution-free Delhi. The Delhi government has been combating the menace of air pollution through multiple measures. In the first week of

two-thirds of all vehicles in Delhi and cause maximum pollution. Incentives up to Rs 30,000 can be availed upon the purchase of two-wheelers listed under the policy along with scrapping incentives. Under Delhi's EV policy, 23 two-wheeler models are available and eligible for purchase and scrapping incentives across seven manufacturers. By switching to electric two-wheelers which have very low operating costs, an individual can make an annual saving of approximately Rs 22,000 as compared to using petrol scooter and Rs 20,000 as compared to a petrol bike. An average electric two-wheeler provides a lifetime savings of 1.98 tonnes of carbon emissions as compared to an average petrol two-wheeler, which is equivalent to planting eleven trees. The Delhi government has launched social media handles for its latest campaign "Switch Delhi". The DDC will be leading the social media outreach programme for the campaign on various social media platforms like on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, said an official statement. This will help the Delhi government to better connect with the citizens of Delhi.



DELHI GOVERNMENT SAVES CRORES IN BUILDING OF FLYOVERS

To make commuting of Delhi residents faster, the Delhi government has built new flyovers and underpasses in record time



To make commuting of Delhi residents faster, the Delhi government has built new flyovers and underpasses across the capital which were completed even before scheduled time. The government in a record time completed two flyovers (Shastri Park and Seelampur) and both have been completed at Rs 25 crore, a cost less than the sanctioned cost of Rs 303 crore, saving Rs 53 crores. The construction of these flyovers has brought relief to around 1.5 lakh vehicle owners daily. The two flyovers will significantly reduce travel time between Shahdara in east Delhi to Kashmere Gate Interstate Bus Terminus. The upcoming Ashram underpass

Delhi government led by CM Arvind Kejriwal completed two flyovers (Shastri Park and Seelampur) in record time and saved Rs 53 crores in the construction cost

The two flyovers will significantly reduce travel time between Shahdara in East Delhi to Kashmere Gate Interstate Bus Terminus (ISBT)

Delhi becomes the only Indian city to get featured in the list of the World's Best Cities for 2021

Under Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi has experienced rapid development in the past 6 years



Delhi got featured in the list of World's Best Cities for 2021 making our Delhi the only Indian city to rank among the 100 best cities across the world. Delhi, the national capital of India, secured the 62nd position on this prestigious list. Last year, Delhi was at the 81st position and has significantly improved its ranking this year. The continuous development work of CM Arvind Kejriwal has brought only great news for the citizens of Delhi. The ranking was done by Resonance Consultancy Limited which is based out of Vancouver and specialises in destination development, branding, marketing, design, tourism, data, and travel reports. Some of the other cities that have been featured in the list include Amsterdam, Rome, Washington DC, Toronto, Prague, and St Petersburg. CM Arvind Kejriwal said, "Such good news for all Dilliwalas. All dilliwalas have worked so hard in the last six

Under the leadership of CM Kejriwal, Delhi has featured in the list of World's Best Cities for 2021 and is the only Indian city to rank among the 100 best cities across the world

Delhi is the only Indian city to feature on the list, acquiring 62nd position in the list of World's Best Cities for 2021

years to make it happen. The world is noticing the positive changes happening in Delhi." Deputy Chief Minister Shri Manish Sisodia said, "Congratulations to all the proud people of Delhi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for the leadership. Our beloved Delhi is ranked 62 on the list. The only Indian city in the list. There is a significant improvement from the past ranking i.e. 81." This ranking has given the national capital 62nd position, making it the only Indian city to feature in the list. Reportedly, the ranks have been given to 100 cities from across the world with a population of over 10 lakh. The ranking was based on the basis of diverse factors, including online hashtags, number of check-ins, diversity, tourist attractions, weather and more. It also included factors like Covid-19 infections in July, income incongruity and unemployment. While Rome (Italy), Chicago (United States), Toronto (Canada), San Francisco (USA), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Berlin (Germany), Prague (Czech Republic) and Washington DC (United States) took the new few spots, Delhi in India was ranked 62 on the list, the only Indian city to have been featured on the list.

PM: New India rectifying injustice by history writers

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 16

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the "injustice" perpetrated by the writers of Indian history "against those who made history" was being corrected in "new India". He made the remark at an online event in which he laid the foundation stones of a Maharaja Suheldev memorial and the development work of Chittaura lake in Uttar Pradesh's Bahraich district.

"Injustice done to those who made history by those who twisted history in the name of writing it is being corrected by 'New India'. The country is getting rid of mistakes," he said.

Modi said history is not just what was written by those who enslaved the country or those who wrote it with the "mindset of slavery". History lies in the folklore of India, he added.

Modi said the attempts made by his government to ensure proper respect is accorded to the makers of Indian history, right from Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Sardar Patel to BR Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi.

The Prime Minister claimed that neither Netaji nor his Azad Hind Fauj was accorded the importance that should have been given, and said the Centre was strengthening his identity from Red Fort to Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Sardar Patel and Ambedkar were similarly ignored in the past, Modi claimed.

Modi said Maharaja Suheldev -- an 11th-Century ruler who killed Ghaznavid general Salar Masud -- was among the icons not given their due respect. He said the contributions of Suheldev might have been ignored by history textbooks, but they had been kept alive in the folklore of the Awadh, Tarai and Purvanchal regions.

Providing examples of monuments related to "history, faith and spirituality" that his government has developed in the past few years, the Prime Minister said the main objective of building such monuments was to promote tourism.

In Uttar Pradesh, Modi said, Ramayana circuits, spiritual circuits, and Buddhist circuits were being developed in places such as Ayodhya, Chitrakoot, Mathura, Vrindavan, Govardhan, Kushinagar and Shravasti that are believed to be connected to Hindu deities such as Ram and Krishna, and the Buddha.

Speaking about the three farm laws that are being opposed by various farmers' groups, Modi claimed that misinformation was being spread about the legislation.

Taking a dig at the Opposition, the Prime Minister said, "The entire country saw that those who brought laws to bring foreign companies into the Indian agriculture market are today scaring farmers in the name of local companies." But their "lies and propaganda" were being exposed, he added.

2 days after Biplab quotes Shah in jest, Nepal objects

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE & DEBRAJ DEB
KATHMANDU, AGARTALA, FEBRUARY 16

THE NEPAL government has lodged its objection to a comment, which Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Deb attributed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah -- during his tenure as the party chief -- that the BJP will be forming government not only in Indian states, but in Nepal as well.

Addressing a party event in Agartala on Sunday, Deb in jest quoted Shah as suggesting that the BJP has plans of expanding to Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Nepal Foreign Affairs Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali



Nepal Foreign Affairs Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali

to Nepal and Sri Lanka. Shah was BJP national president at that time, Deb said, adding that his visionary ideas transformed the BJP into the world's largest political party.

"We were talking at the state guest house in Agartala, when [party leader] Ajay Jamwal said that most of the states have BJP in power. In reply, Amit Shah said Nepal and Sri Lanka are left. We need to win there as well," said Deb, as he burst into laughter.

Referring to the upcoming Assembly elections in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Deb said the BJP would come to power in both states. "There will be neither CPM nor Congress in Kerala anymore. Narendra Modi is going already there. In Tamil Nadu too, we will form next government. There will be no government

other than BJP," said Deb.

Although Deb made the statement in jest, barely 24 hours later, the state BJP came out in his support and said he had spoken the truth about BJP's long-term ideological ambitions. "We started work to extend our Indian philosophy and culture to different countries since long. We never consider poll contest as our primary aim. We are considering to win people everywhere," said Tripura BJP spokesperson Nabendu Bhattacharya.

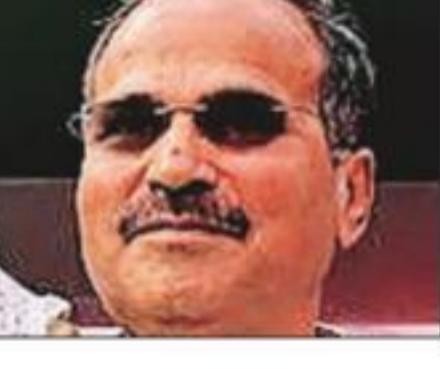
Claiming that the Congress party and Communist party have global presence like Nepali Congress or Communist parties in different nations, he asked why the BJP's ideology can't be spread worldwide. "We believe the Indian culture, philosophy are the best and we want to spread it to other countries. We don't work for political ambitions alone. Biplab Deb said the exact same thing. What's wrong in that?" he said.

Congress veteran and state party vice-president Tapas De said no one should interfere in internal affairs of other countries as both Nepal and Sri Lanka are sovereign countries. CPI(M) leaders were not available for comments. BJP leaders in Delhi also refused to comment on the issue.

RJD, NCP ALSO JOIN ALLIANCE

Furfura Sharif cleric's outfit ties up with Cong-Left in Bengal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 16



West Bengal PCC chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

THE CONGRESS and the Left Front on Tuesday finalised an alliance with Furfura Sharif cleric Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui's Indian Secular Force (ISF), setting the stage for a three-cornered contest in the West Bengal Assembly elections.

Following a meeting with the Left at the state headquarters of the CPI(M), West Bengal Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury announced that besides the ISF, the RJD and the NCP would also be part of the Congress-Left alliance.

"There have been several political developments since we held meetings. Secular parties like the ISF, the RJD and the NCP expressed the desire to be a part of the Congress-Left alliance. Today, we had a very cordial meeting and we have finalised the alliance. We respect these secular parties, therefore we are keeping some seats for these parties. It is the reason we are not announcing the final number of seats for each parties today. We will announce that later," Chowdhury, who is also the leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha, told reporters.

Chowdhury said the TMC did not want the alliance to materialise because it wanted to avoid a three-cornered contest in the elections. "The TMC never wanted Congress and Left Front

to form an alliance. There was a narrative earlier that Bengal polls will be a two-way fight between the TMC and the BJP. Now, there is a three-way fight in Bengal between BJP, TMC and Congress-Left alliance," said Chowdhury.

Earlier, the Congress and the Left Front had held two rounds of meetings about their seat-sharing agreement. 193 of the 294 Assembly seats. Of the 193 seats, the Left Front had agreed to contest 101 seats, with 92 constituencies for the Congress. In the 2016 Assembly polls, the Left and Congress had entered an electoral understanding and bagged 76 seats.

According to sources, the ISF

has demanded 65-70 seats from the Left Front and the Congress.

7 arrested after canal protest by para teachers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 16

A GROUP of para teachers, as a mark of protest to press for their pending demands including salary hike, jumped into a canal in a bid to enter West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's residence by crossing it, police said on Tuesday.

However, the protesters couldn't cross the canal due to "timely intervention of the police", sources said.

Kolkata Police Commissioner Soumen Mitra and other senior officers reached the spot and seven of the protesters were arrested. Security around the CM's house in Kalighat area was also stepped up.

"Seven persons were arrested. They had all jumped into the Adiganga canal," a senior police officer said. They also had placards, listing their demands from the state government, the officer added.

TMG general secretary and state education minister Partha Chatterjee said, "What kind of an agitation is this? Trying to go to someone's house and protest..."

Meanwhile, Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh slammed TMC for its "callous" attitude towards different sections of people in the state.

"No one is happy in Bengal. The para teachers aren't, too. They are deprived. We will see more such protests," he said.

PANCHKULA INDUSTRIAL PLOT ALLOTMENT

ED chargesheet against Hooda, others

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 16

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet against 22 accused, including former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda, four retired IAS officers and some others, in a money-laundering case linked to alleged irregularities in the allocation of 14 industrial plots worth more than Rs 30 crore in Panchkula in 2013.

The ED claimed that "worthy applicants were driven out of merit and applicants who were closely connected to

Hooda, in terms of his personal capacity and also in terms of the political party he belongs to, were allotted these plots".

The Haryana Vigilance Bureau had registered an FIR in 2015 to probe the alleged irregularities. Later, the case was transferred to the CBI, following which the CBI and the ED registered their respective cases.

Hooda termed the case as politically motivated. "It is an old case... It is nothing but a politically motivated case. We will contest it in the court. The matter is sub-judge. I would not like to comment any more on it," Hooda told *The Indian Express*.

ED said the probe found that

as "a result of a criminal conspiracy, then the chief minister of Haryana and ex-officio chairman of HUDA (Hooda), the retired IAS officers and other office-bearers of HUDA in Panchkula illegally benefitted pre-selected acquaintances of the then state CM by allotting them 14 industrial plots and denying allotment to more worthy applicants".

"The criteria for allotment was altered 18 days after the last date of application... The criteria was altered in such a way to favour the pre-selected applicants by increasing the discretion at the hands of the interview committee...", the ED further said.

ED claimed victory in the Una municipality in Gujarat's Gir Somnath district and Kadi municipality in Mehsana district, with a majority of its candidates winning uncontested after the Congress and other rival candidates withdrew their nominations from a number of seats on Tuesday.

In Una, 19 Congress candidates, including Una taluka unit chief Gunvant Talaviya, and 13 others withdrew from the election to the municipality on Tuesday, the last day of withdrawal.

Meanwhile, Talaviya said,

"The BJP threatened, kidnapped and intimidated our candidates to withdraw their nomination papers. Our candidates are so terrified that they are not even willing to come forward to complain to police."

Mitesh Shah, president of BJP's Una town unit, however, rejected Talaviya's accusations, calling them baseless.

The judgment, pronounced on Monday and made public on

Tuesday, concluded that the State Election Commission (SEC) cannot be a "silent spectator", given the circumstances of the "unruly event". "The object of providing a State Election Machinery is... to ensure purity in the electoral process. In a contingency of this nature, could it be said that the State Election Commission is helpless and has to be a silent spectator?" To our mind, the State Election Commission is not without power to remedy the situation," the division bench of Justices JB Pardiwala and Ilesh Vora noted.

Tearing of mandate forms: SEC can't be silent spectator, says HC

AHMEDABAD: Adjudging that "the purity of the election process was irretrievably sullied" on February 13 at the office of returning officer at Palitana in Gujarat's Bhavnagar district, when mandate forms of 36 Congress candidates were allegedly torn minutes before the submission deadline by "hooligans", the Gujarat High Court termed it as a "systemic attack"

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TORA AGARWALA

GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 16

TAKING A firm stand on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), the Congress on Tuesday announced plans to build a memorial to commemorate those who died in the anti-CAA protests in Assam in December 2019. Several Congress leaders, including MPs Gaurav Gogoi and Pradyut Bordoloi, and Assam Congress Committee on Tuesday.

The announcement comes a few days after party leader Rahul

Gandhi addressed an election rally in Sivasagar district, stating that the Congress would not allow the implementation of the controversial law, if elected to power.

Gandhi also sported the traditional Assamese 'gamosa', with the letters CAA crossed out.

In December 2019, a wave of anti-CAA protests had rocked Assam, leading to the death of five protesters.

The state is expected to go to polls in April.

chief Ripun Bora, took to Twitter to make the announcement.

"In the coming months, Guwahati will see a new landmark: a grand memorial in memory of the anti-CAA movement to be built by the incoming Congress government. This will be the state's message to BJP. No CAA in Assam," said Ripun Bora, in an official statement from the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee on Tuesday.

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BRIEFLY



The Tapovan tunnel

UTTARAKHAND

Flash flood: 2 more bodies found, toll 58

Dehradun: Two more bodies were found in the tunnel of a hydro project in Tapovan area of Chamoli district Tuesday, taking the flash flood toll to 58, a report by the state emergency operation centre said. As per the report, over 146 people are still missing. The administration Tuesday directed the rescue teams to search for the missing people at four more locations near Raini village. Chamoli district Disaster Management Officer NK Joshi said removal of slush is on and that more sites were searched after the area became suitable for movement of machines.

ENS



The bus that met with the mishap is lifted from a canal. PTI

MP: 47 killed, 7 missing as bus plunges into canal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOPAL, FEBRUARY 16

the canal to travel to Satna due to heavy traffic on the main highway.

Among the deceased was Ram Sukhi Saket (43), who was accompanying his daughter Amarjoti Saket (19) to her exam center and had taken the bus as they thought it would reach Satna within three hours, according to his cousin Ram Sundar.

"We saw on television that the bus heading from Sidhi to Satna had fallen in the canal but thought it was some other bus as Ram Sukhi was to take a Sukheja bus. But after we sent our child to check at the bus stand, we realised that they were traveling in the Parihar bus," said Ram Sundar.

"They took this bus as it was the quickest. But now I have just cremated both of them," he said trying to control his sobs.

Rewa Divisional Commissioner Rajesh Jain said a magisterial probe has been ordered into the incident.

After a 12-hour operation, the district administration managed to recover 47 bodies from the canal, including that of two children. The operations were called off at around 7:30 pm due to poor light. "Search for them will start at 5 am tomorrow," Collector Chowdhary said.

What came in hand was a team of 24 NDRF personnel who had come for mock training to Sidhi district on Saturday. Mithilesh Kumar, in-charge of the battalion said, "We reached around 10 am and began looking for any survivors but around seven people were already rescued by locals villagers... we removed bodies from the water."

The private bus, carrying close to 60 people despite a seating capacity of 35, was moving at high speed when it met with the accident around 7:45 am, according to eyewitnesses, and had taken an alternate route along

Munawar out, but 2 held in case await bail 45 days on

IRAM SIDDIQUE
BHOPAL, FEBRUARY 16



Yadav was arrested with Faruqui, (right) Khan a day later

now that he has been released, no one really cares who is left behind. I just want my brother to come back home," said Yadav's younger brother, Akash, a Class XII commerce student.

Since Yadav's arrest, Akash has been juggling between his studies, a part-time job, and weekly visits to jail. The brothers lost their mother to cancer in October last year, while their father died much earlier.

"I don't want my brother to feel that he is all alone in this. I want him to know that there is someone standing for him, especially after everyone else who was arrested with him has been released," said Akash.

Yadav was arrested with Faruqui and three others from a cafe in Indore on January 1. Khan was arrested a day later, from outside the court premises, where he had gone to meet Faruqui.

While Faruqui was granted ad-interim bail by the Supreme Court on February 5, two of the show organisers – Prakhar Vyas and Edwin Anthony – who were arrested with him, were granted bail by the Indore bench of the high court on February 12. The third person, a minor, was granted relief a week after his arrest.

Both Yadav and Khan have now filed fresh bail pleas before the Indore bench. Yadav's bail plea was earlier rejected by the Sessions Court and the Indore bench of the high court. After the Supreme Court granted relief to Faruqui, Khan filed a bail plea in the Sessions Court, but it was turned down.

"Since the Supreme Court has granted ad-interim bail to Munawar Faruqui, based on which the high court gave relief to Prakhar Vyas and Edwin Anthony, we will plead for parity before the high court," said Yadav's lawyer, Anshuman Shrivastava.

"This whole case has been about Munawar Faruqui, and

we are hoping that things would get better with the new year. Their hopes are now pinned on the bail plea.

Also waiting for relief is Khan's family. "Sadakat's mother wakes up in the middle of the night asking for him. She hasn't stopped crying, and just keeps asking one question: when will my son return home," said Khan's father, Liyakat Ali Khan.

A civil engineer working in Mumbai, Khan met Faruqui at a comedy show in the city, and the two became good friends. When Faruqui decided to perform in Indore, he asked Khan to accompany him, said Liyakat.

While Khan did not go with Faruqui, he decided to surprise him at the show. "I arranged for a bus ticket to take him to Indore... he wanted to show up at Munawar's show and surprise him," said Liyakat.

On January 1, Khan had left the cafe before the police arrested Faruqui and the others. He was arrested the next day, when he went to meet Faruqui in court.

"After Munawar's release, when he asked Sadakat why he had come to look for him, he told him, tu andar tha, mujhe bahar achha nahi lag raha tha (you were inside, I wasn't feeling good outside)," said Liyakat. "He told me that he offers prayers five times a day and eats his food on time. He has made new friends in prison too," he said.

According to Akash, Yadav wanted to be a dancer, and had opened a dance academy in Pithampura, near Indore. But about three years ago, when his stand-up gig got good reviews, he turned to comedy.

But the lockdown hit them hard, as there were no shows, and it got worse after their mother's death. The brothers

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ICAI advises members, students to exercise caution while using social media

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, FEBRUARY 16

THE INSTITUTE of Chartered Accountants has issued an advisory to chartered accountants and students registered with it asking them to refrain from airing their grievances on social media without first approaching the regulator. Some have also written to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and other higher forums, it adds.

"Some of the posts are highly objectionable, which have the potential to create social and communal disharmony, threatening peace, tranquillity and may disrupt the security of the

nation, public order and friendly relations with other nations. In certain cases, material posted on social media was seen to be false and misleading, tarnishing the image of the profession..." the advisory reads.

The advisory cited rules to state that a member of the institution, "whether practicing or not", would be deemed to be guilty of misconduct, if the person brought "disrepute to the profession or the institute, as a result of his action whether or not related to professional work".

"As far as students are concerned, any such action will be

liable for appropriate action, including cancellation of their registration. Members and students are, therefore, advised in their own interest, to exercise caution while posting/sharing/forwarding any message, video, audio and photographs and comments in other material," it adds.

Mangesh Kinare, former president of ICAI, said: "The directives in no way violate the fundamental rights of CAs or students... Any issue, which is not in our jurisdiction, should be best avoided. Similarly, if we have to express our view on any issue, it should be with facts and after proper verification."

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But the lockdown hit them hard, as there were no shows, and it got worse after their mother's death. The brothers

now that he has been released, no one really cares who is left behind. I just want my brother to come back home," said Yadav's younger brother, Akash, a Class XII commerce student.

Since Yadav's arrest, Akash has been juggling between his studies, a part-time job, and weekly visits to jail. The brothers lost their mother to cancer in October last year, while their father died much earlier.

FROM PAGE ONE

Don't invoke sedition

The judge noted: "Evidently, law proscribes any act which has a tendency to create disorder or disturbance of public peace by resort to violence. In the absence of any exhortation, call, incitement or instigation to create disorder or disturbance of public peace by resort to violence or any allusion or oblique remark or even any hint towards this objective, attributable to the applicant accused, I suspect that Section 124A IPC (sedition) can be validly invoked against the applicant. In my considered opinion, on a plain reading of the tagline attributed to the applicant/accused, invocation of Section 124A IPC is a seriously debatable issue."

Burdak and Ram have been in judicial custody since February 4 and 5, respectively. Burdak works in a finance company while Ram is a labourer.

The prosecution alleged that Burdak shared a "fake video" on his Facebook page with the tagline, "Delhi Police mae bagawat 200 policekarmiyon ne diyasamuhikista (There is a rebellion in Delhi Police; 200 personnel have resigned en masse)".

The prosecution argued that "the video was related to an incident wherein some persons in Khaki (Home Guard personnel) was agitating in respect of their grievances with Jharkhand Government..."

But referring to the video, which was played during the hearing, the court noted that "a senior police officer of Delhi Police is raising slogans, in a very agitated tone, and a group of Delhi Police personnel are seen standing beside him". It noted that "background voices also suggest a very charged up atmosphere".

Puducherry

The Opposition's 14 are made up of seven MLAs of the NRC Congress, four of the AIADMK, and three nominated MLAs of the BJP.

MLA John Kumar tendered his resignation to Speaker V P Sivakolunthu on Tuesday morning. On Monday, former Health Minister Malladi Krishna Rao, who had resigned from the Cabinet earlier, had posted his resignation on Twitter.

After a meeting of the members of the ruling coalition on Tuesday, the Chief Minister, however, declared there was no need for him to resign.

"We came to know about Kumar's resignation today, but our alliance still has majority. We are united. The Opposition's charges are unjust, they should realise their weakness. I repeat that our alliance remains strong. We will go ahead with this government as per law," he said.

Kumar recently met with BJP leaders in New Delhi. The Congress has now lost four MLAs, including two ministers. Two of those who have left - former Minister A Namassivayam and MLA E Theepainthan - have joined the BJP, and Kumar could follow.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Chief Minister Narayanasamy said "not four, only three people" had quit. "The fourth person has given his resignation (but) it has not been accepted by the Speaker. We are trying to persuade him (the MLA). We have got the majority. We will function according to the Constitution."

The removal of L-G Bedi, the Chief Minister said, was "a long pending demand of the Puducherry people". Bedi, he said, "was behaving in an autocratic manner, violating the rules of business, trying to run a parallel government, (and) issuing independent orders against the wishes of the elected government..."

The resignation of Kumar came a day ahead of Rahul Gandhi's visit to Puducherry, scheduled for Wednesday. Former Minister Namassivayam had left during Rahul's last visit to Tamil Nadu on January 25.

Kumar, who resigned on Tuesday, was considered to be close to the CM. He had won the 2016 Assembly polls from Nellithope constituency, and vacated the seat for Narayanasamy. He won the Kamaraj Nagar byelection in 2019.

"Kumar had demanded that the Congress give him both Nellithope and Kamaraj Nagar in the upcoming polls, for himself and an immediate family member to contest. After the Congress refused to make a commitment, his last message to the party was that he would be going to a party that promised him both seats," said a senior Congress leader who was in the loop of communication between Kumar and Narayanasamy.

Another Congress leader said Rahul should have visited sooner. "He was briefed about all these troubles. He hoped that he would be able to manage them on his visit on Wednesday, meeting all unhappy, vulnerable leaders such as Kumar. But it looks like it is too late," the leader said.

BJP top brass

community. Sources said Shah asked party leaders to intensify their campaign to explain the benefits of the three laws and ensure those who are "misleading" farmers get a "fitting reply from people."

Sources said party leaders conveyed to the BJP leadership their assessment of the ground situation. And their concerns if the agitation continues and there are no visible attempts by the government towards a resolution. Sources said senior leaders underlined that disaffection among Jats could affect at least 40 Lok Sabha seats in these regions and so the party has to ensure the protests do not spread. The leaders reportedly said that "professional agitators of the Left," are orchestrating the protests.

FULL REPORT

www.indianexpress.com

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
TAMIL NADU SLUM CLEARANCE BOARD

No. 5, Kamarajar Salai, Chennai - 600005, Tamil Nadu, India.

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)
(Consulting Services - Firms Selection)

Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board (TNSCB), Government of Tamil Nadu is implementing the Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project financed by the World Bank. TNSCB now invites eligible consulting firms to indicate their interest in providing the consulting services for the below mentioned assignment.

Assignment: Consulting firm to carry out Preparation of Guidelines for implementation of the Social Sustainability and Grievance Management Framework under Tamil Nadu Housing and Habitat Development Project, Tamil Nadu, India. (Ref: IN-TNSCB-210188-CS-QCBS)

The detailed REOI and Terms of Reference are available in the websites - www.tnscb.org and www.tenders.tn.gov.in. The Expression of Interest (EOI) shall be submitted for the assignment. Last date and time for submission of REOI is **19.03.2021 up to 5:45 PM**. The EOI shall be sent to Superintending Engineer, Project Monitoring Unit - World Bank Project, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, No.5, Kamarajar Salai, Chennai-600 005, Tamil Nadu, India. E-mail: tnsccbprocurement@gmail.com.

**SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
PROJECT MONITORING UNIT**

DIPR/300/DISPLAY/2021

Labour Department,
Government of NCT of Delhi
PUBLIC NOTICE

Private Placement Agencies providing domestic workers pay attention. Registration of Private Placement Agencies providing domestic workers under Delhi Private Placement Agencies (Regulation) order 2014, has been started on e-district portal w.e.f 05.01.2021. All the Private Placement Agencies providing domestic workers are directed to registered themselves on e-district portal. Those placement agencies providing domestic workers, who are registered under Delhi Shops & Establishments Act, 1954 are also directed to get themselves registered under Delhi Private Placement Agencies (Regulation) order 2014 on e-district portal. Registration is online, free of cost. The Private Placement Agencies who have registered themselves on the e-district portal under Delhi Private Placement Agencies (Regulation) order 2014 should get license within 30 days after getting registration on e-district portal. Deployment of domestic workers without registration and license or violation of any provision of Delhi Private Placement order 2014 is a penal offence and such agency would be responsible to pay Rs. 50,000/- as penalty amount.

General public is also requested to ensure before employing any domestic workers through private placement agency, whether the placement agency has taken registration and license under Delhi Private Placement order 2014 and is following other provisions of the said order.

Sd/-

DIP/Shabdarth/0611/20-21

Secretary(Labour).

UNRESERVED MAIL/EXPRESS SPECIAL TRAINS-2021

For the convenience of passenger, Northern Railway will run following trains as Unreserved Mail/Express Special trains from the dates shown against each till further advice, as per the programme mentioned below:-

| Train No. & Name (Mail/Express Special) | From | Dep. | To | Arr. | W.E.F. |
|---|-----------------|-------|-----------------|-------|------------|
| 04202 Pratapgarh – Varanasi Special | Pratapgarh | 16:15 | Varanasi | 21:15 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04201 Varanasi- Pratapgarh Special | Varanasi | 06:00 | Pratapgarh | 09:15 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04203 Faizabad-Lucknow Jn. Special | Faizabad | 05:35 | Lucknow Jn. | 09:40 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04204 Lucknow Jn.- Faizabad Special | Lucknow Jn. | 17:00 | Faizabad | 21:25 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04213 Lucknow Jn.- Kanpur Special | Lucknow Jn. | 07:05 | Kanpur | 09:00 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04214 Kanpur- Lucknow Jn. Special | Kanpur | 18:50 | Lucknow Jn. | 21:40 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04503 Ambala Cantt.- Ludhiana Jn. Special | Ambala Cantt. | 05:40 | Ludhiana Jn. | 08:10 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04504 Ludhiana Jn.- Ambala Cantt. Special | Ludhiana Jn. | 16:10 | Ambala Cantt. | 18:45 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04501 Saharanpur-Uma Himachal Special | Saharanpur | 06:30 | Una Himachal | 12:15 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04502 Una Himachal- Saharanpur Special | Una Himachal | 13:30 | Saharanpur | 19:10 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04402 Saharanpur-Delhi Special | Saharanpur | 13:15 | Delhi | 18:30 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04401 Delhi- Saharanpur Special | Delhi | 07:45 | Saharanpur | 13:00 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04404 Saharanpur-Delhi Special | Saharanpur | 04:25 | Delhi | 08:45 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04403 Delhi- Saharanpur Special | Delhi | 16:45 | Saharanpur | 21:10 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04405 H. Nizamuddin-Kurukshetra Jn. Special | H.Nizamuddin | 18:10 | Kurukshetra Jn. | 22:30 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04406 Kurukshetra Jn.- H.Nizamuddin Special | Kurukshetra | 05:35 | H.Nizamuddin | 09:45 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04407 Palwal-Ghaziabad Special | Palwal | 06:00 | Ghaziabad | 08:20 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04409 Ghaziabad-Shakurbasti Special | Ghaziabad | 09:00 | Shakurbasti | 10:30 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04410 Shakurbasti-Palwal Special | Shakurbasti | 14:30 | Palwal | 16:35 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04301 Moradabad-Saharanpur Special | Moradabad | 18:30 | Saharanpur | 23:50 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04302 Saharanpur- Moradabad Special | Saharanpur | 04:25 | Moradabad | 09:20 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04303 Bareilly-Delhi Special | Bareilly | 17:15 | Delhi | 03:25 | 23.02.2021 |
| 04304 Delhi- Bareilly Special | Delhi | 23:50 | Bareilly | 09:40 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04305 Balamau - Shahjahanpur Special | Balamau | 18:25 | Shahjahanpur | 21:55 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04306 Shahjahanpur - Balamau Special | Shahjahanpur | 06:35 | Balamau | 10:10 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04601 Pathankot Jn.-Joginder Nagar Special | Pathankot Jn. | 10:10 | Joginder Nagar | 19:55 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04602 Joginder Nagar- Pathankot Jn. Special | Joginder Nagar | 07:05 | Pathankot Jn. | 17:05 | 23.02.2021 |
| 04603 Bhatinda Jn.-Firozpur Cantt. Special | Bhatinda Jn. | 06:40 | Firozpur Cantt. | 08:50 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04604 Firozpur Cantt.- Bhatinda Jn. Special | Firozpur Cantt. | 17:40 | Bhatinda Jn. | 19:55 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04611 Amritsar Jn.-Pathankot Jn. Special | Amritsar Jn. | 06:45 | Pathankot Jn. | 09:55 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04612 Pathankot Jn.- Amritsar Jn. Special | Pathankot Jn. | 17:30 | Amritsar Jn. | 20:30 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04613 Banjali-Baramula Special | Banjali | 11:25 | Baramula | 15:00 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04614 Baramula- Banjali Special | Baramula | 09:10 | Banjali | 12:20 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04615 Pathankot Jn.-Udhampur Special | Pathankot Jn. | 04:40 | Udhampur | 09:15 | 22.02.2021 |
| 04616 Udhampur- Pathankot Jn. Special | Udhampur | 15:55 | Pathankot Jn. | 20:05 | 22.02.2021 |

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website [https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in) or the NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Sources said party leaders conveyed to the BJP leadership their assessment of the ground situation. And their concerns if the agitation continues and there are no visible attempts by the government towards a resolution. Sources said senior leaders underlined that disaffection among Jats could affect at least 40 Lok Sabha seats in these regions and so the party has to ensure the protests do not spread. The leaders reportedly said that "professional agitators of the Left," are orchestrating the protests.

FULL REPORT

www.indianexpress.com

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - III, DELHI
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001
Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.

In the matter of O.A. No. 749/2019/DRT-III

STATE BANK OF INDIA Vs M/s Lalji Enterprises

To, D-1 M/s Lalji Enterprises, Through its Sole Proprietor Smt. Gayatri Devi H. No. G-8/208, Second Floor, Sector-16, Rohini, New Delhi-110085.

Also at: H. No. F-7/194, Sector-16, Rohini, New Delhi-110085.

Also at: 272-D, Ground Floor, Manchand Marg, Rampura, New Delhi-110035.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal on

30.03.2021 at 10.30 A.M.

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-

(i) All the Advocates / Litigants shall download the Cisco Webex application/ software.

(ii) Meeting ID and Password for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar / Recovery Officer-I / and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. drt.gov.in under the Public Notice Head.

(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates / Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 23748469.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 08.02.2021.

By Order of the Tribunal, Assistant Registrar, DRT-III, New Delhi</p



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

PRICE OF REFORM

FCI's overflowing granaries and rising costs — with farmers' agitation as backdrop — are unsustainable

THE NEARLY THREE-MONTH-LONG farmers' protests continue, even as the Narendra Modi government isn't conceding to their demand to repeal its three agricultural reform laws. But the impact of the stir — which has also acquired political colour, with parties such as the Congress and Rashtriya Lok Dal holding kisan mahapanchayat rallies — is already being felt. Government agencies, last year, procured a record 52 million tonnes (mt) of milled rice and 39 mt of wheat, whose combined minimum support price (MSP) value was Rs 2,16,988 crore. Those all-time-highs are set to be surpassed this year. Rice purchases in the 2020-21 kharif marketing season (October-September) have so far been 15.4 per cent higher than for the same period last year. This story is likely to be repeated in wheat, where the new crop — which looks yet another bumper one, on the back of excellent rains and favourable winter temperatures — will start arriving in the mandis from late-March.

There are clear political pressures driving the massive buying. The Modi government wants to dispel any apprehensions that its reform laws are aimed at ending the existing regime of MSP-based procurement through state-regulated mandis. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's latest Union Budget speech had a section detailing the significant increase in official purchases of not just cereals, but even pulses and cotton, under the present government. PM Modi himself has repeatedly emphasised that "MSP was there, is there and will remain in future". Also, the biggest jump in rice procurement this time — from 10.9 mt to 13.6 mt — has taken place in Punjab, where the protests against the farm laws have been the loudest.

But this apparent bending-over-backwards effort to pacify angry farmers isn't going to be costless. At 82.2 mt on February 1, total public stocks of rice and wheat were above the 75.2 mt level a year ago and could cross 100 mt by June. The COVID-19 lockdown afforded an opportunity last year to give out large quantities of grain from the Food Corporation of India's warehouses free of cost, in addition to the regular subsidised sales at Rs 2-3/kg under the National Food Security Act. Such liquidation options aren't available this year, save in the event of drought or a fresh pandemic. The FCI's granaries will, then, overflow further, even as its economic cost of procuring, storing and distributing wheat and rice is projected to touch Rs 30 and Rs 43 per kg, respectively. This is unsustainable. It raises a related point: Has the Modi government expended too much political capital on the farm laws, wherein any movement now on capping MSP purchases and replacing price with income support for farmers is ruled out? These reforms, along with deregulating urea prices or phasing out distortionary subsidies on water and electricity, may well be put on the backburner.

THE DIGITAL BARGAIN

Google's battle against proposed Australia law could lead to a new template for the business of news in the digital age

THE BATTLE BETWEEN Google and, to a lesser extent, Facebook, and traditional news media in Australia reached a head earlier this month when the tech giant threatened to withdraw its popular search services from the country. The bone of contention is a proposed law that frames a bargaining code to ensure that news outlets are compensated for the content they generate. The dispute frames the issue of the dominance of a handful of companies in the digital news landscape. Second, given the abiding importance of quality journalism in informing public debate, it could provide the template for how news organisations' businesses and revenue models will evolve.

The proposed law has come not from Australia's media watchdog but from the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which found after an 18-month investigation that the control over the distribution of content that Google and Facebook have, and the profit from news content they corner, threatens the viability of traditional media. For example, for every \$100 of digital advertising revenue accrued in Australia, \$53 goes to Google, \$28 to Facebook and \$19 is shared among the companies that often actually produce content. Under the new law, if an agreement cannot be reached between online platforms and media houses in a stipulated period, the matter will go into arbitration, where the decision will be binding. It is this final clause that Google objects to the most. As a compromise — and a strategy — Google has launched its "News Showcase" in Australia, and is trying to strike a deal with media groups before the new law comes into effect. News Showcase and a similar initiative by Facebook in the UK in December 2020 pay news outlets licence fees to use their content. The fear, especially among smaller media houses, is that without a law, they will have no bargaining power vis à vis digital behemoths.

There is little doubt that technology has changed how content is consumed and shapes how news outlets must evolve. In entertainment, for example, large studios like Disney have launched their own platforms to compete with the likes of Netflix and Amazon. Given the monopolistic control that Google and Facebook enjoy — and questions over their algorithm-led editorial judgment — preserving the diversity of the media landscape has merit. Already, the spectre of regulation seems to be pushing these companies to share profits with those who create content and report the news. Negotiations between old media and new in Australia will be keenly watched.

TAKING DOWN BRITNEY

A new documentary forces a horrified look back at the culture that enabled the pop star's harassment

IN HINDSIGHT, IT was a hounding. In 2007, as American pop star Britney Spears fell from the height of her teenybop fame to the lows of a mental breakdown, the cameras just would not look away. The unravelling of a 25-year-old young woman was an event for American celebrity culture. From talk show hosts to tabloids and respectable newspapers, they focussed a vicious attention on Spears, her alleged "failings" as a mother, her mental health and substance abuse, her turbulent personal life.

A new documentary on the pop star, *Framing Britney Spears*, inspired by the larger questions of the #MeToo movement, is forcing a horrified look at the culture that enabled the pop star's harassment. Former boyfriend Justin Timberlake, who turned their break-up into a stalker-revenge song and went on a talk show to "bust" her claim that she was a virgin, has apologised for his behaviour. As has a comedian, who once described her children as mistakes. There are calls for apology from media stars like Diane Sawyer, who did nothing short of bully Spears on television. The film also turns the searchlight on the peculiar circumstances of Spears's current life. The spate of breakdowns and tabloid hysteria over her life led her, 13 years ago, to agree to remain under the legal "conservatorship" of her father, who has control over her finances and personal life.

Why are performers, and especially women, so easily shoved into the nether zone between desire and derision? Why does their public punishment feed such a salacious frenzy, across cultures? How do stars so beloved of millions become fair game? The questions the documentary asks are a part of the larger re-evaluation of the misogyny of celebrity culture. They apply as easily to the recent persecution of actor Rhea Chakraborty as to the venom with which the Indian film press once targeted an actor like Rekha. It's time to look back, with more than a little anger.



SUSHIL KUMAR MODI

IT WAS IN the year 1952 that the First Finance Commission was constituted under the chairmanship of KC Neogy for the period 1952-57. The latest in this chain is the Fifteenth Finance Commission, which has performed the daunting and challenging task of submitting its report in COVID times. This is also the first ever Commission to have given recommendations spanning a period of six years, that is, 2020-26. Though the Ninth and Eleventh Commissions also came out with interim reports, the total span of the Commissions was limited to five years.

The 15th Finance Commission has been in the news due to many new and unique demands which were placed on it, the major challenges being addressing the issue of the 2011 population census evoking a sharp response from the southern states, coupled with other issues like the non-lapsable defence fund and the use of certain parameters for performance incentives. Besides these, the Commission was also required to perform the herculean task of assessing and projecting the fiscal roadmap for the Union and state amid an uncertain domestic environment due to shortfall in the GST collection, further accentuated in the year 2020 by the global pandemic.

The Commission, in its final report, recommended vertical devolution at 41 per cent, adjusting 1 per cent for the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. For horizontal distribution, it has tried to harmonise the principles of expenditure needs, equity and performance with the introduction of efficiency criteria of tax and fiscal efforts and by assigning 12.5 per cent weight to demographic performance, resolving the demographic debate and incentivising states for the efforts and progress made in moving towards the replacement rate of population growth.

The second core function entrusted to the Finance Commission is to determine the principles which should govern grants-in-aid, assessed on the needs of the states. The Commission has recommended a total grant of Rs 10,33,062 crore during 2021-26, broadly characterised into: (a) revenue deficit grants, (b) grants for local governments, (c) grants for

The wise arbiter

New and unique demands were placed on 15th Finance Commission. In difficult times, it rose to the challenge

disaster management, (d) sector-specific grants and (e) state-specific grants.

Grants are important as they are more directly targeted and equalise the standards of basic social services to some extent. Many of these grants are linked with performance-based criteria, thereby promoting principles of transparency, accountability, and leading to better monitoring of expenditures. In the Action Taken Report issued by the Union government, mostly all the grants are accepted, barring sector-specific grants (Rs 1,29,987 crore) and state-specific grants (Rs 49,599 crore), which will be considered by the government in due course.

The Commission was also asked to examine whether revenue deficit grants should be provided at all to the states. Some states stressed that revenue deficit grants have serious disincentives for tax efforts and prudence in expenditure and, hence, these should be discontinued. Ultimately, the FFC has recommended revenue deficit grants of Rs 2,94,514 crore for an entire award period. Fiscally stressed states of Kerala (Rs 37,814 crore), West Bengal (Rs 40,115 crore) and Punjab (Rs 25,968 crore) are regular recipients of these grants due to high debt legacy.

With regard to local governments, the grant recommended is Rs 4,36,361 crore during 2021-26. What makes this Commission's grant different from that of its predecessors is the set of entry level conditions for availing grants in the form of (a) constitution of State Finance Commissions, and (b) timely auditing and online availability of accounts for rural local bodies coupled with (c) notifying consistent growth rate for property tax revenue for urban local bodies. Secondly, the recommendation of tying the local bodies to drinking water, sanitation, solid-waste management and faecal sludge management is in alignment with the national programmes of Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Jeevan Mission.

It is for the first time that a Finance Commission has recommended Rs 8,000 crore to states for incubation of new cities, granting Rs 1,000 crore each for eight new cities. The focus of urban grants for million-plus cities is improvement in air quality and meeting the service level benchmark of solid waste management and sanitation.

However, the most landmark recommendation is channelising the health grant of Rs 70,051 crore through local bodies, addressing the gaps in primary health infrastructure.

improvement in air quality and meeting the service level benchmark of solid waste management and sanitation. However, the most landmark recommendation is channelising the health grant of Rs 70,051 crore through local bodies, addressing the gaps in primary health infrastructure.

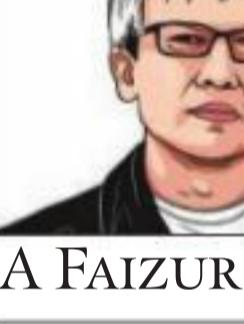
The Commission's recommendation for setting up the state and national level Disaster Risk Mitigation Fund (SDRMF), in line with the provisions of the Disaster Management Act, is both well-timed and necessary. For the first time, the Finance Commission has introduced a 10-25 per cent graded cost-sharing basis by the states for the NDRF and NDMF which has not been appreciated by the states.

To bridge the gap between projected budgetary requirements and budget allocation for defence and internal security and to provide greater predictability for enabling critical defence capital expenditure, the Commission has recommended setting up of a dedicated non-lapsable fund, the Modernisation Fund for Defence and Internal Security (MFDIS), with four specific sources: (a) Transfers from the Consolidated Fund of India, (b) disinvestment proceeds of DPSEs, (c) proceeds from the monetisation of surplus defence land and (d) proceeds of receipts from defence land likely to be transferred to state governments and for public projects in the future. The total indicative size of the proposed MFDIS over the period 2021-26 is Rs 2,38,354 crore. The Union government has accepted this recommendation in principle.

The Commission has also recommended that Rs 1,000 crore per annum should be allocated from this fund for the welfare of families of the defence and CAPF personnel who sacrifice their lives in frontline duties.

The report starts with the famous quote of Mahatma Gandhi: "The future depends on what we do in the present". It would be interesting to see the impact of these overarching and revolutionary recommendations in the times ahead.

The writer is Rajya Sabha MP and former deputy chief minister of Bihar



A FAIZUR RAHMAN

IT WOULD APPEAR from recent reports that Saudi Arabia's crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, is making good on his 2017 promise that he would return the country to a moderate Islam and "eradicate promoters of extremist thoughts." Last month, *The Washington Post* disclosed that the kingdom had started purging its textbooks of anti-Semitic and misogynistic content, and this month Reuters revealed that four new laws — the personal status law, the civil transactions law, the penal code of discretionary sanctions and the law of evidence — are being finalised with the ultimate aim of codifying the entire Muslim law in consonance with the principles of shariah and best international practices. Saudi women have welcomed the move, with lawyer Dimah Al-Sharif expressing the hope that it will empower both women and society in general.

There can be no doubt that these reforms signal a major theological shift, and if implemented successfully, will prove to be a watershed moment in the history of Sunni Islam. The crown prince's announcement is also a courageous attempt to break the state-ulema nexus that has been the cause of Muslim intellectual and economic backwardness for centuries — a fact convincingly exposed by scholar Ahmed T Kuru in his new book *Islam, Authoritarianism and Underdevelopment*. It was this nexus that buttressed the post-Prophetic Muslim expansionism started by Muavia in 661 CE with the launch of the Umayyad Caliphate. Questionable traditions (*hadiths*) were fabricated in the name of the Prophet to scripturally entrench the dynastic ambitions of the ruling family. These *ha-*

A MORE EQUAL FAITH

Attempt in Saudi Arabia to restore and reform Islamic law is welcome

ditions otherised rival tribes and communities, and marginalised women.

Quran's original Arabic text is free of misogyny and does not encourage any kind of ethnically directed hostility. In fact, it speaks of salvific inclusivity and shows respect for non-Muslim places of worship (2:62, 5:69, 22:40), besides inviting "people of the book" (an inclusive term for followers of all religions) to coexist peacefully on the basis of commonalities in their value systems (3:64).

If Muslims find themselves estranged from this equalitarian message, it is thanks to the havoc wrought over the centuries by exegetical interpolations which relied on dubious *hadiths* to introduce sectarian ideas into Quranic translations. For instance, an eschatological *hadith* in the collection Sahih Muslim attributes an anti-Jewish comment to the Prophet. Yet another *hadith* in Sahih Bukhari states that the Prophet considered women to be intellectually deficient because "the evidence of two women is equal to the witness of one man."

The anti-Jewish statements attributed to the Prophet go against the verses mentioned above, and the misogynist *hadith* is based on a complete misunderstanding of the verse 2:282 which instructed Muslims of that period to have their legal agreements witnessed by two men, and "if two men are not available, then a man and two women witnesses of your choice so that if one of them errs (*an tazila*), the other can remind her (*fatu zakkira*)."

A careful reading of this verse would show that there is nothing in it that alludes

to the inferiority or the intellectual inadequacy of women. Thanks to centuries of suppression, women of that period were not conversant with the intricacies of business transactions. Islam sought to change this. Men were asked to accord legal status to women by recognising their right to give evidence which was so far denied to them.

The prescription that there may be two female witnesses in case a male witness is not available, was, therefore, a convenience given to women. The verse makes it clear that the second woman will come into play only if the first one "errs" and if she does not, then the transaction will be concluded with a male and a female witness.

This is proved by the fact that in three other contexts (4:15, 24:4, & 65:2), the Quran speaks of witnesses in gender-neutral terms. Put differently, the evidentiary stipulation mentioned in 2:282 was specific to those times, and only for legal or financial transactions. It cannot be generalised and made applicable in perpetuity to lower the intellectual or legal status of women.

One hopes that the historic attempt by Saudi Arabia to theologically defenestrate anti-Semitic and misogynist content, and codify the Muslim law in line with the egalitarian principles of the Quran will go a long way in restoring the Prophetic originality of Islam and influence Muslim societies across the world to do the same.

The writer is an independent researcher and the secretary-general of the Islamic Forum for the Promotion of Moderate Thought



FEBRUARY 17, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

President Sanjeeva Reddy told a joint session of Parliament that the country was "over the hump, economically and socially". The damaged national economy had been repaired and it was now necessary for everyone to strive for an identity of purpose rather than fritter away energies in fruitless controversies and conflicts. Inaugurating the budget session of Parliament, the President asked all sections of the community to "exercise restraint in demanding higher incomes and prices". The economy, he said, was on the road to recovery but "demands for higher prices and incomes by various sections aggravate inflationary pressures

and lead to a reduction of resources for investment and growth".

FARMERS IN DELHI

LAKHS OF FARMERS and city folk from all over the country, but mainly from neighbouring states, descended on Delhi, virtually paralysing normal life in the city. The crowd today at the Congress (I) Boat Club rally was probably the largest assembly witnessed so far in the capital. Several Delhi roads were closed to vehicular traffic. Estimates of the Boat Club rally varied. Congress (I) general secretary Kalpana Rai, put the figure at five million. Police Commissioner PS Bhinder put it at 2.5 mil-

lion. According to an unofficial CPWD estimate, the lawns cannot accommodate more than 8 lakh people.

RAIL ACCIDENT

AT LEAST 20 persons were killed and 15 injured when the Kanpur-Barauni passenger train rammed into the Oudh-Tirhoot mail near Daronda railway station on the Chhapra-Siwan section of North-Eastern Railways. The Oudh-Tirhoot Mail was suddenly brought to a halt by passengers pulling the chain. The Kanpur-Barauni passenger rammed into the station-mail, derailing the engine and five bogies. Till noon today, 12 bodies had been extricated from the wreckage.

THE IDEAS PAGE

Gender and punishment

Burning of Greta Thunberg's images and lack of protest against Disha Ravi's arrest are symbolic warnings of the possible fate that awaits the woman seen as 'too independent'



SANJAY SRIVASTAVA

THE ARREST OF climate activist Disha Ravi on the charge of sharing a protest "toolkit" and the burning of posters and effigies of Greta Thunberg carries ominous messages beyond the obvious ones relating to dissent and freedom of speech. One does not have to agree with the nature of Greta Thunberg's environmental activism to conclude that reactions to her tweeted support for the farmers' agitation reveal some deeply troubling aspects about gender in Indian society. You do not even have to be supportive of the cause of the farmers to think that our public culture has mutated to a particular level of toxic masculinity. If the sight of a group of men torching images and effigies of a young woman does not make our stomachs churn, then, perhaps, we have become completely habituated to the idea of violence against women and past efforts to address the issues have been in vain.

In the not-too-distant past, the so-called sati of 18-year-old Roop Kanwar led to the passing of the Rajasthan Sati (Prevention) Act of 1987. The Act was the end result of a great deal of debate, discussion and agitation that focussed on the forms of gender discrimination that normalised violence against women in the name of tradition. Eight months after her marriage, Roop Kanwar's husband Maal Singh passed away and the young woman faced a horrific fate at her husband's pyre. One of the key aspects of the Act was to make punishable activities that "glorified" the fundamental aspect of sati — setting a woman on fire.

The Act recognised that beyond the actual horrific nature of the deed itself, its afterlife — in popular culture and religious observances, for example — served as justification of violence against women. It recognised that, in addition to actual violence, symbolic violence is a significant factor in reproducing unacceptable ideas about women and their "place" in society.

If unwilling women were sent to a public death on their husbands' funeral pyres, they did not fare much better in private life. The fires of the family kitchen — otherwise symbols of comfort and sustenance — have been made accomplices in peculiarly Indian dramas of domestic horror, homicide and human greed. Bride-burning constitutes the most frequent method of the killing of women whose families have not been able to fulfil dowry demands. It continues to be a fact of life that many women who are first imagined as cash cows are, when their families are unable to pay up, turned to embers and ash. With new consumer cultures and grander aspirations for material advancement, this tendency has, if anything, deepened.

Of course, women are set alight not just for money but also in the aftermath of rape. In December 2019, a young woman who was on way to the police station in Unnao to testify against her rapists was set alight by those she had accused. In the same month, a veteri-



C R Sasikumar

nary doctor was raped, strangled and her body set alight in Hyderabad and a teenager in a village in Bihar died of her burn injuries after being torched when she resisted rape.

Violence against women extends beyond dousing them in kerosene and setting them alight. There are many ways — hanging, drowning, being pushed from a balcony — through which death takes on a very public face. The recognition of dowry-related death as a legal offence is also a recognition of the deep-rooted nature of violence against women and the unequivocal need to both punish it and provide deterrence. The burning of Greta Thunberg's posters and effigies should alarm us as these disturbing tendencies continue to break the surface of our collective consciousness. And, though effigy burning has a long tradition in India, torching the female form as a type of public protest carries very different meaning as compared to the male one. It comes with its own history of symbolic violence and masculine anxieties.

When male protesters burn effigies of other men, the act has no relation to what actually happens to men in real life. The symbol of the burning woman, on the other hand, has a long history and carries a very different set of meanings. The sight of male protesters burning effigies and posters of women is an image that should cause deep unease to anyone concerned about the ways in which images of gendered violence circulate and come to be regarded as unremarkable. The fact is that it is not just another way of protesting. It would be unthinkable, for example, for white protesters in the United States who disagree with African-Americans fighting for racial inequality to carry effigies of black men hanging from trees. And yet, that is exactly what the symbolism of the burning woman in India is. It represents a horrifying aspect of gender relations and

The symbol of the burning woman, on the other hand, has a long history and carries a very different set of meanings. The sight of male protesters burning effigies and posters of women is an image that should cause deep unease to anyone concerned about the ways in which images of gendered violence circulate and come to be regarded as unremarkable. The fact is that it is not just another way of protesting. It would be unthinkable, for example, for white protesters in the United States who disagree with African-Americans fighting for racial inequality to carry effigies of black men hanging from trees. And yet, that is exactly what the symbolism of the burning woman in India is. It represents a horrifying aspect of gender relations and

must never be tolerated.

Apart from the immediate provocation — the farmers' agitation — the burning of Thunberg's images is also occasioned by additional factors. And this should also make us think about other kinds of malaise that afflicts us and what such forms of protesting might mean. The symbolic burning of public women also represents rising masculine anxiety regarding women who are seen to be independent and willing to engage in public debates. While there is growing acceptance that women should have the same opportunities as men in, say, the fields of education and jobs, there is the continuing expectation that the educated and employed women must nevertheless prioritise the home and "domestic duties". Education and employment are still not seen as a way of ensuring women's autonomy but, rather, as adding to the household income and material prosperity.

Our public spheres are heavily masculinised and the women who do not stick to the cultural norms of where they "actually" belong are both derided and, frequently, punished. The punishment is both actual and symbolic. It is not unusual to hear men sympathise on behalf of a rape victim but also ask if it is proper for a woman to be, say, out at night by herself as a man might. The burning of Thunberg's images and the lack of protest against Disha Ravi's arrest are symbolic warnings of the possible fate that awaits the woman seen as "too independent".

It is easy to dismiss effigy-burning as just another form of protest that has been long prevalent in India. But that is also to dismiss the nature of our social relations and the ways in which they are expressed in the language of gender. The symbolic and the actual are deeply entangled.

The writer is a sociologist

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Without knowledge of the past, including the many legacies of slavery and imperialism both here and abroad, we cannot form an honest view of Britain in the present".

— THE GUARDIAN

One law can't fit all

Farm laws must reflect regional and crop diversities



YOGINDER K ALAGH

THE SUPREME COURT took a practical stand on the farm trade laws — implement them after consultation and with a well-defined framework spelt out. It led to the stand the government has taken — of holding the laws in abeyance for 18 months. This will provide the time for discussing details of agricultural reform, which is necessary since the laws were passed in a hurry.

To begin with, it has to be understood that in a continental country, a one-size-fits-all prescription will not work. In Punjab, Haryana and western UP, minimum support price (MSP)-based agriculture has a logic. It was surprising to read a well-known agricultural economist say that the region must get out of the rice/wheat rotation. Not all regions must diversify. If you have great alluvial soil, good irrigation and almost a century-long tradition of the application of science to agriculture, then there is nothing

that says don't grow the highest-yielding paddy and wheat in the world. This is the wrong advice on diversification. It's like telling Gujarat and Maharashtra to get out of dairy or cotton. In south Punjab, with less irrigation, and parts of Haryana not covered by the Indira Gandhi Canal, some diversification to pulses, cotton etc. could work but the solid specialisation in this region remains.

The argument that private trade anyway exists is misleading. *Arhtiyas* (middlemen) are important in Indian agricultural markets. They are a part of the supply chain in north-west India. Here they are not like the middlemen elsewhere. They function simply as agents of the procurement agencies. This was done by the Manmohan Singh government to reduce overhead costs of procurement.

A lot of the theorisation on private trade in the north-west takes place in Krish Bhawan. The middleman in north-west India wouldn't dare to take on the FCI and the *mai baap sarkar*. Those who pushed the farm laws on the last day of Parliament are from other regions, where procurement doesn't work and the spread of markets must be encouraged in normal times. MSPs in those parts are like ghost money — something which worked at some other time or place. But to ignore it in north-west India is just not kosher.

To say that e-markets, forwards and farmer-managed companies (the last as designed by a committee I chaired at the beginning of this century) are all wonderful is to be with the angels. But to think they are the dominant mode of rural organisations two decades later is naive.

Agriculture is the one good sector in this hellish year. So, we need to strengthen it, not feed off on its glory, even outside north-west

India. We have the largest spread of agricultural markets in the world according to spatial maps. But they are not APMCs. With weak markets (outside of grains) and without first-stage processing and other infrastructure, the farmer knows he is at the mercy of the trader and comes out on the streets when that is not understood. When good agricultural land was to be given to Suzuki in central Gujarat, farmer leader Lalji Desai brought a thousand tractors with women and children on the road. Sanat Mehta and I joined them and spoke to them in Gandhinagar. But they insisted on direct negotiations. It's happening again. The trader is the traditional exploiter and the animus between the *lala* and the *Jat* is the stuff of folklore. No wonder s/he is out on the road in Punjab.

Policy can do a lot, but some caution in a bad non-agricultural year won't hurt anybody. In a normal year, one would have suggested that if the market is there, the state should use its leverage. But in this year, the state will fight stagnation after the pandemic and will not have the time to intervene with that selective touch.

The MSP was in its glory when Marxist economist Ashok Mitra was chairman of Agricultural Prices Commission in the days of compulsory procurement and zonal restrictions. Each crop had its own report then. When I took over, I decided, since prices play an allocation role, there will only be two reports, one for kharif and another one for rabi, apart from one for sugarcane (an annual crop). In the 1982 rabi report, I said relative prices and, in that context, MSP had the role of an intervention mechanism when markets failed, outside the compulsory procurement area. Later, the concept of transport costs and managerial costs became important and a conceptual report I was commissioned to write was classified. The last time I argued for a "fair" MSP to states like Rajasthan and Gujarat was as an advisor to the then finance minister, Jaswant Singh, together with Ram Niwas Mirdha, former deputy speaker of the Rajasthan assembly and a champion of dry land agriculture. Sharad Pawar, a *kisan* at heart, summarised my conceptual report and released it in a Parliament question, knowing full well that compulsory procurement MSPs were a ghost concept outside north-west India. Today, when the farmer agitates on MSPs, s/he says don't be unfair to me.

The Essential Commodities Act should be ditched together with the medical waste of the virus. Next year, after COVID recedes, we will use all these lovely laws we have always wanted and start the slow walk to the land of perennial sunshine. Good laws are good because progress starts with them. But not all laws are good everywhere.

First let's wait out the COVID. From Mehsana to Navsari and Nashik to Mumbai, the milk train must run again. Then a modified version of the laws with a roadmap can be on the agenda — not everywhere, but most places outside the lands of the five rivers. The *kisan* may then be with us and many times she is a woman, who not only serves the langar, but also does agriculture.

The writer, an economist, is a former Union minister

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIA'S ETHOS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Toolkit Justice' (IE, February 16). It is deeply unfortunate that the youth as well as senior citizens are being targeted for actions that are permitted in a democracy. India has been an example of tolerance and freedom of speech for many a nation. Of late, however, its citizens are being apprehended on frivolous grounds like "tarnishing the image of the country".

I have often wondered why this crucial verdict from India's constitutional court is not cited or relied upon more often. Not content with this judicial pronouncement delivered on March 11, 1994, Justice Sawant personally authored *Secularism and the Constitution*, a concluding chapter to the Concerned Citizens' Tribunal Report, Crimes against Humanity, Gujarat 2002. This 4,500-word essay written 19 years ago traces the roots of Indian diversity, pluralism and secularism to centuries-old battles between the *shramans* who fought for equality and against discrimination by the Brahmins. To those who say that justice, equality and non-discrimination are "foreign" concepts, Justice Sawant would say: "Know, learn and read our own history."

At about 9.30 am on February 15, this man of gentle and quiet demeanour, packed with formidable political and moral courage, left us. For his wife, sons, daughters, daughter-in-law, sons-in-law and grandchildren, the loss is deeply personal. For those of us in the social justice movement, the gaping void is hard to fill. For men and women of stature and position who unflinchingly speak truth to power are not just rare but impossible to find. Adieu and salute, Sir.

Pritam Singh, Delhi

IDEAS ONLINE

ONLY IN THE EXPRESS

● A TWO-SPEED RECOVERY: BORNALI BHANDARI, SAMARTH GUPTA, AJAYAK SAHU AND K S URS

● REGENERATING WASTEWATER: A L RAMANATHAN

www.indianexpress.com

ability of hydroelectric projects in such disaster-prone geographies.

Bal Govind, Noida

ON TRACK

THE FORTUNE OF the Indian economy is looking brighter. The country's economy is recuperating faster than developed economies. Like every other country, India also saw a gigantic recession due to the pandemic. India's economy contracted by 23.9 per cent in the first half of 2020. Due to subsequent steps taken by the central government, the economy is on track sooner than was expected. The Modi government is indisputably working towards its vision, of establishing the Indian economy as a \$5-trillion dollar one by 2024.

Anushka Joshi, Jharkhand

In a court of his own

Justice PB Sawant's life was defined by the credo of secularism, social justice



TEESTA SETALVAD

AMONG THE MOST prominent justices from the Supreme Court who were involved in the politics of social justice before their elevation to the bench, two names come to mind. Justice P B Sawant is one of them. The other is Justice V R Krishna Iyer. Justice Sawant was active in the land and peasants' movement even when he was a student of law. This unswerving clarity and commitment to deepening democracy at the grassroots was a passion for this jurist and also led him to be recognised for verdicts of depth and calibre. Be it the *Mandal* verdict or the famed *S R Bommai* judgment — these ironically could be counted among the least cited verdicts of the highest court in the land — both displayed an understanding of Indian state and society that was real and rooted.

Arguably, this clear vision and orientation may have actually hindered his appointment, in the first instance, to the Supreme Court in the mid-1980s, despite a dozen years at the Bombay High Court as a judge. After retirement in 1995, he focused on dissecting the corrosive reality of caste in Indian society, state and governance structures and politics.

Justice Sawant was a long-time associate of Pune-based Baba Ahdav, known for organising Hamal panchayats and for the Ek Gaon Ek Kuan (one village, one well) movement and the president of the Mahatma Phule Samata Pratishthan. He would attend

several conventions of BAMCEF over the years. As chairperson of the Press Council of India, his erudition and understanding of power, autonomy, independence and media were reflected in the reports he prepared. These restricted the publication of exit polls till the last vote was cast and cautioned against the corporate ownership of the media. All these concerns and more are evident in his 2013 book, *The Grammar of Democracy*. He told me that "as long as we do not ensure every person's right to contest an election, we cannot say that we have a truly representative democracy". The book urges that attention is paid to proportionate representation, smaller electoral constituencies for greater accountability and a re-haul of the election machinery.

He had a rare and unique understanding of the concept of secularism. A nine-member bench had delivered the verdict in *S R Bommai*. The part of the verdict Justice Sawant authored for himself and Justice Kuldip Singh offers a crucial insight into India's constitutional federal structure and Indian secularism. In Part 148, they write: "One thing which prominently emerges from the above discussion on secularism under our Constitution is that whatever the attitude of the State towards the religions, religious sects and denominations, religion cannot be mixed with any secular activity of the State. In fact, the encroachment of re-

ligion into secular activities is strictly prohibited.

This is evident from the provisions of the Constitution to which we have made reference above. The State's tolerance of religion or religions does not make it either a religious or a theocratic State. When the State allows citizens to practise and profess their religions, it does not either explicitly or implicitly allow them to introduce religion into non-religious and secular activities of the State... This is also clear from subsection (3) of Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 which prohibits an appeal by a candidate or his agent or by any other person with the consent of the candidate or his election agent to vote or refrain from voting for any person on the ground of his religion, race, caste, community or language or the use of or appeal to religious symbols. Subsection (3-A) of the same section prohibits the promotion or attempt to promote feelings of enmity and hatred between different classes of the citizens of India on the grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language by a candidate or his agent or any other person with the consent of the candidate or his election agent for the furtherance of the prospects of the election of that candidate or for prejudicially affecting the election of any candidate. A breach of the provisions of the said sub-sections (3) and (3-A) are deemed to be corrupt practices within the

meaning of the said section."

I have often wondered why this crucial verdict from India's constitutional court is not cited or relied upon more often. Not content with this judicial pronouncement delivered on March 11, 1994, Justice Sawant personally authored *Secularism and the Constitution*, a concluding chapter to the Concerned Citizens' Tribunal Report, Crimes against Humanity, Gujarat 2002. This 4,500-word essay written 19 years ago traces the roots of Indian diversity, pluralism and secularism to centuries-old battles between the *shramans* who fought for equality and against discrimination by the Brahmins. To those who say that justice, equality and non-discrimination are "foreign" concepts, Justice Sawant would say: "Know, learn and read our own history."

At about 9.30 am on February 15, this man of gentle and quiet demeanour, packed with formidable political and moral courage, left us. For his wife, sons, daughters, daughter-in-law, sons-in-law and grandchildren, the loss is deeply personal. For those of us in the social justice movement, the gaping void is hard to fill. For men and women of stature and position who unflinchingly speak truth to power are not just rare but impossible to find. Adieu and salute, Sir.

The author is secretary, Citizens for Justice and Peace and co-editor, Sabrangindia.in



Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos

THE PHILIPPINES
Marcos's son loses election challenge

Manila: The son of the late Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos has lost a bid to unseat the Southeast Asian country's vice president after the Supreme Court threw out his petition contesting the results of the May 2016 elections. The son, also called Ferdinand Marcos but popularly known as "Bongbong", alleged he was unfairly robbed of victory after losing the vice presidential election to lawyer Leni Robredo by about 260,000 votes. In a statement, the court said its 15 judges had unanimously dismissed the petition, but did not specify the reasons.

REUTERS

IRAQ
Rocket strikes near US base kill 1, injure 8

Baghdad: Rockets struck outside an airport near where US forces are based in northern Iraq late Monday, killing one US-led coalition contractor and wounding at least eight other people, Iraqi security and coalition officials said, sparking fears of new hostilities. At least three rockets hit areas between the civilian Irbil international airport in the semi-autonomous Kurdish-run region and the nearby base hosting US troops at 9:30 pm. No one immediately claimed responsibility.

AP

TURKEY
Erdogan vows to expand anti-PKK ops

Ankara: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed on Tuesday to expand cross-border operations against Kurdish militants in northern Iraq, following the killing of 13 Turkish soldiers, police and civilians who had been abducted by Kurdish insurgents. In a speech to his ruling party's supporters, Erdogan also said that the killings have strengthened Turkey's will to form a secure zone along its border in northern Iraq to protect Turkey's frontiers from the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. Turkey has long been seeking to form a secure zone along its borders with Iraq and Syria to force Kurdish insurgents away from the frontier.

AP

Suu Kyi faces new charge as military crackdown intensifies in Myanmar

ASSOCIATED PRESS
YANGON, FEBRUARY 16

POLICE IN Myanmar filed a new charge against ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, her lawyer said Tuesday, in a move that may allow her to be held indefinitely without trial as part of an intensifying crackdown by authorities who seized power in a coup.

Suu Kyi, who was deposed and detained in the military takeover on February 1, already faced a charge of illegally possessing walkie-talkies – an apparent attempt to provide a legal veneer for her house arrest. The new charge was for breaking a law that has been used to prosecute people who have violated coronavirus restrictions, lawyer Khin Maung Zaw told reporters after meeting with a judge in a court in the capital, Naypyitaw.

It carries a maximum punishment of three years in prison. But, perhaps more worryingly, because of changes to the Penal Code instituted by the junta last week, it could allow her to be detained indefinitely without court permission.

The legal maneuver comes two weeks after the military seized power in a coup that shocked many in the international community who had been hopeful that Myanmar was taking steps toward democracy. Since then, the junta has ratcheted up the pressure on protesters resisting the takeover, including violently breaking up some demonstrations and ordering internet access blocked.

Protests continued Tuesday in Yangon and elsewhere. In Yangon, police blocked off the street in front of the Central



Monks in Yangon hold Buddhist flags while marching against the military coup. AP

Bank, which protesters have targeted amid speculation online that the military is seeking to seize money from it. Buddhist monks demonstrated outside the UN's local office in the city.

Suu Kyi's lawyer told reporters he did not arrive at the court in time to see a videoconference the judge said had been held with her. That videoconference had not been expected, the lawyer said, adding that he has not yet seen his client.

State media have been acknowledging the protest movement only indirectly. The *Global New Light of Myanmar* newspaper reported about a meeting of the State Administration Council, the new top governing body, and quoted its chief, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, saying the authorities "are handling the ongoing problems with care."

It said the council discussed

taking legal action against protesters and providing "true information" to the media. On Sunday and Monday nights, the military ordered an internet blackout – almost entirely blocking online access. Once before in recent weeks it imposed a similar blackout and has also tried less successfully to block social media platforms. It has also prepared a draft law that would criminalize many online activities.

While the military did not say why the internet was blocked, there is widespread speculation that the government is installing a firewall system to allow it to monitor or block most or all online activity.

The *Global New Light of Myanmar* newspaper also reported that council members discussed acting against a "parallel government" established by some elected lawmakers of Suu Kyi's

National League for Democracy party, who were prevented from taking their seats when the military stopped Parliament from opening its session February 1.

In the days following the takeover, members of Suu Kyi's party formed a committee, declaring themselves the true representatives of Myanmar's people and asking for international recognition. No such recognition has come, even as the United Nations, the United States and other governments have urged the military to return power to the elected government and release Suu Kyi and other detainees.

The military contends there was fraud in last year's election, which Suu Kyi's party won in a landslide, and says it will hold power for a year before holding new elections. The state election commission found no evidence to support the claims of fraud.

Military junta guarantees new election, says govt's ouster not a coup

REUTERS
YANGON, FEBRUARY 16

MYANMAR'S MILITARY junta guaranteed on Tuesday that it would hold an election and hand over power, denied its ouster of an elected government was a coup or that its leaders were detained, and accused protesters of violence and intimidation.

The junta's justification of its February 1 seizure of power and arrest of government leader Aung San Suu Kyi and others came as protesters again took to the streets and after a UN envoy warned the army of "severe consequences" for any harsh response to the demonstrations.

"Our objective is to hold an election and hand power to the winning party," Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, spokesman for the ruling council, told the junta's first news conference since overthrowing Suu Kyi's government.

The military has not given a date for a new election but it has imposed a state of emergency for one year. Zaw Min Tun said the military would not hold power for long. "We guarantee... that the election will be held," he told the nearly two-hour news conference, which the military broadcast from the capital, Naypyitaw, live over Facebook, a platform it has banned.

Capitol riot: Pelosi to move ahead with independent probe

EMILY COCHRANE
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 16

THE US Congress will move to establish an independent commission to investigate the attack on the Capitol on January 6, including facts "relating to the interference with the peaceful transfer of power," Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced on Monday.

In a letter to her Democratic colleagues in the House, Ms. Pelosi also promised to move forward in coming weeks with emergency funding legislation "for the safety of members and the security of the Capitol" after consulting with retired Gen. Russel L. Honoré, whom she had asked to examine security on Capitol Hill.

"Security is the order of the day: the security of our country, the security of our Capitol, which is the temple of our democracy, and the security of our members," Ms. Pelosi wrote in the letter, adding that it was clear both from General Honoré's findings and "from the impeachment trial that we must get to the truth of how this happened."

Calls have grown for a bipartisan, independent investigation into the law enforcement and administrative failures that led to the first breach of the Capitol complex in two centuries, particularly after the Senate acquitted former President Donald J. Trump in his impeachment trial on a charge of inciting the rioters.

Trump sued for role in Capitol riot

Washington: Democratic congressman Bennie Thompson accused Donald Trump in a federal lawsuit on Tuesday of inciting the deadly insurrection at the US



Speaker Nancy Pelosi

EXPLAINED **E** 'Fair game' for criminal charges

TRUMP ENJOYED more protection from prosecution while he was president because the US Justice Department has concluded it would be unconstitutional to indict a sitting president. But there is no federal prohibition on charging a former president for acts committed while in office.

Now that Trump has left office, any misconduct he engaged in as president is "fair game" for criminal charges, said Brian Kalt, a constitutional law professor at Michigan State University.

Capitol and of conspiring with his lawyer and extremist groups to try to prevent the Senate from certifying the results of the presidential election he lost to Joe Biden. AP

Prosecution seeks hefty slander fine for Navalny

POLINA NIKOLSKAYA
MOSCOW, FEBRUARY 16

RUSSIAN STATE prosecutors on Tuesday asked a court to fine Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny 950,000 rubles (\$13,000) for slandering a World War Two veteran, a charge he calls politically motivated.

President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic was jailed this month for almost three years for parole violations that he said were trumped up. The judge said the verdict would be announced on Saturday – the same day that Navalny is due to appeal against his imprisonment.

The 44-year-old is accused of defaming a veteran who took part in a promotional video backing constitutional reforms last year. The reform, approved in a referendum, will let Putin run for two more terms in the Kremlin after 2024 if he wants to.

Navalny, who returned to Russia last month from Germany, described the people in the video as traitors and corrupt lackeys.

Veterans of what Moscow calls the Great Patriotic War are widely revered in Russia, and criticising them is regarded as socially unacceptable and insulting.

REUTERS



A nurse administers the Covid-19 vaccine to a municipal worker in Colombo. AP

WHO authorises AstraZeneca vaccine for emergency use

MARIA CHENG
TORONTO, FEBRUARY 16

THE WORLD Health Organization has granted an emergency authorization to AstraZeneca's coronavirus vaccine, a move that should allow the U.N. agency's partners to ship millions of doses to countries as part of a UN-backed program to tame the pandemic.

In a statement Monday, the WHO said it was clearing the AstraZeneca vaccines made by the Serum Institute of India and

South Korea's AstraZeneca-SK Bio.

The WHO's green light for the AstraZeneca vaccine is only the second one the U.N. health agency has issued after authorizing the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in December. Monday's announcement should trigger the delivery of hundreds of millions of doses to countries that have signed up for the U.N.-backed COVAX effort, which aims to deliver vaccines to the world's most vulnerable people.

"Countries with no access to vaccines to date will finally be able to start vaccinating their

health workers and populations at risk," said Dr. Mariangela Simão, the WHO's Assistant-Director General for Access to Medicines and Health Products.

The AstraZeneca vaccine has already been authorized in more than 50 countries, including Britain, India, Argentina and Mexico. It is cheaper and easier to handle than the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, which needs deep-cold storage that is not widespread in many developing nations. Both vaccines require two shots per person, given weeks apart.

AP

Bangla anti-terrorism tribunal sentences 5 to death for killing blogger

ANISUR RAHMAN
DHAKA, FEBRUARY 16

A SPECIAL anti-terrorism tribunal on Tuesday sentenced five members of a banned Islamist militant group to death and a sixth man to life in prison for the killing of prominent Bangladeshi-American atheist blogger Avijit Roy in 2015.

Roy was hacked to death by Islamist militants just after he left a book fair at the Dhaka University on February 26, 2015. His wife Rafida Ahmed was also injured in the attack. The 42-year-old Bangladesh-born US citizen was an outspoken critic of religious fundamentalism.

The five convicts who received capital punishment are fugitive army major Sayed Ziaul Haque, Md Moazzam Hussain alias Saimon alias Shahriar, Md Abu Siddiq Sohel alias Sakib alias Sajid alias Shahab, Md Arafat Rahman and Akram Hossain alias Abir. Major Haque and Abir are on the run.

Judge Mojibur Rahman of Dhaka's Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal court also fined these convicts Tk 50,000 each.

Another convict, Safir Rahman Farabi, was jailed for life.

The verdict came 18 months after the fast track tribunal indicted six militants of outlawed Ansar Al Islam, also known as Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) for murdering Roy.

The judgment said that Roy "laid down his life for freedom of writing and expressing his opinion" while the killers targeted him to obstruct the freedom of expression and discourage others to write anything freely and express their opinion in future.

The son of a senior university professor and physicist, Roy had migrated to the United States in his 20s from where he used to run his *Mukto-Mona* (Free-mind) blog campaigning against organized religions. His book *The Virus of Faith* became bestseller in Bangladesh.

Tuesday's verdict came nearly a week after Judge Rahman sentenced to death eight Islamic militants, including sacked Major Haque, for killing Roy's publisher Faisal Arefin Dipon.

Dipon, the owner of Jagriti Publishers, was hacked to death at his office in Dhaka on November 31, 2015 – months after the killing of Roy.

Six of eight convicts belonged to outlawed Ansar Al Islam terrorist group.

Financial analysts say the hold-up was due to questions around fiscal and revenue reforms.

Agreement was also reached on the measures required to complete further reviews of the reform programme, which should eventually bring Pakistan \$500 million in IMF funds that had been suspended for about a year.

"The package strikes an appropriate balance between supporting the economy, ensuring debt sustainability and advancing structural reform," the Fund said in a statement.

"Pending approval of the Executive Board, the review's completion would release around US\$500 million."

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Dipon, the owner of Jagriti Publishers, was hacked to death at his office in Dhaka on November 31, 2015 – months after the killing of Roy.

Pakistan has also received \$1.4 billion from the IMF's Rapid Financing Instrument in separate, emergency funding to help it fill a funding gap stemming from the coronavirus pandemic.

Australia to amend laws to make Google, Facebook pay for news

Bargaining Code before the Parliament session ends February 25.

The amendment to be introduced to Parliament on Wednesday "improve the workability of the code while retaining its overall effect," Treasurer Josh Frydenberg and Communications Minister Paul Fletcher said in a joint statement.

The opposition center-left Labor Party agreed at a meeting of lawmakers on Tuesday to support the bill, guaranteeing its passage through the Senate.

But the government might have to compromise with further Senate amendments.

Australia Institute's Center for Responsible Technology, a think-tank that supports the

proposed legislation, accepted the proposed changes. "On face value, the amendments keep the integrity of the media code intact," its director Peter Lewis said.

A Senate committee that scrutinised the draft legislation after it was introduced to Parliament on December 9 recommended last week that the code become without changes.

Google and Facebook, which take 81 per cent of online advertising in Australia if the code were introduced. Facebook has threatened to make its search engine unavailable in Australia if the code were introduced. Facebook has threatened to make its search engine unavailable in Australia if the code were introduced.

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Rusesabagina, praised for saving ethnic Tutsis during Rwanda's 1994 genocide and awarded the US Presidential Medal of Freedom, was arrested last year in Rwanda after mysteriously disappearing during a visit to Dubai. Rwanda accuses him of supporting the armed wing of his opposition political platform, which has claimed responsibility for deadly attacks.

The circumstances around the 66-year-old Rusesabagina's arrest, his limited access to an independent legal team and his reported worsening health have drawn international concern for the Belgian citizen and US resident. His family this month said they spoke with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

"This is a charade," one of Rusesabagina's daughters, Carine Kanibamba, told *The Associated Press* ahead of the trial. "They kidnapped him. It is the violation of due process and international law."

Rwanda's president after Rusesabagina's arrest hinted during a national address that he may have been tricked into boarding a private plane in August to Rwanda, where he was paraded in handcuffs.

The Rwandan court has contradicted the original police account that said Rusesabagina was arrested with "international cooperation," instead saying he was arrested at Kigali International Airport in the capital.

The family also worries about what they call Rusesabagina's weakening condition. His outside legal team late last month asserted that his prescribed medication for a heart disorder

was being withheld.

The European Parliament last week adopted a resolution calling for Rwanda to give Rusesabagina a fair trial and condemning what it called his enforced disappearance.

Rwanda's justice minister, Johnston Busingye, described the resolution as "meddling in an ongoing judicial process in Rwanda, a sovereign state with independent courts."

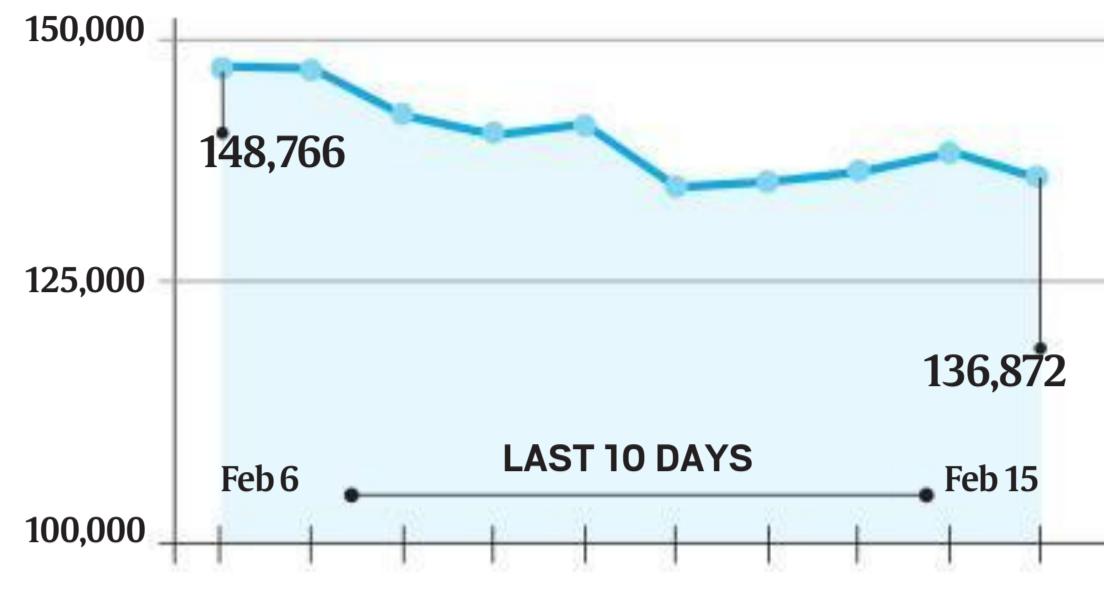
It is a dramatic turnaround for Rusesabagina, who is credited with saving more than 1,000 people by sheltering them at the hotel he managed during the genocide in which more than 800,000 Tutsi and Hutus were killed.

Rwanda's government has long asserted

CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

INDIA ACTIVE CASES

136,872

INDIA TOTAL CASES
10,925,710WORLD TOTAL CASES
109,285,411

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on Feb 16

Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11 pm on Feb 16

India's Vaccine Diplomacy

229.7 lakh

64.7 lakh

165 lakh

is the number of doses India had supplied to other countries under 'Vaccine Maitri' up to February 12.

vaccine doses out of this total number of doses were supplied as grant (free of cost, gifts) to countries.

doses were supplied by India to other countries on a commercial basis.



GIFTS TO FRIENDS & NEIGHBOURS

| | | | |
|-------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| Bangladesh | 20 lakh doses | Mauritius | 1 lakh doses |
| Myanmar | 17 lakh doses | Bahrain | 1 lakh doses |
| Nepal | 10 lakh doses | Oman | 1 lakh doses |
| Afghanistan | 5 lakh doses | Barbados | 1 lakh doses |
| Sri Lanka | 5 lakh doses | Dominica | 70,000 doses |
| Bhutan | 1.5 lakh doses | Seychelles | 50,000 doses |
| Maldives | 1 lakh doses | | |

Source: Ministry of External Affairs

SUPPLIED ON COMMERCIAL BASIS

| | | | |
|--------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Morocco | 60 lakh doses | Mauritius | 1 lakh doses |
| Bangladesh | 50 lakh doses | Bahrain | 1 lakh doses |
| Brazil | 20 lakh doses | Oman | 1 lakh doses |
| Myanmar | 20 lakh doses | Barbados | 1 lakh doses |
| South Africa | 10 lakh doses | Dominica | 70,000 doses |
| Kuwait | 2 lakh doses | Seychelles | 50,000 doses |
| UAE | 2 lakh doses | | |
| Egypt | 50,000 doses | | |
| Algeria | 50,000 doses | | |

Source: Ministry of External Affairs



Consignments of Indian vaccines being unloaded in Bangladesh (top) and Afghanistan. AP

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Google's payment deal with Australian media firm: background, likely impact

AASHISH ARYAN

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

AUSTRALIA'S SEVEN West Media on Monday became the first major media group in that country to sign a licensing deal with Google under which the latter would pay a lump sum for inclusion of news from the outlet on its search pages.

The deal, which Seven described as a "fair payment", comes in the wake of new regulation being proposed by Australia, which would force Internet tech companies such as Google, Facebook, etc., to pay for including news items in their feed.

Why the deal matters

The deal with Seven West Media, one of the largest publication houses in Australia,

could mark the beginning of a de-escalation of the stand-off between the government in Canberra and the Internet search engine giant.

Though the terms of the agreement between Seven West Media and Google are not yet known, it is likely to pave the way for other deals with large media conglomerates, according to experts.

The government's argument

In July 2020, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) had, as part of efforts to tackle the rising dominance of companies such as Google and Facebook, proposed that media companies could negotiate terms of payment for their articles featured in the news feeds of the online tech giants.

This effectively meant that Google and



The deal could mark a de-escalation of the stand-off between Google and the Australian government. Reuters

Facebook included certain news items from media companies on their platforms in various services such as Facebook News Feed,

Instagram, Facebook News Tab, Google Search, Google News, and Google Discover, they would have to pay the media companies for such use of the content.

Since a large number of Internet users now get their daily news digest from these tools instead of visiting the websites or social media handles of the media companies directly, the ACCC proposed that it was only fair that such media organisations be paid for the news. This amount, based on the terms of the deal that they strike with individual companies, could either be on a per-click basis on the link, or a fixed amount per month or per year.

"We are not seeking to protect traditional media companies from the rigour of competition or, indeed, technological disruption, which we know benefit consumers. Rather, we are seeking to create a

level playing field where market power is not misused and there is appropriate compensation for the production of original news content," a bipartisan Economics Legislation Committee of the Australian Senate said in a report last week.

This deal, and others

Does the agreement in Australia impact the inclusion of news by Google and Facebook in other countries as well?

Owing to their worldwide presence, both Google and Facebook are likely to be under pressure to start paying for the news content they use in other countries too. In France, the search engine giant has already entered into agreements with news publishers to pay for the news that is included in its search feed.

Following the deal with Seven West

Media, Google said it had signed similar payment deals with 450 news publishers across the world. Governments in multiple countries are, however, likely to scrutinise these deals to check for the balance of bargaining power with the company. The European Union is likely to propose legislation to force big tech companies to pay for the content they use, despite the offer made by Google.

Facebook has said that it would remove the user's ability to post news on their feed if it was forced to pay media outlets. However, experts believe that Google's deal with Seven West Media could force Mark Zuckerberg's companies to rethink their strategy.

In October 2020, Google had made a \$1 billion initial investment to launch Google News Showcase, a product that the company said would benefit both publishers and readers.

EXPLAINED SPACE SCIENCE

@ieExplained

#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

Reaching for Mars

Early on Friday India time, NASA's Perseverance rover is scheduled to touch down on Mars. Last week, the UAE's Hope mission entered Martian orbit, and was followed closely by a Chinese mission. The flotilla of missions represents the spread of planetary exploration in general, and Mars exploration in particular.

EXPERT EXPLAINS



DR AMITABHA GHOSH

From The Indian Express panel of specialists, exclusive insight

GOING TO Mars is non-trivial, since both planets revolve around the Sun and are hence in constant motion relative to each other. Earth and Mars are at their closest distance relative to each other every 26 months – and this is when Earthlings try to send missions to Mars.

Every two years since the 1960s, different space agencies have sent missions to Mars. Between 1976 and 1992, many launch windows remained unutilised. On occasion, there have been multiple missions in a launch window.

But never in history have three space agencies headed to Mars in a single launch window. And never in history have so many space agencies simultaneously operated a mission to Mars or the orbit of Mars. There are currently 10 spacecraft from five different space agencies – the United States, European Union, India, China, and the United Arab Emirates – either orbiting or on the ground on Mars. Two more rovers – NASA's Perseverance and China's Tianwen-1 – are set to land on Mars on February 18 and in May 2021 respectively.

NASA has a lander (Mars Insight), a rover (Curiosity), and three orbiters (Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, Mars Odyssey, MAVEN); India has an orbiter (Mangalyaan-1); the EU has 2 orbiters (Mars Express and ExoMars Trace Gas Orbiter); and China and UAE will have an orbiter each (Hope and Tianwen-1 respectively).

The flotilla of missions represents the spread of planetary exploration in general, and Mars exploration in particular. This is attributable to a reduction in launch costs and the cheaper availability of the technology required in space exploration.

The UAE's mission of Hope

Two out of the three missions launched for Mars last July are already operational. The UAE, a tiny but rich country of <10 million people, bedazzled the world by becoming the fifth national space agency (after the US, EU, Russia, and India) to reach Mars when the Hope Orbiter underwent orbital insertion on February 9. The UAE beat China in the race for Mars, albeit by a day.

The UAE mission will study the Martian atmosphere, and will seek to address the billion-dollar question of how and why Mars lost its atmosphere. The loss of the at-



An illustration of NASA's Perseverance rover landing on Mars. Hundreds of events must execute perfectly for the rover to land safely on February 18. NASA/JPL-Caltech

mosphere resulted in the loss of surface water, and possibly the environment hospitable to life.

bble ancient groundwater deposits.

This week, Perseverance

The most sophisticated mission from an engineering standpoint, NASA's Perseverance Rover, is en route to Mars, and is set to land on Thursday at Jezero Crater, which was likely filled with water in the past. Touchdown is scheduled for approximately

3.55 pm EST 2.25 am on Friday India time.

Perseverance is

NASA's 4th generation Mars Rover – starting with Sojourner from the Mars Pathfinder Mission in 1997, followed by Spirit and Opportunity from the Mars Exploration Rover Mission in 2004, and Curiosity from the Mars Science Laboratory in 2012.

The goal is to look for biosignatures in the dried up lake bed at Jezero Crater. The thought is that early life on Mars may have resembled early ocean-dwelling life on Earth, like stromatolites. If indeed this was the case,

Perseverance would find fossils or some biosignatures – hints of life – in either the chemical measurements or morphological observations.

In addition, Perseverance will produce oxygen on the Martian surface for the first time, using atmospheric CO₂ from the Martian atmosphere. Perseverance will

this vaccine and is switching to the single-dose vaccine candidate developed by Johnson & Johnson. The company said in January that its shot provided 57 per cent protection against the South African variant.

Effectiveness of vaccines

Two vaccines are being used in India's mass inoculation programme – Covishield, a variant of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine that is being manufactured under licence by Serum Institute of India, and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.

Bharat Biotech has released a pre-print study suggesting that Covaxin is capable of eliciting an immune response against the UK variant, but it did not test the vaccine's effectiveness against the South African variant.

The South African government has said that the vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca (on which Covishield is based) has "limited" efficacy against this variant. It has halted the use of

this vaccine and is switching to the single-dose vaccine candidate developed by Johnson & Johnson. The company said in January that its shot provided 57 per cent protection against the South African variant.

Should you worry?

As of now, the South African variant isn't a major cause for concern in India, as only four cases have been reported so far. However, if the spread of this strain in the country is not contained, and this variant becomes dominant, it might potentially make it tougher to protect the population with the vaccines currently available.

However, several Covid-19 vaccine candidates are currently in the pipeline in India and, depending on the results from their trials, they may be expected to offer protection against this strain.



Newspaper billboards in Johannesburg on February 8. Reuters

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In October 2020, Google had made a \$1 billion initial investment to launch Google News Showcase, a product that the company said would benefit both publishers and readers.

SENSEX: 52,104.17 ▼ 49.96 NIFTY: 15,313.45 ▼ 1.25 NIKKEI: 30,467.75 ▲ 383.60 HANG SENG: 30,746.66 ▲ 573.09 FTSE: 6,763.06 ▲ 6.95 DAX: 14,114.45 ▲ 4.97



GOLD

₹46,900



RUPEE

₹72.69



OIL

\$62.88



SILVER

₹69,530

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market; gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as on Feb 15, 2021

International market data till 1900 IST

SECTOR WATCH NON-BANKING FINANCIAL Cos

'Stressed loans may rise to ₹1.8L cr; debt recast will limit reported GNPs'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 16

STRESSED ASSETS of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are expected to reach Rs 1,50,000-1,80,000 crore, or 6.0-7.5 per cent of the assets under management (AUM), by the end of the current fiscal, a Crisil report said.

The rating agency said the real estate segment is likely to report 15-20 per cent of the advances as stressed assets. As much as 9-10 per cent of vehicle loans and 9.5-10 per cent of unsecured loans are expected to become stressed, it said. The pandemic hit NBFCs at a time when they were already hit by the IL&FS and DHFL fiascos and struggling to return to normalcy.

Unlike previous crises, the current challenges on account of the pandemic impacted almost all NBFC asset segments. Operations were curbed the most in the April-June quarter, when disbursements and collections were severely affected by the hard-braking of economic activity, as per Crisil.

"This fiscal has bought unprecedented challenges to the fore for NBFCs. Collection efficiencies, after deteriorating sharply, have now improved, but are still not at pre-pandemic levels. There is a marked increase in overdues across certain segments and players. Nevertheless, gold loans and home loans should stay resilient, with the least impact among segments," said Krishnan Sitaraman, senior director, Crisil Ratings.

Alongside wholesale loans (dominated by real estate and structured credit), vehicle finance, MSME finance and unsecured loans have been in spotlight this year due to a rise in stressed assets.

'6-7.5% OF AUM'

■ As per a Crisil report, stressed assets of non-banking financial companies are expected to reach ₹1,50,000-1,80,000 crore, or 6.0-7.5 per cent of the assets under management (AUM), by the end of the current fiscal

BRIEFLY

EIL buyback: Govt raises ₹310 crore

New Delhi: The government has raised Rs 310 crore by tendering its shares in the buyback programme by Engineers India Ltd (EIL).

FinMin memo on savings

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry asked departments and ministries to surrender FY21 savings by March 20.

Remittances to IFSCs get nod

New Delhi: The RBI allowed resident individuals to make remittances under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) to International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs).

Proforma on CPSE stake sale

New Delhi: The DIPAM has issued a proforma stating that bidders for government's stake in central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) will have to disclose details of the ultimate beneficial owners to get a security clearance.

Unacademy buys TapChief

New Delhi: Edtech major Unacademy announced the acquisition of majority stake in professional networking platform TapChief.

Petrol at ₹99.8 in Rajasthan

New Delhi: Petrol price Tuesday rose to Rs 99.87 per litre in Rajasthan, as fuel prices were hiked for the eighth day in a row. Petrol was hiked 30 paise a litre and diesel by 35 paise. In Delhi, petrol is sold at Rs 89.29 per litre and diesel for Rs 79.70. PTI

RBI UNVEils DRAFT NORMS FOR CREDIT DEFAULT SWAPS

Retail users to be allowed to hedge underlying credit risk

EXPLAINED

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 16

PUSHING FOR the development of the credit derivatives market, the Reserve Bank of India on Tuesday said retail users will be allowed to undertake transactions in permitted credit derivatives for hedging their underlying credit risk.

Unveiling draft guidelines on credit default swaps (CDS), the RBI said non-retail users will be allowed to undertake transactions in credit derivatives for both hedging and other purposes.

A person resident in India and a non-resident – to the extent specified in the RBI directions – can participate in the market, it said. Exchanges may offer standardised single-name CDS contracts with guaranteed cash settlement. "Retail users shall undertake transactions in exchange-traded CDS only for hedging their underlying credit risk," it said.

Bonds and other debt securities have risk that the borrower will not repay the debt or its inter-

Caution: CDS played big role in '08-09 global financial crisis

The RBI, which was planning to introduce credit default swaps 10 years ago, deferred the move in 2011 in the wake of global financial crisis in 2008-09. CDS played a big role in the global financial crisis as Lehman Brothers, the biggest casualty, owed \$600 billion in debt, out of which \$400 billion was covered by CDS. Insurance firm AIG lacked enough funds to clear the debt, forcing the US Federal Reserve to arrange a bailout.

Considering the risks involved, the RBI seems to be cautious now as the CDS buyer may default on the contract, thereby denying the seller the expected revenue.

est. CDS is a derivative or contract that allows an investor to swap or offset his credit risk with that of another investor.

If a lender is worried that a borrower is going to default on a loan, the lender could use a CDS to offset or swap that risk. To swap the risk of default, the lender buys a CDS from another investor who agrees to reimburse the lender in case the

borrower defaults.

The central bank said commercial papers, certificates of deposit and non-convertible debentures of original maturity up to 1 year, rated rupee corporate bonds (listed and unlisted) and unrated rupee bonds issued by the special purpose vehicles set up by infrastructure companies will be eligible to be a reference or deliverable

obligation in a CDS contract.

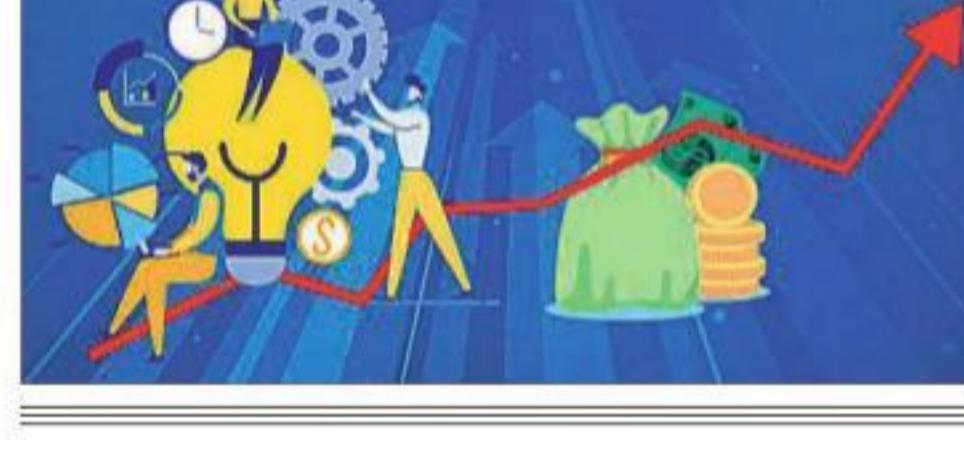
As per the central bank, retail users should exit their CDS position within one month from the date they cease to have underlying exposure. "Market participants can exit their CDS contract by unwinding the contract with the original counterparty or assigning the contract to any other eligible market participant," it said.

CDS contracts should be denominated and settled in Indian rupees. "CDS contracts can be cash settled or physically settled. However, CDS contracts involving retail users should be mandatory physical," it said.

The Fixed Income Money Market and Derivatives Association of India, in consultation with market participants and based on international best practices, should devise standard master agreement/s for the Indian CDS market, which should include credit event definitions and settlement procedures. Credit derivative is a contract whose value is derived from the credit risk of an underlying debt instrument.

'Business optimism turns positive for Jan-Mar quarter'

Having faced negative growth throughout 2020, business optimism has turned positive on a year-on-year basis for the ongoing quarter, a Dun & Bradstreet survey said



79.9 The Dun & Bradstreet Composite Business Optimism Index recorded for January-March 2021, rising 26.8% from the year-ago quarter

INDICATORS THAT HAVE TURNED POSITIVE:

- Increase in demand for passenger vehicles, two-wheelers and retail sales
- All-time high Goods and Services Tax revenue collection in December 2020
- Highest e-way bills collection in over two-and-a-half years

41% SHARE OF BUSINESSES THAT WERE STILL DISRUPTED AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2020, AS AGAINST 90% IN MID-JULY 2020

FACTORS THAT LED TO POSITIVE BUSINESS OPTIMISM:

- Rising consumer demand
- Higher businesses transactions
- Normalisation of supply disruptions

Source: Source: Dun & Bradstreet/PTI

Cairn files case in US to push govt to pay \$1.2-bn award

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

COURT ASKED TO CONFIRM AWARD

■ Cairn asked the US court to recognise and confirm the award, including payments due since 2014 and interest compounded semi-annually.

edge of the arbitration case said. "If Cairn wins the case, it will be a step towards attacking and seizing Indian assets overseas, especially in the US," the source said.

Cairn declined to comment but pointed to a February 9 Twitter post where it said Chief Executive Simon Thomson was looking forward to meeting the Finance Minister in Delhi next week.

The Finance and External Affairs Ministries did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

587TH RBI CENTRAL BOARD MEETING

In first meeting post Budget, FM tells RBI board govt's priorities

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday explained the government's priorities to the Reserve Bank of India's central board during their first meeting after presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22.

As per the tradition, the Finance Minister holds customary meeting with the board members of the RBI and the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) after Budget presentation every year.

The Finance Minister addressed the 587th RBI central

Finance Minister
Nirmala Sitharaman. PTI file

Tata group to acquire 68% stake in BigBasket for ₹9,500 crore

New Delhi: The Tata group is acquiring 68 per cent stake in online grocery platform BigBasket for around Rs 9,500 crore as it bids to expand in the fast growing e-commerce space in India, according to sources. The salt-to-software conglomerate, which has been working to gain majority control in the Bengaluru-based startup for months, has finally signed the deal, according to people in the know of the development.

The deal provides an exit route for a host of investors of BigBasket, including Chinese billionaire Jack Ma-controlled Alibaba. When contacted to confirm the development, Tata group, BigBasket and Alibaba declined to comment.

SAT stays Sebi ban on Biyani, other Future Group promoters

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

THE SECURITIES Appellate Tribunal (SAT) has stayed the order passed by market regulator Sebi that had put a one-year ban on Future Retail Chairperson Kishore Biyani and some other promoters from the securities market. SAT has also directed the Future Group promoters to deposit a sum of Rs 11 crore as an interim measure.

Future Corporate Resources Private Limited (FCRPL), in a statement, said that in a hearing held on February 15, the SAT stayed the effect and operation of Sebi's order accusing the promoters of the Future Group of insider trading in the context of purchases of Future Retail shares made in March 2017.

The case will next be heard on April 12 by the tribunal. On February 3, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) had barred Kishore Biyani and certain other promoters of Future Retail Ltd for indulging in insider trading.

It is understood that Tata group's acquisition puts the enterprise value of BigBasket at over Rs 13,500 crore. The deal comes at a time when online shopping has accelerated in India, especially in the aftermath of Covid pandemic.

The conglomerate has been reported to be working on a 'super app' to stamp its presence in the e-commerce space currently dominated by Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart, while Reliance Retail is also making heavy inroads in the sector. In March 2019, BigBasket had raised \$150 million from Mirae, Alibaba and CDC Group, which placed the Bengaluru-based company in the unicorn club (companies with val-

uation of \$1 billion and above).

The company had then said it planned to utilise the proceeds of this fundraising to further penetrate into existing markets with more investments in the first mile, scaling-up of its supply chain and for developing new reseller channels.

Founded in 2011, BigBasket operates in 25 Indian cities. It competes with SoftBank-backed Grofers as well as Amazon India and Flipkart.

According to reports, the top management of BigBasket, including co-founder Hari Menon, may continue with the company for three to four years. However, Menon did not respond when reached out for comments. PTI

PLI boost: Amazon to make Firestick locally

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 16

GLOBAL E-COMMERCE giant Amazon will start manufacturing its flagship product Amazon Firesticks in India soon, before expanding its portfolio of domestic electronic manufacturing in the country. Amazon has tied up with Cloud Network Technology, a subsidiary of Foxconn, and the production is likely to start in second half of the calendar year, the

ministry of Electronics and Information Technology said.

While the manufacturing is set to start from the Chennai plant of Foxconn, Amazon will evaluate adding production capacity depending on domestic demand, the ministry said. Amazon Firestick is a USB-style plug-and-play device that allows users to watch

and surf internet content from across over-the-top platforms.

Foxconn, also a contract manufacturer for Apple, was among the 22 companies that last year got the IT Ministry's nod to start manufacturing in India and claim incentives under the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme.

Apart from mobile phones, the

PLI scheme also aims to encourage the establishment of factories manufacturing peripheral electronic components such as transistors, diodes, thyristors, resistors, capacitors and nano-electronic components such as micro electromechanical systems.

Earlier in the day, during a virtual meeting with Amazon's India head and global vice president Amit Agarwal, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad asked the company to extend help in making Indian products global.

GAINING ACCEPTANCE AMONG MAINSTREAM INVESTORS, FIRMS POWERS RALLY

Bitcoin crosses \$50,000 for first time

REUTERS
LONDON, FEBRUARY 16

BITCOIN SOARED above \$50,000 Tuesday to an all-time high, adding steam to a rally fuelled by signs that the world's biggest cryptocurrency is gaining acceptance among mainstream investors and firms.

Bitcoin hit a record \$50,602,

and was last up 2.7 per cent at \$49,100 as of 12:30 ET. It has risen around 70 per cent so far this year, with most of the gains coming after electric carmaker Tesla said it had bought \$1.5 billion in bitcoin.

The move by Tesla, which also said it would accept bitcoin as payment, was the latest in a string of large investments that have

vaulted Bitcoin from the fringes of finance to company balance sheets and Wall Street, with US firms and traditional money managers starting to buy the coin.

Some believe the extreme volatility is a cause for concern.

MAJOR BACKERS OF THE CRYPTOCURRENCY

- ELON MUSK, Tesla CEO
- JACK DORSEY, Twitter founder
- TYLER AND CAMERON WINKLEVOSS, best known
- PAYPAL, payments firm

Even as Bitcoin laps into the mainstream, cryptocurrencies remain subject to patchy oversight around the world, with the lack of regulatory clarity and associations with crime keeping many larger investors leery of exposure. US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and European Central Bank President Christine Lagarde both called last month for tighter oversight of Bitcoin due to concerns over its use for criminal activities such as money laundering.

Some believe the extreme volatility is a cause for concern.

NORTHERN RAILWAY**CORIGENDUM**

No 257-W/SURVEY/TJK/2020 Dated: 16/02/2021
Sub:- Renovation of existing Survey and construction office space on first floor building of Dy. CSE&C Office at Tilak Bridge, Near ITO, New Delhi.
 Tender notice invited for the open tender for and on behalf of the president of India on the subject work on 28/01/2021 & 1st corrigendum issued on 08/02/2021 has been cancelled herewith due to administrative reasons.

341/21

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Khadi and Village Industries Commission
 Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, (Govt. of India)
 Ch. Charan Singh, Multi Disciplinary Training Centre
 PANJOKHERA, DISTT. SHAMLI-247757 (U.P.)
 Ph. No. 01392-225356, E-mail: mdtppanjokhera.kvic.gov.in

Date: 16.02.2020

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE

Ch. Charan Singh MDTDC, KVIC, Panjokhera invites sealed tenders from registered firm engaged in manufacturer/ supplier of Paper conversion and Paper plate & Dona making Machines and Equipments.
 The tender documents can be purchased in cash from our office on any working day between 11.00 A.M TO 4.00 P.M (except Saturday, Sunday National holidays & Lunch Hrs. 1.30 PM to 2.00 PM) or tender form can also be download from KVIC website i.e www.kvic.org.in, however, the cost of tender form will have to be deposited along with the tender in the shape of demand draft/pay order drawn in favour of "Ch. Charan Singh M.D.T.C., KVIC", Payable at Kathandla, Distt. Shamli.
 The Principal will be empowered to cancel one or all the tenders without assigning any reason.
 All the details are mentioned in tender documents.
 Cost of tender form : Rs. 200/-
 Date of tender form issue : 17.02.2021
 Last date of tender form issue : 03.02.2021 before 1.00 PM
 Last date of tender submission : 03.03.2021 by 3.00 PM
 Opening of Bids : 04.03.2021 at 1.00 PM Principal Mob No.: 9891110509

NORTHERN RAILWAY**TENDER NOTICE****Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)**

| | |
|--|--|
| NIT No. | 221-S/4/2/W/BP/SSB/ML-IV (2020) |
| Name of work and its location | Round the clock Transportation of Drivers Line Boxes of Diesel & Electric Drivers and guards from Engine/Train/B.Van to running room/Lobby/Station/Yard and vice versa at Shakurbasti Station under Sr. Crew Controller, for the period of two years from the date of execution of work. |
| Approx Cost of work | Rs. 21,70,868/- + GST as applicable (Rs. Twenty One Lakh Seventy Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Eight only) |
| Earnest Money | Rs. 43420/- (Note: It should be in the form of net banking or gateway only. Note : FDR not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Board letter no 2015/CR-II/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016) |
| Completion period of work | Two years i.e. 24 months from the date of execution of work |
| Cost of tender document on cash/by post | Rs. 3540/- including GST @18% |
| Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender | Upto 12.00 hrs on 12-03-2021 Opening of Tender at 12.15 hrs |
| Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen | Above tender will be available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in |

221-S/4/2/BP/SSB/ML-IV (2020) Dated: 16-02-2021 345/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority
 Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)
 Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.in & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

(A) 1. 26/CGM/SM(WC-7)/e-tender/2020-21; Name of work: D/o Village (C/o Balance C.C. Road and Drain in Village Nagla Charandas) Noida. Cost: Rs. 78.87 Lacs.

2. 56/CGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2020-21; Name of work: D/o Sector-145 to 147 (Repair of Service Road at 45.00m Wide Road in Front of Sector-145) Noida. Cost: Rs. 70.58 Lacs.

3. 58/CGM/SM(WC-10)/ET/2020-21; Name of work: M/o Road (Repair and Painting of Footpath & Central Verge of Sectoral Road-152, 153, 154, 157 & 159) Noida. Cost: Rs. 72.01 Lacs.

Which can be uploaded by date 02.03.2021 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 03.03.2021 at 11.00 AM.

(A) 1. 42/GM/SM(WC-6)/2020-21; Name of work: Internal Development of Sector-75, 76, 77, 78 & 79 (C/o RCC Column & G.I. Chain Boundary wall of Near Civicith Stadia and Sports wood Society in Sector-79), Noida. Cost: Rs. 95.03 Lacs.

Which can be uploaded by date 23.02.2021 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 24.02.2021 at 11.00 AM.

Chief General Manager, NOIDA

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

उप्र. पावर ट्रांसिशन कारपोरेशन निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 2. ई-निविदा संख्या-125/ई.टी.सी.एम./2020-21: विद्युत परेषण खण्ड-रामपुर के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र टांडा पर 40 एम.वी.ए. परिवर्तक-2 से ऑयल लीकेज रोकने से सम्बन्धित कार्य। धरोहर राशि: रु. 6000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 3. ई-निविदा संख्या-126/ ई.टी.सी.एम./2020-21: विद्युत परेषण खण्ड-रामपुर के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र रामपुर पर गैसिक्ट बदलने से सम्बन्धित कार्य। धरोहर राशि: रु. 6000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 4. ई-निविदा संख्या-127/ ई.टी.सी.एम./2020-21: विद्युत परेषण खण्ड-द्वितीय, मुरादाबाद के अन्तर्गत 220 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र मझोला मुरादाबाद पर पुराने 245 के.वी. सर्किट ब्रेकरों के स्थान पर नये सर्किट ब्रेकरों को बदलने से सम्बन्धित कार्य। धरोहर राशि: रु. 2000/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, सामान्य निविदा खुलने का दिनांक-16.03.2021 5. निविदा संख्या-128/ई.टी.सी.एम./2020-21: विद्युत परेषण खण्ड-रामपुर के अन्तर्गत अधिसारी अभियन्ता के उपयोगार्थ 01 नं. डीजल चालित वाहन (चालक सहित) 12 माह हेतु उपलब्ध कराने का कार्य। धरोहर राशि: रु. 2500/-, निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 590/-, नोट-उक्त सामान्य निविदा हेतु प्रपत्र कार्यालय से निविदा मूल्य ऑनलाइन जमा किए जाने की प्राप्ति प्रस्तुत कर किसी भी कार्यालय में क्रय किए जा सकते हैं। हस्ता.-अधीक्षण अभियन्ता विद्युत परेषण मण्डल-प्रथम, मुरादाबाद। "राष्ट्र द्वितीय भवित में बिजली बचाएं" प्रत्रांक-553/ विधायक मृ. ई-निविदा/2020-21, दिनांक 16/02/2021

निविदा प्रपत्र का जीएसटी सहित मूल्य रु. 1180/-, 2. ई-निविदा संख्या-125/ई.टी.सी.एम./2020-21: विद्युत परेषण खण्ड-रामपुर के अन्तर्गत 132 के.वी. उपकेन्द्र बिलारी पर 40 एम.वी.ए. परिवर्तक से ऑयल लीकेज रोकने हेतु गैसिक्ट एवं रेडियेटर वाल्व बदलने से सम्बन्धित कार्य। धरोहर राशि: रु. 6000/-,

COIMBATORE CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (NIT) - SHORT TERM TENDER****PREPONEMENT OF TENDER NOTICE**

Date : 16.02.2021

The Commissioner, Coimbatore Corporation hereby invites bids through both on-line and off line from eligible bidders for the following works:

| Name of work | Value put to tender Rs. | Bid Security Rs. | Period of Completion |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Improvement of Sanganoor Pallam from Mettupalayam Road to Sathyamangalam Road at Coimbatore Corporation. Package - I (From Chainage 0 to 2300 m) | 47.00 Crore | 47.00 Lakh | 18 months |
| 2 Improvement of Sanganoor Pallam from Mettupalayam Road to Sathyamangalam Road at Coimbatore Corporation. Package - II (From Chainage 2300 to 3300 m) | 29.00 Crore | 29.00 Lakh | 18 months |

The Coimbatore Corporation has already issued a tender notification for the above mentioned work fixing the tender date on 02.03.2021. Due to administrative reasons, the tender date has been postponed to 25.02.2021.

The bidding documents will be available upto 24.02.2021 and downloaded / uploaded from the website [https://nttenders.gov.in](http://nttenders.gov.in) on or before at 15.00 Hours on 24.02.2021 through online. Tender Submission will be closed at 15.00 hours and opened at 16.00 hours on 25.02.2021 through offline.

Roc. No. 3615 / 2012 / JN 4
 Off: 0422-2396026/0422-2391122
 e-mail: commr.coimbatore@tn.gov.in
 DIPR / 1110 / TENDER/2021

The Commissioner
 Coimbatore Corporation,
 Coimbatore Corporation Office Building,
 Big Bazaar Street, Coimbatore-641001.

Commissioner, Coimbatore Corporation

Kerala Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd.

Milma Bhavan, Pattom P.O, Thiruvananthapuram-695004

Phone: 0471 2786415 & 416 E-mail: purchase@milma.com

E TENDER FOR SUPPLY OF MOLASSES

Bids are invited from Bidders for supply of MOLASSES for Cattle Feed Plant Pattanakkad & Malampuzha. E-tender cum auction is hosted in www.etenders.kerala.gov.in. Last date for submission of bid is 01.03.2021. For more details: www.milma.com, or www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

Managing Director.

ANDHRA PRADESH CENTRAL POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED

Dr. Y.S. VIJAY SOUDARAS CO-OPERATIVE OFFICE, 111 COLLEGE ROAD, VIJAYAWADA-520 026

e-Procurement Notice

Tender notification No: CPMPMT-15/20-21, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21/20-21 of APCPDC/CGM (P&MM)

dt. 16/02/2021.

APCPDC invites online bids under e-procurement for obtaining (i) CPMPMT-15/20-21: 1500 Kms of L.T. Aerial Bunched Cable XLPE IC X25 Sq.m.m - 25 Sq.mm, (ii) CPMPMT-16/20-21: 1000 Nos of 30.100 KVA Amorphous / CRGO core Cyclic type Aluminium wound Distribution Transformers with BEE 5 Star Rating (iii) CPMPMT-17/20-21: 1000 Nos of 30.53 KVA Amorphous / CRGO core Cyclic type Aluminium wound Distribution Transformers with BEE 5 Star Rating (iv) CPMPMT-18/20-21: 800 Nos of 30.100 KVA Amorphous / CRGO core Cyclic type Aluminium wound Distribution Transformers with BEE 5 Star Rating (v) CPMPMT-19/20-21: 1500 Kms of L.T. Aerial Bunched Cable XLPE IC X25 Sq.m.m - 25 Sq.mm, (vi) CPMPMT-20/20-21: 1000 Nos of 30.100 KVA Amorphous / CRGO core Copper wound Distribution Transformers with BEE 5 Star Rating (vii) CPMPMT-21/20-21: 500 Nos of 11KV 200 Amps Tilt Type General Open Type Distribution Transformer with BEE 5 Star Rating (viii) CPMPMT-22/20-21: 3.500 Nos of 11KV 200 Amps Tilt Type Current Transformer Electrical Energy Meter with 0.5% to 0.5% rating of 1.5 class accuracy with IRDA physical testing.

Tenders can have further details and download the tender schedules from e-Procurement market place from 16-02-2021 i.e. [https://tender.approcurement.gov.in](http://tender.approcurement.gov.in) (published by APCPDC).

Chief General Manager / PGM
 APCPDC, Andhra Pradesh

Ph: 0866-2955455 & Email: cgnpm.cpdcl@apcpdc.in

All other terms and conditions will remain unchanged. Please visit Western Railway Website of material Management Department at www.indianrailways.gov.in as well as on www.ireps.gov.in e-auction portal for further information.**WESTERN RAILWAY-AHMEDABAD DIVISION****CORIGENDUM**

Corrigendum to E-Tender Notice

No. Sr.DEE/ADI/39(20-21) dt.

01.02.2021 for the following tender:

Tender No. EL-50-1-AIDI-T-58-

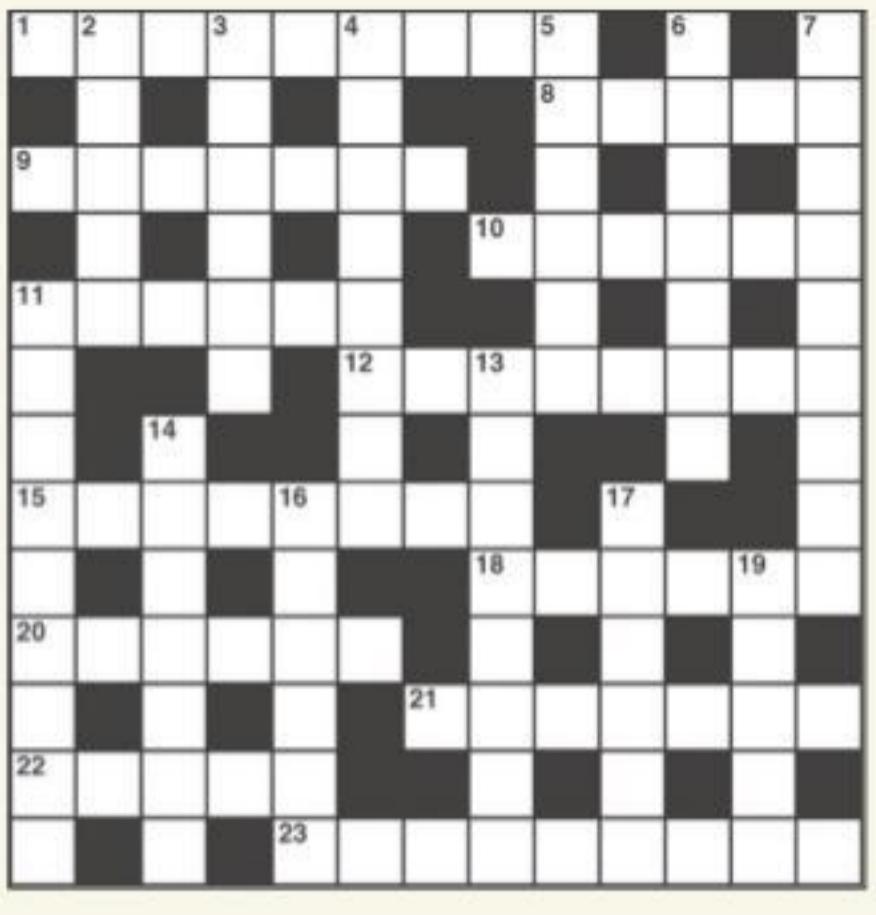
2020-21; Changes to be noted-

Some correction made in attached

attached tender Document is

attached on www.ireps.gov.in website.Like us on: facebook.com/WesternRly**WESTERN RAILWAY**

CROSSWORD 4356



ACROSS

- 1 Not occupied? There's no hurry (2,7)
- 8 Doctor has to die in agony, having no water left (5)
- 9 His suffering has no legal force (7)
- 10 It's of small account to give way and agree (6)
- 11 He reviews one with opposing views (6)
- 12 Pots and pans could be her award (8)
- 15 Kindly feeling not hard to place (4,4)
- 18 Ladies make perfect models (6)
- 20 A rendezvous lined with trees (6)
- 21 Is involved with women of attractive appearance (7)
- 22 Cruel form of profit (5)
- 23 Close relations in The Guards perhaps (9)
- 1 Picnics, 4 Strum, 7 Rare, 8 Departed, 10 Discharged, 12 Needle, 13 Affray, 15 Allocation, 18 Credited, 19 Tint, 20 Stars, 21 Oranges.
- Down: 1 Pared, 2 Caressed, 3 Steers, 4 State of war, 5 Rate, 6 Modesty, 9 Chiblains, 11 Training, 12 Notices, 14 Toledo, 16 Notes, 17 Beta.

Solutions Crossword 4355:

Across: 1Picnics, 4Strum, 7Rare, 8Departed, 10Discharged, 12Needle, 13Affray, 15Allocation, 18Credited, 19Tint, 20Stars, 21Oranges.
Down: 1Pared, 2Caressed, 3Steers, 4State of war, 5Rate, 6Modesty, 9Chiblains, 11Training, 12Notices, 14Toledo, 16Notes, 17Beta.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & I Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



SUDOKU 4386

Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4385



JUMBLED WORDS

Here are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ___ is affected by a ___ - Blaise Pascal (5,,6)

LMEEE



AEMCNP



HTALO



HNOOBB



NORTHERN RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

Re-Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Name of work | Fabrication, Supplying, providing & fixing of steel stool with its location for Br. No. 60-A & 100 over Ambala Division |
| 2. Approx. Cost of work | Rs. 1436063.54 |
| 3. Completion period of the work | (04) Four Months |
| 4. Cost of Tender form | Rs. 200/- Note:- Cost of Tender Form should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only, FDR will not be accepted as cost of tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Boards letter no 2015/ICE-IC/T/5/1 dated 31.08.2016) |
| 5. Date & Time for submission of tender & opening of tender | Upto 14.00 hrs. on 10.03.2021 Opening of Tender after 14.00 hrs. on same day. |
| 6. Website particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded. | Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in |

Tender Notice No: 32-W-BR-100-60A-UMB Date : 15.02.2021. 338/21

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Roland Diby**, Age: 31 years, S/o Diby, R/o: B-6/27 Nawada Village, Delhi, Permanent Address: Azagui, State-Republic of Cote, D'Ivoire has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence of **NDPS Act, FIR No. 100/18 Punishable U/s 21/29 NDPS Act, Sec 14 Foreigner Act** registered at P.S. Special Cell, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon that the said **Roland Diby** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Roland Diby** has absconded (or is concealing him self to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proceeding u/s 82 Cr.P.C. has been initiated in this case. Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Roland Diby** accused of **NDPS Act, FIR No. 100/18 Punishable U/s 21/29 NDPS Act, Sec 14 Foreigner Act**, is required to appear before this Court to answer said complaint on or before **22.03.2021**.

By Order

Sh. Ajay Kumar Jain,
Additional Sessions Judge, NDPS Act
Room No. P-1,
DP/005/Spl.Cell/2021 Patiala House Court, New Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P. C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Govind @ Danny S/o Suman Singh Thapa** R/o J-556, Dakshin Puri, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under case **FIR No. 125/20 U/s 307/302/34 IPC & 25/27 Arms Act**. has been registered at P.S. Preet Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Govind @ Danny S/o Suman Singh Thapa** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **Govind @ Danny S/o Suman Singh Thapa** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Govind @ Danny S/o Suman Singh Thapa** FIR No. 125/20 U/s 307/302/34 IPC & 25/27 Arms Act required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 25.03.2021.

By Order,
DP/357/ED/2021-
Court matter
Sh. Pankaj Arora, Lt. ACMM,
Karkardooma Court, Delhi

NIT No.: BB/CO/NIT/2/2020-21 dated 15.02.2021

Estimated Cost of the Project (indicative) : Rs. 9,62,542.00

Earnest Money Deposit : Rs. 19,250.00

Cost of Tender Document : Rs. 500.00

Period of contract : 1 (one) month

Date of issue of tenders : 17.2.2021(1100 hours) to 24.2.2021 (upto 1500 hours)

Last date of submission of bid : 25.2.2021(up to 1500 hours)

Opening of tender : 25.2.2012 (1530 hours)

The bid document and other details can be obtained from office of the Executive Engineer, Brahmaputra Board, sector 10, Dwarka, New Delhi and also from the website <http://eprocure.gov.in>. This notice may also be seen at website <http://brahmaputraboard.gov.in>. All corrigendum shall be issued online only at <http://eprocure.gov.in>.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Coordination Office
Brahmaputra Board Dwarka,
Sector-10 New Delhi-110075

: BB/CO/NIT/2/2020-21 dated 15.2.2021
2. Download/ Sale Period: Date: 18.2.2021 to 4.3.2021 up to 05.30 pm.
3. Pre Bid Meeting Date : 24.2.2021 on 2 pm at office of The Superintending Engineer (Electrical) Pune Regional Elect. Circle P.W.D. Pune.
4. Bid Opening Date : 08.3.2021 after 11.00 Am. office of The Superintending Engineer (Electrical) Pune, Regional Elect. Circle P.W.D. Pune.
5. All information about E-Tender is available on following web site. <http://mahatenders.gov.in>.

NORTHERN RAILWAY

1st Corrigendum

Name of Work : SELECTION OF AGENCY FOR ELECTRONIC & PRINT MEDIA MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA RELATED SERVICES FOR RAILWAY BOARD

Ref. No.: SLIET/Admin/1/2021/01 Dated: 17.02.2021

संत लौगंगावल अभियांत्रिकी एवं प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान
Sant Longowal Institute of Engineering and Technology
(Deemed to be University under MoU)
Longowal-148106, Distt. Sangrur, Punjab

Ref. No.: SLIET/Admin/1/2021/01 Dated: 17.02.2021

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed Tenders in two bid system i.e. technical and financial bid for providing "Online Recruitment Process of Teaching and Non-Teaching positions through website/web portal upto preparation of merit and declaration of result" at SLIET, Longowal are invited from ISO 27001:2013 & ISO 9001:2015 certified Agencies / Firms. The last date and time for submission of Tenders is 10.03.2021 upto 04:00 PM. For more details, please log on www.sliet.ac.in.

DIRECTOR

(भारत सरकार के अधीन सम विश्वविद्यालय)

PSPCL

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

(Regd. Office.: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
CIN: U40109PB2010SC033813, Website: www.pspcl.in

Short Notice E-Tender Enquiry No: 02/SE/MHP/2020-21/P-403

Dated: 16.02.2021

Short Description: Outsourcing the Annual Maintenance of 5 Nos. Machines (3x15 MW & 2x19.5 MW) at Mukerian Hydel Project, Stage-I, PSPCL, Talwara, Punjab.

Last date for downloading of tenders Documents : 03.03.2021 upto 11.00 Hrs.

Last date & Time for Bid Submission : 03.03.2021 upto 11.00 Hrs.

Date & time of opening of Tender : 08.03.2021 at 11.00 Hrs.

EMD: Rs. 1,80,000/-

Tender Specifications can be downloaded from PSPCL e-procurement website [https://eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://eproc.punjab.gov.in) and no hard copy of the same will be issued by the office.

Sd/-

SE/O&M Circle,

MHP, Talwara

C 62/21
1550/PB

STORES E-PROCUREMENT

Tender Notice No. S/29/2020-21, dtd. 12-02-2021. (1) All tenders have been uploaded on Indian Railways-E-Procurement portal (IREPS)- www.ireps.gov.in. For details & necessary guidelines for quoting against e-tender. Please visit IRE-E-Procurement portal. (2) The prospective tenderers are advised to get them registered on the website www.ireps.gov.in online. This registration is mandatory for participation in e-tendering and is free of charge. (3) Offers are to be submitted against such e-tenders through e-mail, post/fax or in person will be rejected summarily without any consideration. (4) This notice is for information during initial phase only. In future, no such notice shall be published. Vendors are requested to get registered with IREPS and visit portal www.ireps.gov.in for future tenders. (5) Please submit offers online for the following materials: SN.1. Tender No.: B/01/52821/OT/90/2020-21. Brief Description, P.L. No. & Quantity: (1) Medical gas Pipeline System (MGPS) with all accessories. Details specification as per Annexure-B. Qty-1 No. for MD/CH/Malgona (P.L. No-8290NSN). (2) CMC for 8 years as detailed in annexures attached by the bidder. Qty-1 No. for MD/CH/Malgona (P.L. No-8290NSN). Closing/Opening Date: 01/03/2021. SN.2. Tender No.: B/01/52821/OT/90/2020-21. Brief Description, P.L. No. & Quantity: PVC Insulated armoured, unscreened, Underground Railway Signalling cable of size 2 core X 2.5 Sq mm. as per RDSO Specification No IRS-S/63/2014 (Rev.4) (1) Qty-3 KM for Sr. Section Engineer/SIG/Fakiragram (P.L. No-5611N001) (2) Qty-1 KM for Sr. Section Engineer/SIG/Badarpur (P.L. No-4020N004) (5) Qty-1 KM for Sr. Section Engineer/SIG/Alipurduar Jn. (P.L. No-5611N009) (10) Qty-3 KM for Sr. Section Engineer/SIG/Alipurduar Jn. (P.L. No-5611N010) Closing/Opening Date: 02-03-2021. SN.3. Tender No.: B/01/52821/OT/90/2020-21. Brief Description, P.L. No. & Quantity: PVC Insulated armoured, unscreened, Underground Railway Signalling cable of size 12 core X 1.5 X 50 mm. copper conductor conforming to RDSO Specification No IRS-S/63/2014 (Rev.4) Qty-150 KM for Sr. SSE/SIG/ New Jalpaiguri (P.L. No-5611N001). Closing/Opening Date: 05-03-2021.

PCMM

NORTH EAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

"Serving Customers with a smile"

DAY TODAY

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Due to Mercury's emotional and uncertain movements, you must watch out for dodgy commercial offers, or for strangers promising deals which are apparently too good to be true. In addition, spending on luxuries or entertaining may have placed greater demands on your resources than you anticipated.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Dew may reduce swing in D/N Test

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
FEBRUARY 16

PHYSICALLY THEY were in Chennai. But as was evident on Tuesday, the Indian team management has started preparation and planning for the third Test in Ahmedabad - a pink-ball affair under lights, to be played from February 24.

A bird's-eye view of India's reserve players' practice from the TNCA Club balcony confirmed that the team's focus has shifted to the all-important day-nighter. Hardik Pandya was batting in the nets against the pink ball. After the match, Pandya, along with Pujara, came to the centre square at Chepauk to have another pink-ball batting stint. This is a series with a difference.

Conditions at the new Motera will be vastly different from Chennai. The pitch will have grass cover, a requisite for pink-ball Tests. Ahmedabad has already started setting the stage, as informed by Gujarat cricketer Samit Gohel.

"The ground has both red soil and black soil pitches and as of now a decent grass cover is there on both types of pitches. Pink-ball needs grass and the pitches are fresh. In the recently concluded Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy knockouts, although it was a white-ball tournament, the pitches behaved well. The ball was coming on to the bat, while bowlers, too, had some purchase," Gohel told *The Indian Express*.

In late February, dew could be a factor. "What happens here, when the dew is heavy, the wet ball also becomes heavy. So it stops to swing, conventional or reverse. Spinners also struggle to grip the ball. Weather at the moment is a little hot and humid in the morning, but it's getting cooler in the evening. Dew could be a factor if it's heavy," Gohel said.

Usually, in home conditions, India are unstoppable once they get the momentum. In 2016, after England had finished the first Test at Rajkot stronger, the hosts bounced back on a Vizag turner to win the second and ended up winning the five-match series 4-0. Spin-punch did the job. But pink-ball Tests bring fast bowlers into prominence. Because of the extra coat of lacquer, pink ball requires live grass on the surface.

At Adelaide Oval, 11mm grass is routine. At Eden Gardens, the venue that hosted India's first-ever pink-ball Test in November 2019, curator Sujan Mukherjee had left 6mm live grass on the strip. Extra coat of lacquer means more swing. Grass on the pitch means lateral movement off the seam. Then there's the twilight period, when batsmen face difficulty to pick the ball.

So England have the liberty to brush off the defeat and start afresh. The conditions for the third Test - the first at the new Motera Stadium - are expected to be more akin to the Blighty than the subcontinent. And when pacers are at the forefront, it becomes a battle of equals.

A lot is at stake in the third Test. India need to win this series 2-1 at least to qualify for the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) final and whether they can get there, and also their chances of winning the ongoing series, will depend on their performance in the day-night Test. The equation will be entirely different, making turner-induced momentum all but redundant. Little wonder then that Pandya is apparently on the team management's radar provided he is bowling-fit.

Karatsev in semis on Major debut; Serena, Djokovic win

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MELBOURNE, FEBRUARY 16

ASLAN KARATSEV will have no trouble with name recognition now. With a 2-6, 6-4, 6-1, 6-2 win over 18th-seeded Grigor Dimitrov on Tuesday, the 114th-ranked Russian qualifier became the first man in the professional era to reach the semifinals in his Grand Slam debut.

Just over a week ago, Karatsev was in the shadows of Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev on the Russia team that won the ATP Cup team title in Melbourne.

At the champions' news conference, on the eve of the Australian Open, Russia's coach Evgeny Donskoy pointed to a player to left - Karatsev didn't get to play a "live" match because Medvedev and Rublev were unbeaten in singles - and told everyone "you're going to hear his name soon."

That prediction has come true. All three Russians reached the quarterfinals. Two will feature in the semis. The 27-year-old Aslan Karatsev started putting wins together on the secondary tier of international tennis late last year. Last month, he qualified for a Grand Slam tournament for the first time after nine failed attempts. Now he has won five matches at Melbourne Park, and taken out three seeded players including Dimitrov - a three-time major semifinalist - No. 8 Diego Schwartzman and No. 20 Felix Auger-Aliassime.

"It's an unbelievable feeling," Karatsev said. "Of course, it's first time. First time in main draw, first time semi. It's incredible."

Karatsev is the lowest-ranked man to reach

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 16

HALF AN hour into the second session on Day 4, the curtain came down on the second Test. England went into the lunch break on 116/7 and there was little doubt how this match would end for the visitors. India won by 317 runs to make the Chennai leg of the four-Test series 1-1. Axar Patel bagged a five-for on his Test debut. England had won the first match by 227 runs.

Once Rohit Sharma had set up the hosts with a magnificent 161 in the first innings on a Chepauk turner, England couldn't help but wait for the inevitable. India have superior batsmen and far superior spinners than their opponents in these conditions. The ball turned from Day 1, making the toss less important.

A combined XI on such a typical Indian surface would see only two England players getting to the side - Joe Root and Ben Stokes. Jos Buttler returned home after the first Test, while James Anderson was rested. So they weren't considered. To start with the respective opening partnerships - Rohit and Shubman Gill tower way over their English counterparts, Dom Sibley and Rory Burns. Rohit is a world-class batsman in subcontinental conditions, while Gill is the most talented young Indian batsman, who has grown up playing on such surfaces. The Indian middle-order comprising Cheteshwar Pujara, Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane, and down to Rishabh Pant, comfortably trumps their English equivalent despite Root's presence.

The England captain is a modern-day great in his own right and even on the fourth day, standing on the burning deck, he showed top application before getting out to a well-nigh unplayable delivery from Axar.

But overall, Root, also, was uncertain in his approach and allowed the conditions to get the better of him. Compare this with Kohli, who after being dismissed for a duck in the first innings, trying to play a cover drive, mostly avoided the shot at the second dig. He scored a masterful 62. The India captain rather played on-drives against the turn, when the pitch had deteriorated even further.

Coming to the respective spin departments, Moeen probably would be the first to admit that he is no match for Ashwin on subcontinental pitches, his 189 Test wickets notwithstanding. Ashwin is just a different kettle of fish here, so good that he could bowl a straight ball on a rank turner to nutmeg Dan Lawrence on Tuesday. Rishabh Pant effected a terrific stamping Axar, in his first Test, expectedly bowled a lot better than his direct rival - England's left-arm spinner Jack Leach. Speed was important on this deck and Axar bowled well into the 90s (kph). For Leach, after playing his entire formative cricket at Taunton and in his first tour of India, it was too big an ask to adjust his bowling adequately as per the pitch conditions.

Ashwin and Axar combined took 15 wickets in this game, conceding 196 runs. Kuldeep Yadav also chipped in with a couple of wickets in the second innings. In comparison, Ali and Leach accounted for 14 scalps by giving away 404 runs. Needless to say, the England spinners faced a far greater degree of difficulty. Similar deliveries from Indian tweakers that made England batsmen's footwork iffy, Rohit and Kohli just stood and walloped. The tourists also could have avoided sweeping Axar, for he is a difficult bowler to play the shot due to the extra bounce he extracts from the surface.



With his 5 for 60 in England's second innings, Axar Patel became the ninth Indian bowler to take a five-for on Test debut. BCCI

Chennai feels like home again

India outplay England on a turner to win second Test by 317 runs and level series 1-1 on Day Four

SCORECARD

INDIA vs ENGLAND

CHENNAI

Toss: India, chose to bat

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| INDIA | 329 & 286 |
| ENGLAND | 134 & 164 (o/n: 53/3) |
| D Lawrence st P Pant b Ashwin | (53b, 2x4, 1x6) |
| J Root c Rahane b Patel | 33 (92b, 3x4) |
| B Stokes c Kohli b Patel | 8 (51b) |
| O Pope c Sharma b Patel | 12 (20b, 1x4) |
| B Foakes c Patel b Kuldeep | 2 (9b) |
| M Ali st Pant b Patel | 43 (18b, 3x4, 5x6) |
| O Stone lbw b Patel | 0 (5b) |
| S Broad not out | 5 (10b, 1x4) |
| ■ Extras (b 6, lb 1) | 7 |
| ■ FoW: 1-17 (Sibley, 8.2 ov), 2-49 (Burns, 15.6 ov), 3-50 (Leach, 16.6 ov), 4-66 (Lawrence, 25.1 ov), 5-90 (Stokes, 37.6 ov), 6-110 (Pope, 43.5 ov), 7-116 (Foakes, 48.3 ov), 8-116 (Root, 49.2 ov), 9-126 (Stone, 51.1 ov), 10-164 (Ali, 54.2 ov) | |
| ■ Bowling! Sharma 6-3-13-0, A Patel 21-5-60-5, R Ashwin 18-5-53-3, Mohd Siraj 3-1-6-0, K Yadav 6.2-1-25-2 | |
| ■ India won by 317 runs | |

A WIDE MARGIN

India's winning margin of 317 runs is their largest versus England in terms of runs, surpassing the 279-run victory at Headingley in 1986.

Mark Wood, Jonny Bairstow, Jos Buttler - the England management had said the rotation policy was the reason. For Moeen, Root said, "It was not about asking him if he wanted to stay. It was a decision he chose. He wants to get out of the bubble and that is absolutely fair enough. We respect where he is at. It's obviously been a very tricky tour for him. As mentioned at the start, if players feel like they need to get out of the bubble, then that's been an option and I think it's really important that we stand by that. That decision's been made and hopefully, he feels better for it."

How has the English media reacted?

Guardian's Andy Bull writes: "From this distance, Moeen's situation isn't any different from Jos Buttler's, or Jonny Bairstow's, (like them, he will play in the IPL if he gets picked up by a franchise). But by describing this as being Moeen's decision, Root's left him open to accusations that he lacks commitment. It would be a clumsy way to treat any player, but it's especially so for one who has spoken before about how he has been made to feel like he is 'always one of the first guys to get the blame', and who England's own spin bowling coach, Jeetan Patel, only just said needed to 'feel a bit of love from the game'."

No govt inquiry yet into Jaffer controversy

Dehradun: AMIDST CONTROVERSY over former India opener Wasim Jaffer's resignation as Uttarakhand coach, treasurer of the Cricket Association of Uttarakhand (CAU) has written to its president JS Gunsal demanding a meeting of the apex council to decide whether to conduct an internal inquiry.

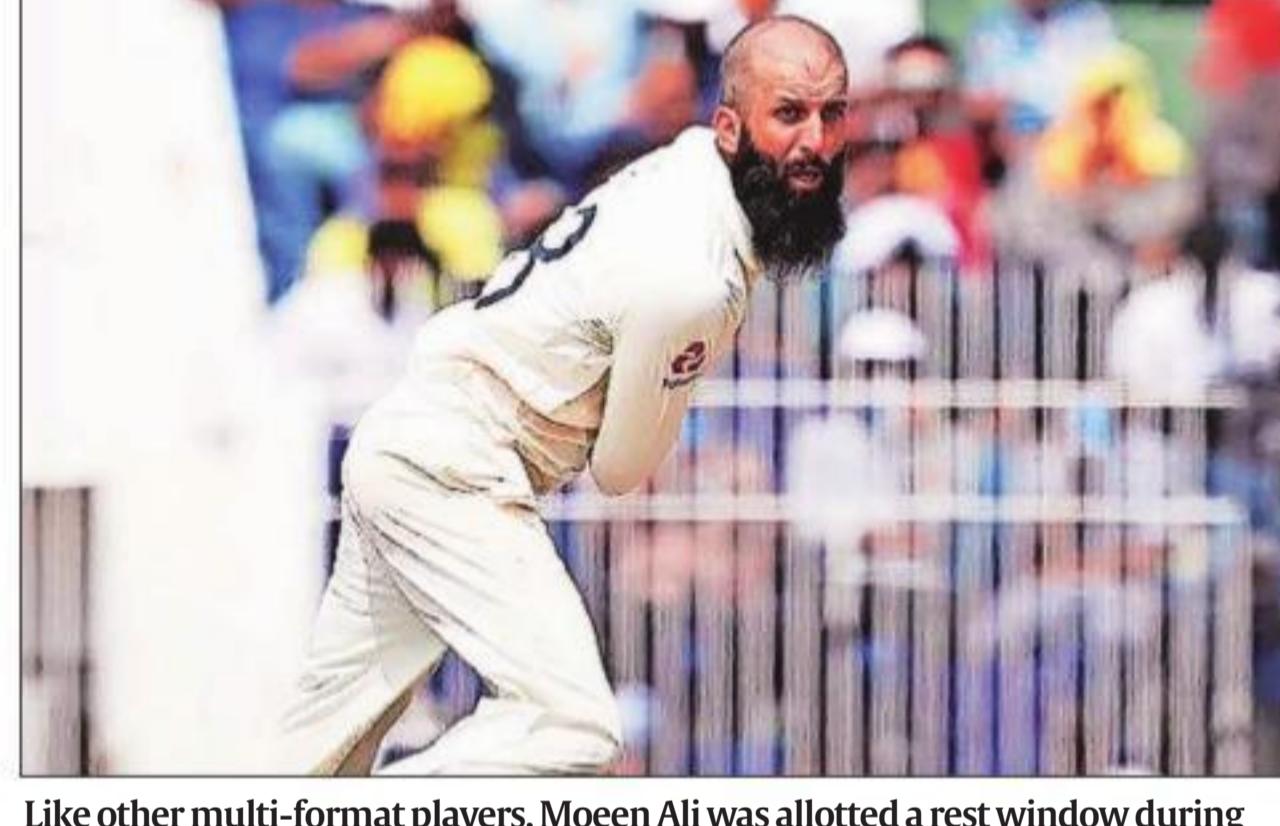
The letter comes on the heels of treasurer Negi, vice president Sanjay Rawat and joint secretary Avnish Verma meeting chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat on Sunday.

The chief minister's media coordinator Darshan Singh Rawat said that Rawat (chief minister) had a discussion with the CAU delegation on Sunday but added that no inquiry had been ordered yet by the government. Darshan Rawat said that the chief minister's office will take cognizance of the matter only if the CAU submits something in writing. Uttarakhand Sports Department Secretary BK Sant said there was no communication about any inquiry.

Negi confirmed that the chief minister had inquired about the Jaffer-related episode. "The meeting was about some other issue. But CM asked about this controversy as well," Negi said.

Jaffer had resigned last week citing interference in selection by the CAU secretary Mahim Verma and selectors. A day later, Verma accused Jaffer of trying to communalise the dressing room. Negi said, "This issue has defamed us because Wasim Jaffer has made very serious allegations. If an allegation is against our secretary (Mahim Verma), an internal inquiry should be done. President has the right to call a meeting of Apex Council."

LALMANI VERMA



Like other multi-format players, Moeen Ali was allotted a rest window during England's tour of the subcontinent. BCCI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

FEBRUARY 16

MOEEN ALI will not feature in either of the remaining two Tests on the India tour. That's because, in skipper Joe Root's words, the off-spinning all-rounder "has chosen to go home". The England selectors and team management have stuck to a rotation policy for this hectic year, but while in the cases of other players, it was conveyed that the matter was taken out of the player's hands, the manner in which Moeen's departure has been described conveys that it was entirely the player's call.

Some sections of the England media have hinted that the spinner has been a victim of differential treatment, giving the impression that he is deserting the team in the midst of a crucial and challenging Test series, while intending to return for the T20 series with an eye on the Indian Premier League. Former skippers Michael Vaughan and Kevin Pietersen have also criticised Moeen's departure.

Like other multi-format players, he was allotted a rest window after the first two Tests against India. But after featuring in just one Test out of four in Sri Lanka and India and with only the inconsistent and less-experienced Dom Bess in the squad as a like-for-like replacement, the team management had probably hoped that Moeen will forgo his break.

Guardian's Ali Martin hinted at some intrigue in the controversy when he reported that while in the other cases of player rotation

chief selector Ed Smith and head coach Chris Silverwood didn't divulge any in-house discussions to the media, Moeen "now finds his commitment to the national team being questioned by some supporters following the defeat" in the second Test on Tuesday.

Why is Moeen going back?

Because he is tired of the quarantine life. He had contracted Covid-19 in Sri Lanka and couldn't play any game. He played the second

Test in Chennai and has now chosen to go back home. He has been in quarantine since the start of January and if he is picked in the IPL auction, that period would stretch till the end of May - a total of six months.

What's the controversy in his decision to go back?

It was in the way the Root phrased his departure. Until now, for all the other players who have been sent home - Sam Curran,

Punch in the gut for Indian boxers: World Olympic qualifier called off

NITIN SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 16

A YEAR after Indian boxers secured a historic nine quota places for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, India's hopes of sending one boxer in each of the 13 weight categories received a jolt when the Boxing Task Force (BTF) decided on Monday night that the final World Olympic qualifier to be held in Paris, France in June later this year will not be held.

Now 53 quota places (32 men and women quota) will be allocated to the best ranked boxer not yet qualified per region. Having missed out qualifying in the men's 51 Kg, 81 Kg and 91 Kg and women's 57 Kg at Jordan last year, Indian boxers find themselves well behind in BTF Rankings.

While Gaurav Solanki had lost out on the men's 57 Kg category quota at Jordan with a narrow loss to eventual gold medallist Uzbekistan's Mirzazbek Mirzakhilov in the first round, Sachin Kumar's loss in quarter-finals in 81 Kg and Naman Tanwar's first round loss in 91 Kg meant India was hopeful of securing berths in these categories in Paris. In the women's 57 Kg category, Sakshi Chaudhary had lost in the quarter-finals in 57 Kg category at Jordan.

Perhaps the biggest sucker punch falls on the men's 57 Kg category seeing the presence of 2018 CWG champion Gaurav Solanki, 2019 Asian Championships silver medallist and world champion quarter-finalist Kavinder Bisht, Sunil Siwach and 2017 World Championship bronze medallist Gaurav Bidhuri.

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Gaurav Bidhuri.

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The women's 57 Kg will feel similarly hard done by with the likes of Sonia Chahal apart from Sakshi Chaudhary. Solanki and Chahal's narrow losses in Jordan had curtailed their hopes but Nieve was confident of them securing a quota in Paris.

"Obviously, we are very disappointed with this development because we were preparing for the world qualifiers and we had high hopes of qualifying more boxers for the Olympics. But we understand that these are unprecedented times and unprecedented decisions need to be taken," said Santiago Nieve, Indian boxing's High Performance Director, told *The Indian Express*.

"Men's 57 kg has been one of the most

competitive category in men's boxing in India and any one of Gaurav Solanki, K