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## REPUBLIC DAY VIOLENCE

# Day after: Police file 25 FIRs, book over 30 farm leaders part of talks

Also named in Delhi Police FIRs: Yogendra Yadav, Medha Patkar

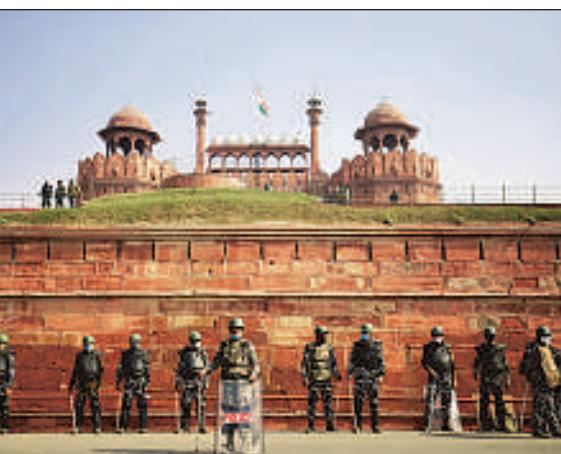
MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL & JIGNASA SINHA  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

A DAY after the Republic Day violence, when hundreds of protesters their way into the Capital and stormed the Red Fort, the Delhi Police has registered 25 FIRs, including against over 30 of the 40 farm union leaders who were involved in talks with the Centre over the last few months.

One of the FIRs, on the Red Fort incident, names Punjabi film actor Deep Sidhu and Lakhbir Singh Sidhana alias Lakha Sidhana, gangster-turned-politician and president of the Malwa Youth Federation.

Thirty-seven farm union leaders, including six spokespersons of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), have been named in FIR registered at the Samaypur Badli police station, in Outer Delhi, based on a complaint filed by Inspector Anil Kumar.

The six SKM spokespersons who have been named are: Jagjit Singh Dallewal, president, BKU (Sidhpur); Balbir Singh



High security at Red Fort in Delhi on Wednesday, a day after protesting farmers entered the monument. Praveen Khanna

**Deep Sidhu said in run-up: Picture abhi baki hai...  
Jan 26 plans up to Almighty**

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR  
AMRITSAR, JANUARY 27

ON JANUARY 20, exactly a week before the Republic Day violence, when Delhi Police and farm unions were in talks over security rules for the tractor parade, Punjabi film actor Deep Sidhu, who has been named in the Delhi Police FIR on the Red Fort incident, went on Facebook to livestream several tractors en route from Punjab to Delhi and said: "Picture toh abhi baki hai mera dost".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



Cracks within, unions call off Parliament march, allege plot to break them

SOURAV ROY BARMAN,  
SUKRITA BARUAH  
& RAKHI JAGGA  
NEW DELHI, LUDHIANA,  
JANUARY 27

ITS NEGOTIATORS with the government named in Republic Day violence FIRs and under pressure following cracks within the direction of the protest, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, the umbrella organisation of farmer unions seeking the repeal of new agriculture laws, Wednesday

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**EXPLAINED** E Weighing options

DAYS AFTER they rejected the Centre's offer on suspension of the farm laws, farmer unions are on the back foot. With the police lodging FIRs and the future of the dialogue process uncertain, the unions now have to weigh their options on the way ahead.

Farmers told to pay bonds, Allahabad HC seeks UP reply

Action needed or situation would have been same as in Delhi: Sitapur SDM

ASAD REHMAN  
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 27

THE ALLAHABAD High Court has sought a response from government authorities in Sitapur on a PIL alleging "financial hardship" to farmers who own tractors on January 19, and police surrounded their houses to prevent them from joining the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

them, plus surtees, "on the apprehension that they may violate law and order" given the farmers' protests on in the district.

In the PIL, activist Arundhati Bhaduri said the Sitapur district administration issued the notices to farmers who own tractors on January 19, and police surrounded their houses to prevent them from joining the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**'You can't hurt religious sentiments': SC rejects Tandav plea for relief from arrest**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

THE SUPREME Court Wednesday declined to grant interim protection from arrest to the makers of the Amazon web series *Tandav*, who are facing

charges of hurting religious sentiments, but agreed to consider their plea for clubbing of FIRs registered in different states.

"Approach High Court," a bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and M R Shah said as Senior Advocate Fali S Nariman, appear-

ing for the petitioners, urged the bench to direct that no coercive action be taken against the petitioners. The bench also issued notice on the prayer to club the FIRs pending in different states.

The bench did not seem to agree with advocate Siddharth

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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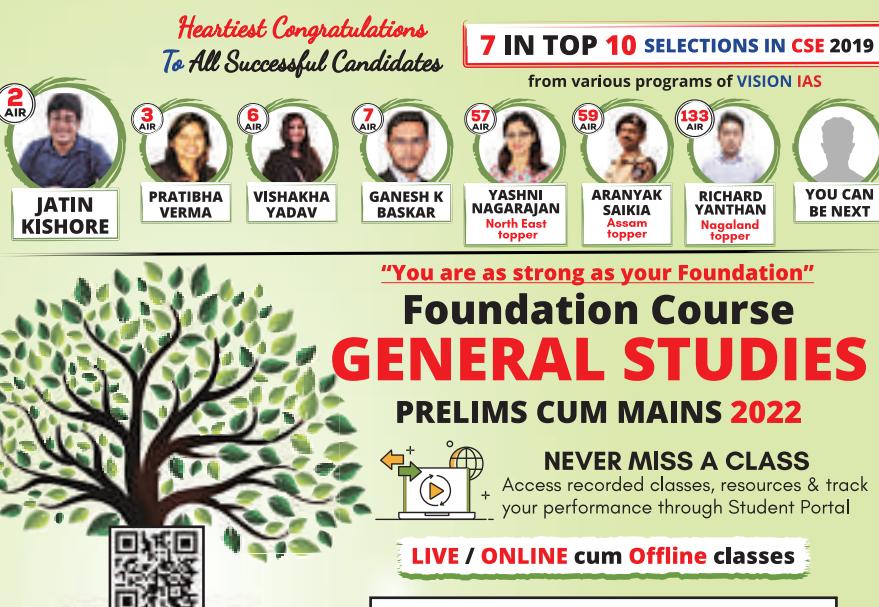
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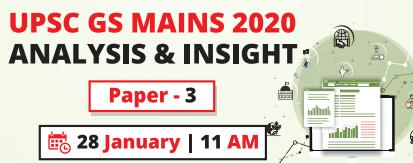
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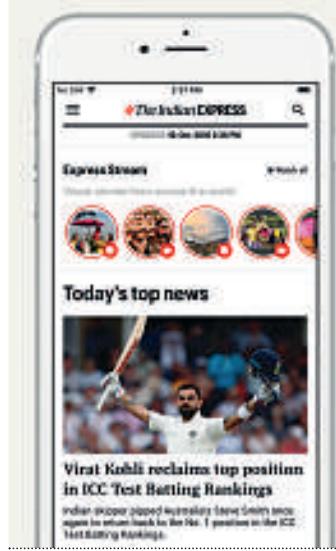
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**NAGALAND'S IMCHA IMCHEN, FEATURED ON APPLE'S TOP 2020 HITS, ON MAKING MUSIC THAT HEALS**

Strife, turbulence and violence are a few things Nagaland's latest 23-year-old pop sensation, Imcha Imchen, doesn't want to sing about. But tell him your love story, and he will serenade you with a ballad.

**TECH****WHAT IS CLUBHOUSE, THE SOCIAL AUDIO APP**

**The iOS-only app, is creating the right noises online**

**EXPLAINED****WHO'S ARCHAEOLOGIST BB LAL?**

**The Padma Vibhushan awardee led excavation at 'Ramjanmabhoomi'**

**EXPRESS AUDIO****How the chaos of the tractor rally will affect the farmers' protests****NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY**

Today on the 3 Things podcast, we talk about how the violence and chaos that happened on Republic Day affect the farmers' negotiations with the Centre.

**FROM PAGE ONE****Cracks within**

called off its march to Parliament House on February 1.

As two organisations, BKU (Bhanu) and Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan, withdrew from the protest at the borders of Delhi, Krantikari Kisan Union leader Darshan Pal, speaking for the Morcha at a press conference, said: "We have postponed our march to Parliament on Budget day on February 1. But our agitation will continue and there will be public meetings and hunger strikes across the country on January 30."

The Morcha blamed the Republic Day violence on "a dirty conspiracy... hatched with the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee and others" to break the agitation.

It also called actor-activist Deep Sidhu as an "agent" of the government, and alleged he was behind the hoisting of the flag at the Red Fort.

The Morcha offered an "unconditional apology" to those whose feelings had been hurt by the storming of the Red Fort.

BKU (Rajewal) president Balbir Singh Rajewal said: "Ninety per cent farmers carried out the march peacefully. But the cadre of the Kisan Sangharsh Mazdoor Committee were purposefully placed in the front. They were allowed to take a separate route."

BKU (Tikait) chief Rakesh Tikait questioned the police decision not to fire at protesters who indulged in vandalism inside the Red Fort.

Swaraj India leader Yogendra Yadav said the Morcha was taking "moral responsibility" for the "regrettable events".

Satnam Singh Pannu, president of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, denied

any role in the Red Fort incident.

"We went to the Ring Road and returned... We are not going to say anything against the unions. We are in coordination with the SKM and will keep implementing other calls of the Morcha as well."

Sarwan Singh Pandher, general secretary of KMSC, too said: "We never gave any call to occupy Red Fort or ITO. It was the actor's call (referring to Deep Sidhu) to which several people responded. We condemn the actions of all those who indulged in rioting and violence. I have respect for the Morcha and will not give in to the government's plan of dividing us."

Meanwhile, leaders of two farmer groups said they were withdrawing from the movement following the January 26 violence. The pull-out announcements were made by VMS Singh of Rashtriya Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan and Bhana Pratap Singh of BKU (Bhanu) at Delhi's Ghazipur and Chilla borders, respectively.

VMS Singh told a press conference that he could not continue supporting an agitation where the leaders "want to take it in another direction," referring to BKU's Rakesh Tikait.

"The farmers' movement will continue as long as the issue of MSP continues, but not in this way. We have not come here to martyr people or get them beaten up," he said.

Bhanu Pratap Singh of BKU (Bhanu) said: "I am so saddened and so ashamed by yesterday's events that we are withdrawing from this agitation."

Joginder Singh Ugrahan, president of BKU (Ugrahan), said there was delay in "marginalising" and "expelling" those giving the farmer movement a bad name. "All such communal elements

and government agents should now be removed from our struggle," he said.

**— WITH AMIL BHATNAGAR  
IN NEW DELHI**

**Deep Sidhu**

And on January 23, he shared a web channel interview, in Punjabi, in which he said: "We can't plan what will happen on January 26. It would be out of our calculations. It would be unpredictable. It is up to the Almighty, what happens on January 26."

The first eight-minute-long Facebook post had over 2 lakh views and is one of a series showing how Sidhu, given the cold shoulder by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) since the protests started on November 26, reached out to farmers over the unions' heads and kept raising the pitch.

In fact, one theme he kept underlining was the "need for unity" among protesters, a not-so-veiled snub to the farm leaders. It was point he made on Tuesday, too, after the Red Fort incident.

Denying that he had instigated the crowd and claiming that the Nishan Sahib flag was hoisted in a "flow of emotions", Sidhu said: "I had warned that our leaders had taken a decision against the youth's sentiments."

Sidhu is now in the cross-hairs of the Opposition, who alleged Wednesday that he was close to the BJP and part of the "conspiracy" to discredit the protests.

Referring to Union Minister Prakash Javadekar's remarks that action should be taken against all of those who instigated the crowd, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor tweeted: "Agree with Prakash Javadekar on this. So to catch the culprits, we can start with this name: Deep Sidhu, campaigner-in-chief for BJP MP Sunny Deol. Judging by these photos, his associates won't be hard to find either."

Tharoor posted photographs of Sidhu and Deol with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sidhu with Home Minister Amit Shah.

On January 19, Sidhu defended BKU (Haryana) president Gurnam Singh Chaduni and himself against the allegations of farmer unions and highlighted the trust deficit between farmer unions and himself. Chaduni, a member of the SKM, was suspected by farmer unions of holding talks with political parties.

"We should have faith in our man even if he is sitting with the enemy... It happened with me also. I am tagged as a BJP-RSS man for campaigning for Sunny Deol for just 20 days. Now they are doubting Gurnam Singh Chaduni for just attending a meeting. There may be a difference of opinion, but it shouldn't mean that you tag anyone as the enemy's man," he said in an interview to a web channel shared on Facebook.

On January 21, Sidhu interviewed an unnamed man whom he introduced as a "hero". The man, who identified himself as a protester at the Singhu border, claimed that some farm union leaders wanted to move to the Burari ground on November 26 itself but he had defied these orders and asked the crowd to remain at Singhu. "It was the decisive moment. If we had shifted ground, the Modi government would have the upper hand," he said.

In another post, he shared a Punjabi song dedicated to Sikhs killed in 1984 and the aftermath of the riots.

After some protesters, mostly youths, took over the stage at Singhu for hours on the night of January 25 — Sidhu was among those who addressed the crowd — he posted another video calling for unity and urging farm union leaders to take decisions that were acceptable to all. "Nobody should be seen as a rival. Nobody should make it an ego issue," he said. His last one-line message on Facebook, posted before the dawn of January 26, was: "It's absolutely necessary for us to stay together now."

On January 24, he said he "appreciated... farmer leaders for the firm stand they took on farm laws." That night, he shared an unconfirmed map of the route

**Day after: Police file 25 FIRs, book over 30 farm leaders part of talks**

Rajewal, president, BKU (Rajewal); Darshan Pal, president, Krantikari Kisan Union; Rakesh Tikait, president, BKU; Kulwant Singh Sandhu, general secretary, Jamhoori Kisan Sabha; Yogendra Yadav, president, Swaraj Party India. Barring Yogendra Yadav, all the others took part in the talks with the government.

The others who were also part of the talks and have been named in the FIR are: Boota Singh Burjill, president, BKU Dakaunda; Nirbhai Singh Dhudike, president, Kirti Kisan Union; Ruldu Singh Mansa, president, Punjab Kisan Union; Inderjit Singh, president, Kisan Sangharsh Committee; Harjinder Singh Tanda, president, Azad Kisan Sangharsh Committee, Punjab; Gurbaksh Singh, president, Jai Kisan Andolan; Satnam Singh Pannu, president, Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee; Kanwalpreet Singh Pannu, president, Kisan Sangharsh Committee; Joginder Singh Ugrahan, president, BKU-Ugrahan; Surjeet Singh Phool, president, BKU Krantikari; Harmeet Singh Kadian, president, BKU Kadian; Satnam Singh Sahni, general secretary, BKU (Doaba); Bogh Singh Mansa, president, BKU (Mansa); Balwinder Singh Aulakh, president, Majha Kisan Committee; Satnam Singh Behru, president, Indian Farmers Association; Bharat Boota Singh Shadipur, president, Bharti Kisan Manch; Baldev Singh Sirsa, president, Lok Bhali Insaf Welfare Society; Jagbir Singh Tanda, president, Doaba Kisan Samiti; Mukesh Chandra, Doaba Kisan Sangharsh Committee; Sukhpal Singh Daffar, president, Ganna Sangharsh Committee; Harinder Singh Lakhawal, general secretary, BKU Lakhawal; Kirpal Singh Nathuwala, president, Kisan Bachao Morcha; Prem Singh Banga, president, All India Kisan Federation, Punjab unit; Gurnam Singh Chaduni, president, BKU

Haryana; Kavita Kuruganti, Mahila Kisan Adhikaar Manch; Rishipal Ambavatta, president, BKU Ambavatta; Prem Singh Gehlot, president, All India Kisan Mahasabha, Haryana Unit.

where and was at the Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar. A group of youths surrounded us there and marched towards Delhi. We came back to Tikri," said Ruldu Singh, Punjab Kisan Union.

The others named in the FIR are: Medha Patkar, V M Singh and Avik Saha.

The FIR against them lists sections of rioting, criminal conspiracy, attempt to murder and robbery. "The rioters/protesters and their leaders had a pre-planned objective of not following the mutually agreed route" leading to the violence, it says.

"Around 8.30 am on Tuesday, they first broke through blockades on the Singhu border and were riding on tractors, horses, trolleys, carrying iron rods, sticks and some of them even swords. Despite directions of designated route, they wanted to move towards Outer Ring Road... Announcements were made, but the protesters started rioting, causing injuries to the policemen... and running their tractor over the police officials with intent to kill," Inspector Kumar said in his complaint.

He alleged that the timing of the commencement of their "so-called parade" was meant to disrupt the Republic Day parade.

The farmer leaders named in the FIR denied any role in the violence. "I didn't cross the Singhu border. I condemn the violence. I was satisfied with the route the police suggested and marched there. Police registered a false case against me," said Nirbhai Singh Dhudhike, Kirti Kisan Union.

Shrivastava said the Delhi Police held five rounds of meetings with the farmer leaders. "The farmers were given permission to hold the rally with terms and conditions. But they did not follow the conditions," he said.

"By late evening of January 25, there were indications that they would not keep their word. They brought forward the aggressive and militant elements, who delivered provocative speeches which made their intentions clear. Farmer leaders were also involved in the violence that broke out during the tractor rally. Some farmer lead-

ers like Satnam Singh Pannu and Darshan Pal gave inflammatory speeches, following which the protesters breached the barricades," said Shrivastava.

"Police had many options, but remained calm. While 394 police personnel were injured, 30 police vehicles were damaged," he said.

A 27-year-old farmer, Navreet Singh, died at ITO when his tractor overturned. In the FIR filed in connection with the ITO violence, Delhi Police has claimed that Singh was driving in a rash and negligent manner.

"It was others who instigated the farmers, not us. I left with a tractor from the Singhu border. At one point, a few farmers asked me to join them and go to Red Fort. These men wanted to indulge in violence. I didn't. So, I came back," said Satnam Singh Behru, Indian Farmer's Association (Bharat).

"No movement is a concert. FIRs, jails, harassment — these are part and parcel of every movement," said Yogendra Yadav.

Police said 25 FIRs had been registered across 10 districts and 19 people arrested and 50 detained. "We are using the facial recognition system and CCTV and video footage. Those involved in the violence will not be spared and the farmer leaders will be questioned," said Delhi Police Commissioner S N Shrivastava.

Sources said Delhi Police officers were instructed to take strict action against the rioters and to identify and book leaders who had instigated or facilitated the violence. Sources said Shah also received a report from the Delhi Police on the violence.

"It has been made clear that such violent behaviour on the part of certain elements from the rally cannot be tolerated and a strong message has to be sent through legal action," said an official.

Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy called the protesters' actions "seditious", and also blamed the Congress.

"Desecrating symbols on the day our republic was consecrated is sedition... Congress Party's vulture politics is exposed again," he tweeted, shortly after a meeting with Shah.

**— WITH DEEPTIMAN TIWARI, NEW DELHI**

Sitapur Additional DM Vinay Kumar Pathak told *The Indian Express* that the SDMs and city magistrates had served the notices following reports from Circle Officers about law and order concerns. "After a report is received from a police station, and according to the stature of a person, a notice is served under CrPC Section 111 with amount (specified)," said Pathak.

Dhuru, who is the national convenor of the National Alliance of People's Movements, said she came to know of the issue through the SKMS. "We are also collecting notices sent to farmers of other districts, like Baghpat."

**Tandav**

Aggarwal, counsel for *Tandav* actor Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub, who contended that the statements of the character cannot be attributed to the actor in person.

To this, Justice Shah said that the actor would not have accepted the role without reading the script and added, "you can't hurt religious sentiments of others".

Nariman pointed out that the objectionable parts, which allegedly hurt religious sentiments, have been removed and an apology tendered. Despite this, seven more FIRs have been filed, he said.

The bench pointed out that the prayer was for quashing the FIRs and sought to know why he was not approaching the high courts. The senior counsel replied that the FIRs were in six states "and it's increasing every day".

Justice Shah remarked that police can file a closure report if the content has been removed and the apology tendered.

Emphasising that it was a case of free speech under Article 19(1)(a), Nariman referred to Republic TV Editor-In-Chief Arnab Goswami's case in which the SC had clubbed the FIRs pending in different states.

Agreeing with Nariman, Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Amazon India Creative Head Aparna Purohit, said, "(The show) is a political satire. If people are so sensitive... then art, cinema, TV, all will be destroyed." Article 19(1)(a) is the most zealously guarded right and must be protected as was held in the Goswami case too, he urged.

Urging the bench to at least merge all FIRs, he recalled that the court had done so in the M F Husain case in which he had appeared. "The petitioners reside in Bombay. Why will they go to different states?" Rohatgi said.

Senior Advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing for the producer, director and scriptwriter of *Tandav*, also sought to underline the Article 19(1)(a) argument but the bench told him, "Your right to freedom of speech is not absolute."

Stating that it involved questions of liberty and natural justice, Luthra referred to the SC order protecting journalist Amish Devgan from coercive action in FIRs filed against him in different states and consolidating the FIRs.

*Tandav*, argued Luthra, is an analytical serial about political and social issues. The makers deleted the scenes when objections were made, he said, adding that on Amazon and other OTT platforms, a person sees something only when he or she agrees to watch it.

The cases against its makers, he argued, "is persecution not prosecution".

Rohatgi reiterated that in Goswami's case, only the primary complaint was kept alive and others were quashed. But Justice Shah told him that the Goswami case was considered by another bench of which he too was a part and the FIR was not quashed.

**CLARIFICATIONS & CORRECTIONS****27.01.2021, PAGE 10**

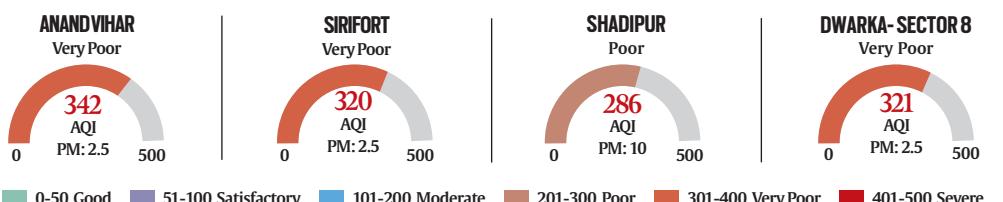
The report 'In Budget, disinvestment and borrowings' said disinvestment receipts for 2020-21 was Rs 6,179 crore, based on data from the Controller General of Accounts (CGA). In fact, the government has raised Rs 17,957.70 crore through disinvestment in the current fiscal year so far, via various means including offer for sale (OFS), initial public offer (IPO), and buyback, as per the latest data available with the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM). OFS has been the preferred route for disinvestment—the government has raised Rs 4,924 crore through OFS of HAL, Rs 4,473 crore through the IRCTC OFS, and Rs 2,737 crore through the SAIL OFS. The error is regretted.

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PROTEST SITE FEELS RIPPLES OF RED FORT RAID

# Wind out of Singhu sails

Capital chaos dominates talk at subdued protest site, many admit fault but say unfair to discredit movement

**SOURAV ROY BARMAN**  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

**SINGHU** ON Wednesday appeared a little subdued and a lot emptier; its usual exuberance replaced by a sense of unease, a day after the violence during the tractor rally in Delhi.

The crowd thinned in the area that overflowed with protesters till Republic Day as many who had turned up for the tractor march started their return journey.

A 15-member contingent from Amritsar, which had arrived at Singhu on January 20, was among those that chose to leave. "All us belong to one family. We had specially come for the march. Our decision to return has nothing to do with what happened on Tuesday," said Sakattar Singh, steering the tractor-trolley. As the tractor made its way out of the area, an elderly Sikh farmer came running behind the tractor, appealing them to return soon. "We will babaji," Sakattar nodded.

As Delhi Police fortified entry points to the city, a fresh batch of concrete blocks left the lane leading to the protest site considerably narrower.

Across the protest site, the sequence of events that unfolded on Tuesday dominated the chatter. And the common thread that bound them was the consensus that protesters were unfairly stopped from entering the city and forced to make a U-turn from peripheral areas.

"All along we were told we will take the Ring Road. Then why did police put barricades? Don't we have any right to enter the country's capital?" said Sandeep Singh, a resident of Haryana's Kaithal.

Said Anand Jagnan, a resident of Panipat, "Many of us were told about the route late on Monday. Time was so less that it could not be conveyed to a large section."

In the absence of a robust machinery to convey decisions taken by the joint coordination committee leading the protests, the farmers have to rely on announcements made from the stage, and word of mouth.

In some cases, minivans fitted with microphones are deployed to make announcements while some unions also send messengers on bicycles.

Many voices betrayed a sense of unease over the act "by a section of protesters" to barge into Red Fort and unfurl the panthic flag of Sikhism. Many denounced the act, but added that the relentless focus on "the act of a few was aimed at sullying the entire movement".

"We spent months on the railway tracks of Punjab. No one bothered. We have spent over two months here, everyday people are dying, but they are making it look like we are all extremists. No one is showing we were also showered with petals in many places," said Harjinder Singh from Patiala, who said he reached Red Fort but did not enter.

Participants of the march returned to the site through the night till early Wednesday morning. The Delhi government's langar seva remained suspended due to "vandalism" and will resume soon, AAP MLA Raghav Chahda said.

Gagandeep Singh from Kaithal said farmers had no intention of indulging in vandalism. "Lakhs of us have been camping here. There has not been one act of violence."

The farmers unions have claimed that unruly elements infiltrated the march, triggering confusion and chaos, a narrative echoed by protesters on the ground.

"The mob does not have any definite shape. When the flood-gates open, water does not always flow in accordance with the set course of the river. It often leads to a deluge," said Jagnan, who runs a dairy trade in Panipat and supplies milk to protesters on a daily basis.



At Ghazipur Monday. Many who had arrived for the tractor parade on Republic Day have left. *Prem Nath Pandey*

## At Tikri, a short march for course correction: 'This will improve our discipline for future parades'

**ARANYA SHANKAR**  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27



Volunteers marched till Bahadurgarh bus stand. *Aranya Shankar*

the Samyukta Kisan Morcha be followed and asked protesters not to be "swayed". Late afternoon, volunteers took out a march till Bahadurgarh bus stand to mark their presence among farmers, after appeals from the stage to "march under flags of farmers".

Gurudutt Singh, a volunteer, said, "After yesterday's mistake, this is a way for us to register our presence among farmers and also improve our discipline for future parades."

At the stage, one speaker said, "This was a BJP ploy. Farmers were misled. They are the ones

who provoked us by making us sit here for 60 days. We will keep fighting."

Another said, "What happened at Lal Qila is not something we could have done. One must ask how this small crowd could enter Lal Qila and hoist a flag with police present there."

Many in the audience agreed.

Major Singh, a farmer from Punjab, said veering off the route was not necessarily wrong but the Nishan Sahib flag should not have been hoisted at the Lal Qila. "People say permission was not given for the route some took. Even Bhagat Singh didn't have permission to enter the Assembly, but he did. If the government had listened to us, none of this would have happened. But the flag hoisting was wrong. We are here only under the Indian flag and flags of our farmer unions," he said.

Jagbir Singh, from Jagraon in Punjab, said, "There has been so

much frustration among people. Our people have died. They have killed themselves. There was no outrage then. But now farmers are being maligned. This was a reaction to an action."

However, some like Surinder Singh felt what happened on Tuesday was not wrong. "It was required. At least now the government knows our strength. We have been sitting here peacefully, and we have got nothing," he said.

The discomfort with the Nishan Sahib being hoisted at the Red Fort was more palpable among farmers from Haryana.

Kishan Kumar from Haryana district said, "Whatever happened was completely wrong. This is not a protest of a single religion. It is a protest of farmers, and the farmers' flag should always be supreme. Routes should have been followed. This will create problems for our union leaders in future negotiations now."

## Quieter, emptier: Ghazipur site, which first broke ranks

**SUKRITA BARUAH**  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

BY 2 pm on Wednesday, the green carpets in front of the stage at the Ghazipur protest site had been rolled up, marking an early end to the day's activities. A day after the tractor rally spiralled into violence, the gathering at the Ghazipur protest site had visibly thinned and the atmosphere was more subdued.

The Ghazipur site was from

where a large number of protesters first broke away from Tuesday's designated route to head towards Central Delhi. A farmer who died at ITO, Navreet Singh, had also left for Delhi from here. The few speeches made from the Ghazipur stage on Wednesday were tributes to him.

In days leading to the Republic Day rally, the gathering there had swelled to several thousand and their tractors and tents had occupied over 2.5 km both over and below the Ghazipur flyover.

On Wednesday, those present said the numbers seemed dwindled because most of those who had arrived just to participate in the rally had returned.

"Many had come from nearby districts and villages for the rally, and because of that the numbers had increased a lot in the last few days. They have returned to their villages after the rally. A few mischievous people had taken things out of hand yesterday but the protest will continue peacefully as before," said Jitender Singh

from Lakhimpur district.

The coordinators at the protest site have maintained that some "mischievous elements" had provoked and misled other protesters into breaking away from the rally.

"We are currently keeping a lookout for any mischievous elements and we are also telling all protesters to not be misled by anyone... Yesterday, some of these elements broke out early and the rest of the farmers followed them not knowing it was

not the correct time or route," claimed Jitender Singh, volunteer and security in-charge at Ghazipur.

This message was communicated from the stage on Wednesday as well. "We were told that there are some wrong people among us and we should be vigilant about them. If there are people who say provocative things, we should understand that they are not a part of our movement," said Jagtar Singh from Bareilly district.

It was at 10 am Wednesday that panchayats of 20 villages, in-

cluding Masani village, held a meeting and decided to give an ultimatum to the farmers. "The incident has shamed India and every person here is also responsible for this. We cannot tolerate such things..." said Lalram, sarpanch of Masani village.

He added that although the residents had been facing issues earlier itself, they had restrained themselves till now. "Some of the protesters had indulged in hooliganism; roads have been broken; crops have been damaged. Ours was an open defecation-free area but this is no longer true... (We) kept thinking that they are farmers and did not take any action," alleged the sarpanch.

In Palwal, a day after farmers protesting against the three farm bills tried to break through police barricades, an FIR has been lodged against more than 2,000 people regarding the incident. "The FIR has been registered against 2,000 to 2,200 people in 350 to 400 tractors who became violent with police officers," said Hanish Khan, the probe officer.

**CULTURE MINISTER TAKES STOCK**

## Extent of Red Fort damage becomes clear, tableaux targeted too

**ANANYA TIWARI, DIVYA A & ASHNA BUTANI**  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

CCTV CAMERAS, metal detectors, glass windows and security equipment at the entrance of the Red Fort, where visitors deposit baggage and are cleared by security, lay ransacked and smashed, a day after protesters stormed the monument.

On Wednesday morning, Union Minister of Culture and Tourism Prahpal Singh Patel visited the fort with Delhi Police officers to assess the damage.

Patel tweeted: "I visited the Red Fort this morning along with Culture Secretary (Raghvendra

Singh) and ASI Director-General (Vidya Vath). I have instructed them to prepare a report immediately and lodge an FIR."

The report will be submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Even as the ASI refused to reveal the extent of damage, sources in ASI and the Ministry of Culture said there has been substantial damage and littering inside the premises, adding that even tableaux parked there after Republic Day were targeted.

The ASI report will be the basis for charges that the Delhi Police will press on the rioters, an ASI source said. The source said there has been damage to the flooring due to movement of tractors inside the premises, and



The entrance to Red Fort, Wednesday. *Praveen Khanna*

that some walls have been scratched and scraped in the process. A part of the grill of the iconic Lahori Gate also received

some dents, the source said. Outside the premises, signs of destruction were visible everywhere – from the demolished

entry points to the ransacked cabins of security and Central Public Works Department officials. Audio-visual equipment given for tours lay battered while shards of windows and some lights were strewn across the floors. Outside the security area lay an upturned CISF Gypsy, and just inside the tall gates of the Red Fort, a bus stood with its windows broken. The railing lining the grassed moat lay tilted and a few bare pieces of chairs and railings lay beneath.

Red Fort has been shut since January 19 after cases of bird flu were confirmed inside its premises. On Wednesday, ASI declared it will remain shut from January 28 to January 31. Officials said stainless steel railing, around 150 metres long, on the central verge near Vikas Bhawan at ITO had fallen on the ground and a few pots too had been damaged along the stretch.

### Damage at ITO

A visual assessment by the Public Works Department (PWD) revealed railings were broken in several areas in ITO and Netaji Subhash Marg, though the roads were not damaged. Officials said stainless steel railing, around 150 metres long, on the central verge near Vikas Bhawan at ITO had fallen on the ground and a few pots too had been damaged along the stretch. "When barricades break, there would obviously be some damage to the footpaths and plants as well. Immediate repair work has started. Our teams are on the ground cleaning up the area, getting rid of debris," said a PWD official.

But it would take longer to replace the railings. "General repair work will take 8-10 days. A tender will be floated to replace the railings that are missing or have been completely damaged. The tender process alone would take a few weeks," said the official.

Similar damage was seen at Netaji Subhash Marg. In some portions, an official said, the median had also been broken. A senior official said, "Since the damage occurred in the protests, we will intimate the police about the same. We are preparing a report on the damages. After the assessment, we will float a tender. It will take around three months for repair and replacement work."

India raises concerns over Khalistan flags at Rome embassy

New Delhi: India has raised with Italian authorities the issue of Khalistani flags being stuck on its embassy in Rome and has sought action.

Sources said flags and slogans on Khalistan were painted on the walls of the embassy on Tuesday night. The embassy took it up with Italian officials on Wednesday.

A source said, "We have been constantly raising our concerns with the Italian authorities and we had done so recently as well in view of Republic Day... We have taken up this specific incident with them... Safety and security of Indian diplomats... is the responsibility of the host government."

KRISHNA KASHIK & SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27



Sullivan (left) and Austin. File

### 3rd Rafale batch arrives in India

New Delhi: The third set of Rafale aircraft reached India from France on Wednesday, flying non-stop for over 7,000 km, the IAF tweeted.

With the arrival of the three new planes, India has received 11 of the 36 fighters it had ordered in 2016 from France. All 36 are expected to be in India by the end of the year.

ENS

### HC vacancies: SC questions govt over delay in action on Collegium recommendations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

EXPRESSING CONCERN over the government delaying action on the recommendations of the Collegium to fill up vacancies in the High Courts, the Supreme Court on Wednesday asked Attorney General KK Venugopal to apprise it of the Centre's timeline in the matter.

"Suppose you have reservations and send the names back, we can reiterate. But if you don't give comments for five months on Collegium recommendations,

it is a matter of great concern," Justice S K Kaul, part of a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India S A Bobde, observed as a matter which raised the question of vacancies in the High Courts came up before it.

CJI Bobde told Venugopal that Justice Kaul has drawn up a chart about the vacancies in the High Courts and the proposals pending with the government and the Collegium. He said 189 proposals were pending and asked the Attorney General to study the same.

Justice Kaul pointed out that in five months, the Collegium

cleared nine names of which six are pending with the government.

The Attorney General referred to the pendency figures and said the numbers had reduced to 104 from 150 in December 2020.

CJI Bobde said the main objective was to speed up appointments and that the court was not asking about matters which the Collegium had deferred. "We all need to see a timeline to achieve this target," he said.

Justice Surya Kant said the government has taken more than a year to respond in some cases. "You say something is

pending with Intelligence Bureau and some Chief Minister has not responded. But we want to know your timeline," he told the Attorney General.

The bench also took note of the large number of vacancies in Delhi High Court and wondered why there has been no recommendation for a long time. The CJI said the High Court must respond when it hears the matter again next week.

Justice Kaul referred to the difficulties in getting enough names from lawyers in High Courts for consideration and said SC lawyers could be considered.

PRIME MINISTER'S RALLY

28th January 2021

CARIAPPA PARADE GROUND,  
DELHI CANTONMENT

LIVE TELECAST | LIVE BROADCAST

11:50 hrs onwards on DD National

11:55 hrs onwards on Rajdhani Channel MW 450.5 mtrs ie 666khz

FM Rainbow 102.6 Mhz

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## The Agriculture Sector Needs to Come to Terms with Reality!

CLAAS

"India has an unequal distribution of rainfall, temperature and weather patterns, creating an imbalance when it comes to farming in different parts of the country. Moreover, the farming community lacks awareness regarding various government benefits, sometimes due to their inability to comprehend rules regarding such benefits and sometimes due to misconceptions. Similarly, much awareness is needed to make them embrace technology and mechanise the farming process. Viability of small & marginal farmers is a big issue that needs to be addressed comprehensively. I sincerely believe we can reach the goal of achieving PM Modi's vision of doubling the farmers' income by 2022, if every industry stakeholder involved comes together", says Mrityunjaya Singh, Managing Director, CLAAS Agricultural Machinery Private Limited.



Mrityunjaya Singh

have CLAAS Academies through tie-ups with several agricultural universities - at Rahuri and Akola (Maharashtra), Ludhiana (Punjab), Dharwad (Karnataka), Sabour (Bihar) and Bhubaneswar (Odisha). Further, we have our own state-of-the-art academy at Tumkur, about 60 km from Bangalore. At these Academies we update University faculty, students, dealers, customers and farmers regarding every technological development that can benefit their farming methodology and help improve productivity.

For operators a good quality training is also provided to enhance their skills in handling modern equipment. We have a CLAAS Operators Club under which machine operators who have been trained by us enjoy several benefits provided by CLAAS - scholarship for one child, subsidised advanced level training, personal accidental insurance, preview of latest machinery launch and better job prospects by connecting them to machine owners.

Our agricultural institutions can do more in updating farmers, providing them with knowledge about various schemes, or making them aware about the benefits of crop diversification. Similarly, the farming community should be educated about the benefits of using agricultural machinery to improve farm productivity.

What is the role of your company in making the farming community aware about agricultural machinery?

CLAAS

understands technology and its usage and benefits for the Agriculture sector. Across the globe, CLAAS educates the farming community about the benefits of bringing technology to farming. In India, we

CLAAS is well known for providing harvesting solutions that can address multiple crops. What is the state of maize mechanisation nowadays?

Yes,

CLAAS harvesters do harvest mul-

tiple crops like paddy, wheat, maize, soybean, pulses, sunflower etc. Mechanisation level of maize harvesting today is very low at about 10% or less. It is because the attention is lacking from the government to increase mechanisation for maize harvesting since more attention goes towards paddy and wheat, both accounting for over 200 million tonne per year, compared to about 28 million tonnes of maize. However, the need for increasing area under maize is growing, particularly because the Government would like farmers to move away water-guzzling crops like paddy.

Farmers' earnings from maize can go up significantly if we increase adoption of mechanised harvesting. For example, the estimated cost of manual harvesting is Rs.6000 per acre. If this is mechanised, the cost comes down to Rs. 3000 per acre. There is also a substantial saving on time and a reduction in losses. It therefore makes tremendous economic sense to mechanise harvesting.

Finally, what are your suggestions to various industry stakeholders/enablers?

Firstly, the industry has to realise that it is not only the government's job to double farmers' income by 2022, it is every stakeholders' responsibility to see this vision become a reality. We should believe in the target and give it our best try. Secondly, if we continue to be purely profit-driven and do irreparable damage to our environment for the sake of our bottom-line, we're only going to hurt our future generations.

Thirdly, our small & marginal farmers should become viable and this can only happen when they are educated to adopt a non-traditional crop pattern, apart from the paddy-wheat cycle. Individual elements of the industry have to play a major role in providing an interface to farmers to create awareness regarding new agricultural processes, new crops, new ways of trading and even benefits of land consolidation to improve farming efficiency. All these messages have to go down to the grassroots level to make farming

viable for small & marginal farmers. Every one of us from various fields have to come together to ensure that we create an ecosystem consisting of best practices so that the benefits of technology and market opportunity reach every farmer in the country.



**GROOMING FUTURE LEADERS**  
**NATIONAL CADET CORPS**

**PRIME MINISTER'S RALLY**  
28th January 2021

**CARIAPPA PARADE GROUND, DELHI CANTONMENT**

**LIVE TELECAST | LIVE BROADCAST**

11:50 hrs onwards on DD National

11:55 hrs onwards on Rajdhani Channel MW 450.5 mtrs ie 666khz

FM Rainbow 102.6 Mhz

**ACHIEVEMENTS: 2020**

- NCC Training App: Launch of App to enable cadets' training during Covid-19
- Exercise Yogdan: Over 1,39,961 cadets & 21,380 staff participated in the exercise countrywide during Covid-19
- National Education Policy Awareness: Over 50,411 NCC cadets participated in online campaign and impacted over 1.74 lakh people
- Tree Plantation: NCC planted 3.5 lakh saplings during Tree Plantation Drives
- International Yoga Day: Celebrated online pan India with a participation of over 10.5 lakh NCC cadets
- NCC Expansion: One lakh cadets in Border/Coastal Taluks and Taluks Housing Air Force Stations
- Incentives: NCC Certificate Holders in recruitment in CAPFs
- Associate Member: NCC now an associate member of Hockey India

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DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## A LOT IN A NAME

AS THE Assembly elections in West Bengal edge nearer, political parties are using all kinds of names while attacking each other. If the TMC calls the BJP "Bargis" (marauders), the BJP insists on calling Mamata Banerjee "Pishi" (aunt) instead of her usual moniker — "Didi". Under particular attack of this name-calling has been the TMC's Abhishek Banerjee, Mamata's nephew and seen as next in line in the party. While the BJP has accused Abhishek of corruption and called him "Bhaipo" (nephew) repeatedly, Suvidhu Adhikari, former TMC leader and state minister who recently joined the saffron party, added a new term in a speech on Tuesday. He called Abhishek "babushona", usually a term of endearment for a young child. Clearly though, in the political lexicon of Bengal this is not a term of endearment, but tries to paint the Lok Sabha MP as immature and inexperienced.

## COSTLY AFFAIR

THE NEW menu card of Parliament canteen, which will now be run by ITDC instead of Northern Railways, has shocked many MPs. The prices of all items have been increased multiple times — for example, the price of fish and chips has gone up from Rs 25 per plate to Rs 110, mutton cutlet from Rs 25 to Rs 150, mutton curry from Rs 20 to Rs 125, and masala dosa from Rs 6 to Rs 50. According to some members, MPs from nearby states would be the worst affected, as they get many guests from their constituencies visiting Parliament during sessions. Even though visitors are not allowed in the Budget Session due to Covid-19 restrictions, visitors will be allowed in future. During their visit, it has been a regular practice that the MPs treat them with lunch or snacks in Parliament canteen. Now that subsidy is off, many may find it difficult to continue this ritual, members say.

## FARMERS IN MIND

BJP LEADER and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis met Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Wednesday and is learnt to have discussed issues related to farmers and agriculture. The meeting comes at a time when farmers have been protesting against the new farm laws. Interestingly, Fadnavis was the convenor of the high-powered committee of chief ministers that recommended the agri-reform laws.



Chautala drives to the Assembly in his tractor. Jasbir Malhi

## INLD's Abhay Chautala quits as Haryana MLA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 27

sent to me citing the Union government's refusal to accept farmers' demands," the Speaker said.

Abhay said he was walking in the footsteps of his "grandfather Chaudhary Devi Lal who worked his entire life for the welfare of farmers". "If anybody works against the interest and welfare of farmers, our party will stand against it."

Earlier this month, Abhay had written to the Speaker urging him to consider the letter as his resignation if Centre does not accept the farmers' demands by January 26.

"I have accepted it (resignation letter). He has referred to his earlier two letters that he had

## Pak hand in farm protest, says Uttarakhand CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
DEHRADUN, JANUARY 27

A DAY after protesting farmers engaged in violent clashes with the police in Delhi on Republic Day, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat Wednesday alleged that there were evidences of Pakistan's involvement in the farmers' agitation. Rawat also said that it appears that farmers' agitation has become Congress's movement.

Speaking to reporters in Dehradun, Rawat said, "It seems the farmers' agitation has now become the Congress's agitation.

Rawat said farmers can never be involved acts that are not patriotic. "Certainly some anarchists have entered strategically with some agenda."



Trivendra Singh Rawat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

Various forces which protested against CAA and GST, lobbies and fractions that have always been opposed, leftists, and now evidence of Pakistan's involvement has also surfaced. This is unfortunate."

The letter, signed by DCP (HQs) Chimoy Biswas, asked Singh to send his response in three days.

"You are asked to explain as

to why legal action shouldn't be taken against you and other members of your organisation... You are also directed to provide names of the perpetrators of such violent acts belonging to your organisation," it said.

Singh could not be reached for his response. Volunteers of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, a unit front of the protesting farmers, said Singh has not received the letter yet.

The police said in the letter that they had come to an agreement with the farmer leaders to conduct the tractor rally along three designated routes, but Singh

cated tractors, who were on the rear of the dharma, were brought forward at Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur borders. These militant elements occupied the stage and started provocative speeches right from the early hours of January 26," the letter said.

According to the police, the tractor rally started at 7.30-8.30 am from Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur, and no noon. They accused Singh of not waiting till the end of Republic Day parade and going ahead with the rally.

During discussions with the police, Singh had agreed to lead the rally from his organisation and fabricate violence and vandalism in parts of Delhi and several police personnel were injured during the clashes.

was not found at the front. Further, Singh also violated the terms of the rally by taking out more than 5,000 tractors, said the police.

"The number of tractors were much higher than agreed upon. In gross violation of the conditions, many participants of your organisation carried weapons," said the police in the letter.

Calling the Red Fort incident an "anti-national act", the police said Singh's organisation was behind the clashes. The incident led to violence and vandalism in parts of Delhi and several police personnel were injured during the clashes.

New Delhi



Darshan Pal Singh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

THE DELHI Police on Wednesday wrote to farmer leader Darshan Pal Singh, asking him to explain why legal action should not be taken against him and his organisation, Krantikari Kisan Union, a day after the national capital witnessed violence during the tractor march.

The letter, signed by DCP (HQs) Chimoy Biswas, asked Singh to send his response in three days.

"You are asked to explain as

## Away from Morcha, union accused of 'plotting' with govt part of stir since Sept

RAAKHI JAGGA  
LUDHIANA, JANUARY 27

THE SAMYUKTA Kisan Morcha, the umbrella organisation of farmer unions protesting against the farm laws on Delhi borders, has accused the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (KMSC) of being part of a government conspiracy to discredit the movement. At the same time, the Delhi Police has booked KMSC founder-president Satnam Singh Pannu, along with farm leaders of the Morcha, under sections of rioting, criminal conspiracy, attempt to murder and robbery.

Formed in 2017, with a substantial presence in both the Majha and Malwa regions of Punjab, the KMSC has in fact been at the forefront of the protests against the three new farm laws -- while refusing, at every step, to toe the Morcha's line.

In fact, the KMSC continued its rail roko at the Jandiala Guru Rail Way Station in Amritsar long after the Morcha and BKU (Ugrahan) ended theirs, saying they would allow only freight trains but not passenger trains till the farm laws were repealed. The KMSC dharna near the parking area of the railway station, in fact, is still on, with Pannu threatening to return to the tracks if any other train besides freight is allowed. As a result, a majority of the passenger trains still haven't resumed in Punjab.

When the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee gave a Delhi Chalo call on November 26-27, the KMSC again stayed away. Instead, it started from Punjab in a convoy of 1,500 vehicles on December 11, and started its dharna at Singhukundli two days later.

The KMSC also stayed away from the initial rounds of talks of farmer unions with the Centre, on October 13 and November 13, as well as the first five meetings after the protests began at Delhi borders, saying these would not yield any results. It has been present though at the last six meetings with the Union ministers.

KMSC general secretary Sarwar Pandher said that in blaming them for the Red Fort incident, BKU (Rajewal) president Balbir Singh Rajewal is hurting the movement. "We always corrected him at meetings and not in public," Pandher said, adding that the KMSC would still not attack him.

## Conspiracy with govt help, say Cong, CPM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

A DAY after the violence in Delhi during the tractor rally, the Congress on Wednesday claimed it was a "concerted conspiracy aided and abetted" by the government to malign the farmers' movement. The party also demanded the sacking of Home Minister Amit Shah, arguing that there was a huge security and intelligence failure.

The CPI (M) also said the incidents were the "handiwork of agent provocateurs, some with links to the ruling party", and argued that the incidents cannot detract the focus from the main demand of the farmers of repealing the three laws. The CPI asked the government not to be rigid but be realistic and reasonable to accept demands of the farmers.

WITH PTI INPUTS



Prakash Javadekar

## Javadekar: India won't tolerate manner in which Tricolour was insulted

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

BREAKING ITS silence on Tuesday's violence, the ruling party on Wednesday said India will not tolerate the "manner in which Tricolour was insulted at the Red Fort".

Union minister Prakash Javadekar addressed the media at the party headquarters in the evening. His remarks came after the Congress claimed it was a "concerted conspiracy aided and abetted" by the government to maligned the farmers' movement.

"Action should be taken against all those who instigated others. India won't tolerate the manner in which the Tricolour was insulted at the Red Fort," Javadekar said.

"Rahul Gandhi was not merely supporting (farmers' protest) but was instigating. It happened at the time of CAA. There was talk of Congress rally and on the second day people came on the road. The same thing happened yesterday."

"A Congress tweet claimed an 'anti-national act', the police said Singh's organisation was behind the clashes. The incident led to violence and vandalism in parts of Delhi and several police personnel were injured during the clashes."

New Delhi



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA  
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,  
PUBLIC HEALTH CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR, ODISHA.  
E-mail id: - sephsbp@yahoo.in / sephsbp@gmail.com

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

Bid Identification No. SEPHSBP- 08/2020-21 Dt. 20.01.2021

01. Number of Work	: 10 nos.
02. Type of Bid	: Two Bid system
03. Estimated Cost	: Rs. 102.94 lakh to Rs. 267.44 lakh
04. Period of Completion	: 3 (Three) to 4 (Four) Calendar Months
05. Class of Contractor	: 'B' & 'A' Class.
06. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	: From 11.00 Hrs. of dt. 28.01.2021 to 17.00 Hrs of 11.02.2021
07. Last date / time of seeking clarification	: 17.00 Hrs of 03.02.2021
08. Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal	: 17.00 Hrs of 11.02.2021
09. Date & Time of opening of Technical bids	: At 11.00 Hrs. of 12.02.2021
10. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid	: Superintending Engineer, P.H. Circle Sambalpur, Brooks Hill, Near Stadium, A/Po- Motiharan, Dist- Sambalpur-768 001.

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "http://www.tendersissa.gov.in"

Sd/-  
Superintendent Engineer,  
P.H. Circle, Sambalpur.  
OIPR-13018/11/0007/2021

**NMDC Limited**  
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Telangana, CIN:L13100T1958GO001674

#### CONTACTS DEPARTMENT

Tender Enquiry No: HO[Contracts]NISP/MaintInst763 Dated: 28.01.2021  
NMDC Limited, A "NAVARATNA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites online bids from experienced domestic bidders for Maintenance of Instrumentation Installation of RMHS, Cokeoven, By-product, Sinter Plant and respective auxiliaries for a period of 2 years for 3.0 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant at Nagamara near Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh State.  
The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and /or downloaded from NMDC website: http://www.nmdc.co.in Central Public Procurement portal http://www.eprocure.gov.in/mobile/app & MSTC portal https://www.mstccommerce.co.in/ePROCUREMENT/nmdc from 28.01.2021 to 10.02.2021.  
For accessing the bid document from MSTC portal, bidders to visit MSTC website and search Tender Event No. NMDC/H/10/2021-2021/ET789.  
The Bidders, on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC website / CPP Portal / MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date.  
For further clarification, the following can be contacted:  
Chief General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad, Fax No.+91-040-23534746, Tel No.+91-040-23532800, email: steelcontracts@nmdc.co.in  
Chief General Manager (Contracts)

### MEGHALAYAN AGE LIMITED

#### (Govt Meghalaya Undertaking)

##### Request for Proposals

Meghalayan Age Limited (MAL), a Govt of Meghalaya undertaking invites Request for Proposals from eligible individuals for Individual Consultant for Project Management support to Meghalayan Age Limited.

Last date for Submission of the Proposal: on or before 27th February by 5:00 PM.

Details are available at [www.mba.gov.in](http://www.mba.gov.in)

All interested parties to keep themselves updated on any addendums through this website.

No further newspaper advertisements will be published.

Expressions of Interest must be delivered in a written form to the address below through registered post/speed post/ courier/ by hand/ email on or before 27th February 2021. Email id: meghalayanagelimited@gmail.com

Meghalayan Age Limited, Meghalaya Basin Development Authority C/o Meghalaya State Housing Financing & Cooperative Society Ltd., Upper Nongrim Hills, Shillong- 793003. Phone: 0364-2522921/2522992.

Sd/-  
Chairman and Managing Director  
Meghalayan Age Limited

### Govt. of Jharkhand Labour, Employment, Training and Skill Development Department, Directorate of Employment and Training, Jharkhand, Ranchi

#### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Directorate of Employment and Training (DET), Department of Labour, Employment, Training and Skill Development (DOLET&SD), Jharkhand, Ranchi inviting Request For Proposal (RFP) for "Selection of Agency for Project Management Consultant for providing Technical Assistance Support to Directorate of Employment and Training, Jharkhand, Ranchi for the World Bank Assisted Centrally Sponsored Scheme "Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement(STRIVE)".

RFP Document can be downloaded from the website <http://niyojanprashikshan.nic.in>

The proposal shall be submitted in the format provided in the RFP document. The last date of submission is 04.03.2021 upto 12:30 P.M. at Dy. Director Training (HQ), Directorate of Employment and Training, Jharkhand, Ranchi Govt. of Jharkhand, Room No.-307, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Nepal House, Doranda, Ranchi-834002.

The time schedule for the RFP is as follows:-

SL.No.	Event Description	Date
1.	Issue of Tender/Bid Document	27.01.2021
2.	Sending prebid query by email	08.02.2021
3.	Prebid Meeting	09.02.2021 (12:30 P.M.)
4.	Publishing of prebid queries	12.02.2021
5.	Last date and time of bid submission	04.03.2021 (12:30 P.M.)
6.	Opening of Technical Bids	04.03.2021 (03:00 P.M.)
7.	Technical Presentation	04.03.2021 (04:00 P.M.)
8.	Commercial bid opening	To be announced later

Sd/-  
Dy. Director Training (HQ)  
Directorate of Employment and Training,  
Jharkhand, Ranchi

PR 240172 (Labour Employment and Training) 20-21'D

### Government of Jharkhand Urban Development & Housing Department (Directorate of Municipal Administration) JUPMI Building, 1st Floor, Dhurwa, Ranchi 834004

#### Tender Notice

Date: 27/01/2021

1. Name of the Work

Selection of Firm/Agencies for

Operation, Management and Maintenance of Shelter Homes for Urban Homeless in

5 clusters (41 ULBs and 79 Shelter Homes) of Jharkhand under Scheme of Shelters for Urban Homeless component of DAY- NUML.

2. Tender Fee & EMD (In INR)

Tender Fee: Rs. 5000/- (Demand Draft - Non Refundable)

EMD- Rs. 50,000/- (Demand Draft)

3. Total time Period

36 Months (1095 days)

4. Mode of Submission of Bids

Online Tender

<http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>

5. Date of Publication of Tender on website

28/01/2021 at 2:00 PM

6. Last Date of submission of pre-bid queries

02/02/2021 till 05:00 PM, bidders must submit their queries through email only

([directoroma.goj@gmail.com](mailto:directoroma.goj@gmail.com)) in writing. Mail should contain Tender Reference no. and Tender Name in subject line.

7. Date of Pre Bid Meeting

(To address pre-bid queries submitted through email)

8. Date and Time of Start of Submission of Bids

09/02/2021 From 11:00 AM

9. Last Date/Time for submission of online Bids

18/02/2021 Up to 12:00 Noon

10. Date of Technical Bid Opening (Online)

19/02/2021 at 12:00 Noon

11. Tender Fee and EMD Submission Address

Director, Directorate of Municipal Administration, JUPMI Building, 1st Floor, Dhurwa, Ranchi 834004

12. Helpline no. of e-Procurement Cell

Land line- 06512401955  
**Note: Only e-Tenders will be accepted.**

Further details can be seen on website <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>

Sd/-  
Director,  
Directorate of Municipal Administration

PR.NO.240169 Urban Development and Housing(20-21)D

Serving Customers with a Smile

O-948

1. Name of the work

-> Road works

-> 03 Nos. (Three)

-> Rs.174.67 lakh to Rs 343.61 lakhs (Approximately)

-> B Class, 'A' Class & Special Class (of Odisha P.W.D.) or relevant Class of other licensing authorities (as per annexure).

-> 9 (Nine) & 11 (Eleven) Calendar months for the work.

-> :-

Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of tender On-line for bidding From Td Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification Technical Bid Financial Bid

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27/01/2021 Up to 5.00 P.M. 10.02/2021 Up to 5.00 P.M. 12/02/2021 Up to 11.00 A.M. Will be informed later

Sd/ Er.P.K.Sahoo  
Superintending Engineer, R.W. Circle, Balasore.  
0PR/25105/11/0014/2021

\* Further details can be seen from the website: [www.tendersissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersissa.gov.in)

## NIA takes over probe into killing of Shaurya Chakra awardee in Punjab

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency Wednesday took over the probe into the killing of Shaurya Chakra recipient Balwinder Singh Sandhu in Punjab.

Sandhu, known for fighting

militancy in Punjab, was gunned down at his home in Tarn Taran district's Bhihkhwind by two unidentified bikers on October 16. The attack took place months after the 62-year-old's security cover was removed by the state government. Sandhu's family termed the killing a terror attack, and blamed it on the decision to remove his security.

"During the initial investigation by Punjab Police, it was revealed that the killing was

executed under a conspiracy hatched by Pakistan based Khalistani Terrorist Lalvir Singh Rode and his handlers in Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI. The killing of Comrade Balwinder Singh was executed through Sukhmeet Singh alias Sukh Bhikariwal r/o village Bhikariwal, Kalanuru, District Gurdaspur, a gangster turned terrorist," NIA said in a statement.

In November, the Tarn Taran police had arrested eight persons in the case. But in December, the Delhi Police Special Cell arrested five suspected members of a banned terrorist group following a brief exchange of fire in East

Delhi's Shakarpur. While two were from Punjab, three belonged to Kashmir.

The two accused from Punjab were said to be associates of dredged gangster Sukhmeet Singh, alias Sukh Bhikariwal, and were allegedly involved in the killing of Sandhu, a former CPI(M) member.

Police had then said they were working on the directions of Khalistani movement leaders sponsored by Pakistan's ISI and had allegedly killed Sandhu on their orders.

The two men were allegedly planning targeted killings in various north Indian states and the police seized weapons, drugs, and other incriminating materials from their possession.

### ANU BOBBY SPORTS FOUNDATION

B12, GoodEarth Orchard, Kengeri, Bengaluru-560060

#### TENDER NOTICE

The Chairperson of Anju Bobby Sports Foundation (ABSF) invites item rate tenders in two-bid system from specialised Indian agencies for the following work.

**NIT No:** ABSF-20-21/001. Construction of 400 metre 8 lane Sandwich Type Synthetic Athletics Track (World Athletics Class II Certified, Class 1 category field tested) for Anju Bobby Sports Foundation at Sy.No. 92, Kambipura, Kengeri, Bengaluru-560074.

**Estimated Tender Value:** INR. 5,25,00,000 (Rupees Five Crores Twenty Five Lacs Only). **Last Date for Submission of Technical & Price bid:** 30/01/2021, 16:00 hrs.

Tender documents can be obtained from the Operations Office of ABSF at Confluence Club, GoodEarth Malhar, Kambipura, Kengeri, Bengaluru-560074 between 10am to 5pm on weekdays upon payment of INR. 10,000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand Only) in Demand Draft or bankers Cheque in favour of "Anju Bobby Sports Foundation".

Email: anjubobby@gmail.com | Phone: +91-7594-362800

### ANDHRA PRADESH CENTRAL POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED

By: Y.B.R. Vidyut Soudha,  
Corporate office, Beside Oxfet Polytechnic college, III Road, Vijayawada - 520 033

Tender Notice No: CGMPROJWBILWE/NCB-11/2020-21 Dt: 28.01.2021 Bids through e-procure.gov.in invited from the eligible bidders for execution of 3 Phase Bid Power Substations in Palakur and Krishna Districts. (i) Integration of 256 New Rural Substations by establishing MCC at Vijaywada & BCC at Gurur on Turnkey basis. (ii) Integration of

# EXPRESS NETWORK

## BRIEFLY



Police clash with teachers in Agartala. PTI

### TRIPURA Protesting teachers clash with police, many injured

**Agartala:** A demonstration by teachers demanding permanent jobs turned violent on Wednesday, with police fired water cannons at the protesters, burst tear gas shells and lathi-charged them following clashes between both sides. IGP (Law and Order) Arindam Nath said, "There were apprehensions of law and order deteriorations or that they could disrupt essential services." CPI(M) leader Bijan Dhar posted on Facebook, "We condemn the barbaric attack on peaceful demonstration... We demand to release them immediately and accept their demand of reinstating in government service." However, Tripura BJP spokesperson Nabendu Bhattacharjee claimed that a section of the protesters were acting at the behest of the opposition and "created" the clash with police. ENS

### MAHARASHTRA Financing fraud: Dilip Chhabria's sister arrested

**Mumbai:** The Mumbai Police on Wednesday arrested the sister of celebrity car designer Dilip Chhabria in connection with the cheating complaint given by comedian Kapil Sharma. An officer said that they had been on the lookout for Kanchan Chhabria, who was also involved in running the Dilip Chhabria Designs Private Limited (DCDPL) company that was owned by Dilip. "We had a tip off that Kanchan was at a popular eatery in south Mumbai following which our team reached there and arrested her," an officer said. The officer said that she will be produced before the court on Thursday. ENS

### JAMMU & KASHMIR BJP issues notice to leader for misconduct

**Jammu:** The Jammu and Kashmir BJP unit Wednesday issued a show cause notice to Wasim Kohli, son of former cabinet minister Abdul Ghani Kohli, for "anti-party activities" that allegedly resulted in the defeat of a party candidate at the hands of the NC nominee in Kalakote during the District Development Council elections. ENS

### BIHAR RJD ex-MP Sitaram Yadav, joins BJP

**Patna:** The RJD on Wednesday suffered a setback, with former Sitamarhi MP Sitaram Yadav and over a dozen Yadav leaders from different opposition parties joining the BJP in presence of Bihar party in-charge Bhupendra Yadav and state BJP president Dr Sanjay Jaiswal. After he joined, Bhupendra Yadav said, "Our party would only get stronger with presence of leaders like Sitaram Yadav." ENS

## KARNATAKA ASSEMBLY SESSION BEGINS TODAY

# JD(S) eyes Chairman post, BJP looks to tighten Council grip

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, JANUARY 27

THE BJP government in Karnataka is set to renew efforts to gain control of the legislative council in the state legislature when it convenes on Thursday.

Its prospects have received a boost with the opposition JD(S) offering support on the condition that its senior leader Basavaraj Horatti is made council Chairman.

The BJP needs the support of the JD(S) to oust current Chairman K Prathapchandra Shetty against whom the party has moved a fresh no-confidence motion after an earlier motion taken up in the winter session – amid confusion over JD(S) support for it – was rejected by the Chairman on the grounds that it not in order.

The BJP has 31 members in the 75-member Upper House while the Congress has 29 (including Chairman) and the JD(S) 13 – following the death of

Deputy Chairman S L Dharmegowda last month. The council has one Independent member. The Congress has been in control of the council in alliance with the JD(S) since 2018.

Since the BJP came to power, the JD(S) has shown inclination to support it in an issue-based manner and at the end of the winter session all 14 of its MLCs had given a letter to the secretary of the legislative council expressing support for the no-confidence motion against the Chairman.

On Wednesday, Horatti, who is also the JD(S) leader in the council, indicated that talks were on between his party and the BJP for an alliance in the council on the grounds that the Chairman's position is given to him.

"I had a meeting with the Chief Minister yesterday. Our 13 MLCs, party leaders H D Deve Gowda and H D Kumaraswamy have held discussions. We have decided to ask for the council Chairman's post and to support them (BJP) for the Deputy

Chairman's post," said Horatti, a former Chairman of the House. "I am a senior member in the House and there is general opinion among everyone that I should be made Chairman. We are asking for the post."

The BJP is most likely to accept the offer as it needs a hold in the council. It needs the JD(S) support in the council to push through legislation on its agenda such as the Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill, 2020, which was not tabled in the winter session, and new labour laws defeated in the monsoon session by the Congress-JD(S) combine.

The JD(S), however, supported the BJP in passing a land reforms amendment law in December in the council.

The winter session of the council ended in pandemonium after the BJP government got the Governor to direct council chairman Shetty to reconvene a legislature session – with the express purpose of ousting him. This was a few days after the

winter session had been adjourned sine die by the chairman after rejecting a no-confidence motion moved by the BJP members.

The council witnessed unruly scenes with BJP members locking the chairman out of the house and getting deputy chairman Dharmegowda of the JD(S) to occupy the chairman's seat. Dharmegowda was pulled out of the chair by Congress legislators before the chairman was allowed to enter the House and adjourn the proceedings sine die.

While the BJP and JD(S) were finalising strategies for a tie-up in the council – with the chairman's post going to the Horatti-Dharmegowda committee suicide on December 28, citing among other things the insult he suffered in the council.

In the absence of a deputy chairman to conduct proceedings – in the event of the no-confidence motion against the chairman being taken up – the House will have to elect a deputy chairman first, council officials have indicated.

### SC stays arrest of BSY, former minister in corruption case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

IN A relief to Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and former minister for industries Murugesh Nirani, the Supreme Court Wednesday protected them from arrest in a case pertaining to alleged forgery over withdrawal of approval for a parcel of land in the state.

The top court however refused to stay the January 5 order of Karnataka High Court, by which it had allowed restoration of the criminal complaint against the Yediyurappa.

"You (Yediyurappa) are a sitting Chief Minister. Who can issue arrest warrant against you," the top court observed.

A bench of Chief Justice of India A S Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, which issued notices to complainants, one A Alam Pasha and others, in the case agreed to examine the pleas of Yediyurappa and Nirani challenging the order of the high court restoring the complaint.

"Issue notice. There shall be stay of arrest in the meantime," the bench said in its order.

### 'NO SKIN TO SKIN CONTACT'

# SC stays HC order acquitting man under POCSO Act

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

THE SUPREME Court on Wednesday stayed the Bombay High Court order acquitting a man of sexual assault under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act on the ground that groping a child over her clothes without direct "skin to skin" physical contact does not constitute the offence under the Act. The court had instead convicted the man under Section 354 of the IPC, which deals with assault or use of criminal force to any woman with an intent to outrage her modesty, and sentenced him to one year in jail.

On January 12, the Nagpur Bench of Bombay High Court, modified the ruling of a sessions court, which convicted 39-year-old Bandu Ragde under Section 8 of the POCSO Act and sentenced him to three years in jail. The high court convicted him under Section 354 of the IPC, which deals with assault or use of criminal force to any woman with an intent to outrage her modesty, and sentenced him to one year in jail.

"...it is not the case of the prosecution that the appellant removed her top and pressed her breast. As such, there is no direct physical contact i.e. skin to skin with sexual intent without penetration," the court said, acquitting the accused under Section 8 of POCSO Act.

The high court also held the accused guilty under Section 342 of the IPC for wrongful confinement of the prosecutrix. The sentences were to run concurrently.

## NIA seeks dismissal of Varavara Rao's medical bail plea



Varavara Rao

have dementia. However, we do not rule out dementia completely."

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) reiterated in the Bombay High Court the Maharashtra government's proposal to shift Elgaar Parishad accused P Varavara Rao to the prison ward of JJ Hospital arguing that the Nanavati hospital report said Rao was fit to be discharged and could take care of himself.

The NIA was opposing the petition filed by Rao's wife P Hemalatha seeking bail on medical grounds. Rao's counsel submitted that shifting Rao to Sir JJ Hospital could result in a relapse and hence the option was to either send Rao to Taloja jail if he was deemed fit or to his home in Hyderabad.

A division bench of Justice S S Shinde and Justice Manish Pitale was hearing a plea filed by Hemalatha, seeking his release on bail on the grounds of poor health from Taloja Central Jail in Navi Mumbai.

On January 21, state prison authorities told the High Court that Rao could be moved to the prison ward of the state-run JJ Hospital. The state government also submitted that Rao's family members would be allowed to visit him based on hospital protocols during the Covid-19 pandemic.

On Wednesday, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh for NIA submitted, "We must consider and believe in the latest medical report. The last report of Nanavati Hospital, which declared him fit to be discharged, shows Rao has been doing well clinically... The neurologist suggested normal cognitive functions and it appears he does not

To which, ASG Singh responded, "Most of these pills are drowsiness and delirium." However, senior counsel Anand Grover representing the petitioner opposed NIA's submissions and said that no question of shifting Rao to JJ Hospital arises as the hospital is 'hotbed of infections' and might lead to relapse in Rao's health conditions.

The court sought fresh medical report from Nanavati Hospital on Rao's condition by Thursday morning and adjourned hearing on his bail plea to January 28 afternoon.

## Cong leaders file police complaints against Arnab

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, JANUARY 27

CONGRESS LEADERS in Mumbai on Wednesday gave a written complaint against Republic Media editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami demanding his immediate arrest for breaching Section 5 of OS & investigate. It needs to be known as to who gave him info regarding Balakot strike?

An officer from the Samta Nagar police station confirmed receipt of the complaint. The chats between Dasgupta and Goswami are part of the chargesheet submitted by the Mumbai police in connection with the TRP case in which Dasgupta along with 14 others have been charged. Dasgupta is currently behind bars.

The Nirmal Nagar complaint was given by Congress MLA Zeeshan Siddique.

### SETS TONE FOR KERALA CAMPAIGN

# UDF does not represent secular values: CPM-led LDF



LDF is planning rallies across Kerala in February. File

IUML state president Sayed Hyderali Shihab Thangal. "The message of the visit is very clear. It indicates that the Congress leaders have reduced the party agenda to strengthen its alliance with religion-based forces. The UDF does not represent secular values. They are also going for an electoral understanding with the BJP. In the local body elections, we have seen Congress leaders urg-

ing people to vote for the BJP symbol. The LDF would start a massive campaign against this political approach of the UDF," said Vijayaraghavan.

The LDF convener has set the tone of the election campaign as the ruling front is planning two regional political rallies across Kerala from the second week of February. The rallies are envisaged to activate the party ma-

chinery for the elections.

"Our campaign would be mainly based on developmental initiatives of the LDF government and agenda of protecting secularism. UDF cannot politically face the people. They have no qualms to solicit votes for religious fundamentalists," said Vijayaraghavan.

In the recently-held local body elections, which saw the LDF making gains, the CPI(M) had played to tilt the UDF alliance with Welfare Party of India, the political outfit of right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami. The Congress later admitted that the tie-up contributed to its poor show in the civic body elections.

Subsequently, the Congress has pushed UDF convener M M Hassan, who forged the deal with the Welfare Party of India, to the backburner of the front's political deliberations. The party has also openly stated that it would not go for any alliance with the Welfare Party of India, Christian community, tradi-

tionally pro-Congress, have also been critical about the UDF alliance with Welfare Party of India and saw the IUML as a bridge with right-wing Islamic groups.

To retain the political tempo of the local body elections, the CPI(M) continued to attack the UDF over the alleged dominance of IUML in the front. That campaign gained further ground after IUML MP P K Kunhalikutty decided to return to state politics. Besides, the IUML is set to demand more seats from the UDF in the elections, a move which would serve another opportunity for CPI(M) to buttress its argument that IUML is calling the shots.

PK Firoz, general secretary of Youth League, the youth wing of IUML, said the CPI(M) agenda is to communalise the elections and this would only help the BJP. "The CPI(M) may be able to win a few seats in the elections by creating Islamophobia. But in the long run that would help on BJP," he said.

New Delhi

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2021

# THE EDITORIAL PAGE

## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

### A WORSENING DYNAMIC

Despite multiple rounds of talks, India and China are nowhere near a framework for disengagement and de-escalation

**T**HE LATEST FACE-OFF between Indian and Chinese troops last week on the Sikkim border ended without any casualties but the confrontation demonstrates the worsening situation that Delhi faces on its long and contested China frontier. Unlike the recent military crises on the northern frontiers in 2013, 2014 and 2017, the current military confrontation that began in April last year has lasted much longer. Multiple rounds of negotiations are nowhere near finding a framework for disengagement and de-escalation. Meanwhile, the People's Liberation Army is activating multiple points on the frontier with its bold tactics to nibble at India's territory. Of course, China's brazen appropriation of territory is not limited to the high Himalayas. Beijing has employed similar tactics in its territorial disputes with most of its neighbours in Asia. Not long ago, China had promised to resolve its disputes with neighbours through peaceful negotiations. But China, today, believes it can unilaterally force changes in territorial disposition. This belief is rooted in the material fact that the military balance of power between China and its neighbours has shifted decisively in Beijing's favour. The imbalance is far more serious if you look at the growing gap between the economic power of China and its neighbours — Beijing's GDP is more than five times that of Delhi.

The combination of military and economic imbalance and an ambitious political will for hegemony in Beijing has produced an adverse set of circumstances for India. This new dynamic is evident not only on India's northern frontiers but also in the subcontinent and its waters as well as in regional and international spheres. Delhi needs near-term actions to hold off Chinese aggression as well as long-term strategies to secure India's territorial integrity and strategic autonomy from China. Nearly six decades ago, Chinese aggression in the Himalayas compelled India to radically overhaul its defence management. Unlike Mao, who was leading a poor and divided nation, Xi's China is a superpower that can impose considerable costs on India. At the operational level, China is trying to pin down the Indian army that must stay vigilant and on high alert in defending the disputed border that has become active. The focus on protecting the land frontiers has already begun to reduce the much-needed emphasis on naval expansion. But it is not just a question of matching China's resources, military or financial. India needs to develop asymmetric strategies that can help overcome the growing power gap with China.

Since independence, India has allowed political illusions about solidarity with China to mask the depth of real problems with the northern neighbour, underestimate Beijing's growing power, and misread its political intentions. The 1962 shock did not prevent Delhi from making the same errors of judgements from the late 1980s when India bet on normalising ties with China and aligned with Beijing to produce a "multipolar" world. The price of that folly has just begun to unfold. It will need an enormous, prolonged and, above all, a wise national effort to stop China from dictating terms to India.

### THE WRONG PRECEDENT

Bombay High Court ruling on child sexual assault is disquieting. Supreme Court does well to order a stay

**T**HE SUPREME COURT is right to stay a decision of the Bombay High Court to acquit a man of sexual assault on the grounds that his underage victim was clothed when he groped her breasts. The High Court, while setting aside the conviction of the accused by a lower court under Section 8 of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, argued that since there was no direct "skin-to-skin" contact during the assault on the 12-year-old girl, the charge of sexual assault could not be upheld. The HC judgment is disquieting because it introduces a new condition to satisfy a charge of sexual assault, which is not there in POCSO. This is bound to set a precedent in other cases, when the condition of the child's clothing might be used against her.

The Bombay HC's observation that "stricter proof and serious allegations" were needed given that a sexual assault conviction mandates a minimum of three years punishment, however, frames the problem of diminishing returns of tougher laws on sexual violence. The POCSO was enacted in 2012, after years of mobilisation by child rights organisations. While the number of cases filed under the law continues to rise, the conviction rates remain low. There are several reasons for this, including a police and legal system that lacks the training to deal with child victims with empathy, the number of cases in which the offenders are related to the child, and the lack of infrastructure and personnel to deal with the cases. Studies, such as those carried out in several states by the National Law School of India University, also flag the consequences of the mandatory minimum sentence. Under POCSO, judges do not have the discretion to pronounce sentences lower than that laid down by the law. Hence, in cases when they feel the sentence is disproportionate to the crime, they might be reluctant to find the accused guilty. This is in line with what experts have been saying for a while: Tougher punishments, such as the death penalty in cases of rape of children under 12, or harsher sentencing might be easy to sell politically but they often end up working against the aims of justice. The focus, instead, should be on fixing the process that often is the punishment — and the cultural narratives that enable sexual violence against children.

The SC stay is a step in the right direction in re-evaluating an insensitive judgment that is inimical to the intent of POCSO: The protection of children.

### THE OTHER AMMA

As Jayalalithaa aide Sasikala leaves jail, she needs a new home and party

**N**EARLY FOUR YEARS ago, ahead of surrendering before a Bengaluru court that had convicted her on corruption charges, VK Sasikala was seen at the burial site of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and AIADMK leader, J Jayalalithaa, on Marina beach. She circumambulated the site, thumped thrice at the grave. Her supporters claimed that the three thumps meant three vows that she "will overcome hurdle(s), treachery and (the) plotting (against me)". Much has happened since. On Wednesday, Sasikala was released from jail in Bengaluru. But she is out of both her home and party — the Poes Garden house, where she lived with Jayalalithaa, is now government property, and Edappadi Palanisamy, the confidant she backed as Tamil Nadu CM, has said that there is no place for her in the AIADMK.

Stranger things have happened in Sasikala's life. She was running a parlour that rented out video cassettes in Chennai in the 1980s when she befriended Jayalalithaa, then a rising star in the AIADMK. As Jayalalithaa consolidated her hold over the party and became chief minister, Sasikala moved in with her to run the Poes Garden household. For party cadres, Sasikala became *chinnamma* (junior mother), second only to Amma, whose orders were next only to that of Jayalalithaa. There were emotional interludes that saw Sasikala exit Poes Garden only to return.

When the law caught up with her, Sasikala was alone — Jayalalithaa was dead by then. Jail has been a lonely affair for Sasikala though nephew TTV Dinakaran has kept alive the rump of a party that claims the legacy of Jayalalithaa. Her old aides are now foes. No director has been in charge of Sasikala's script, even she does not know the next twist in the plot. That could make her a person to watch out for, in an election year in Tamil Nadu.



MANISH TEWARI

DELHI HAS NEVER understood Punjab and does not do so even now. The Punjab allude to is the territory that till 1966 extended from the borders of Delhi all the way to Amritsar, encompassing large parts of current Himachal Pradesh. Two decades before that, it extended from Delhi to Peshawar and even beyond to the Khyber Pass before 1901.

To understand the current farmers' agitation, one needs to understand the history, culture and the people who are in the vanguard of this struggle. From the 10th to the 18th century onwards, at least 70 invaders who came down the Khyber to pillage India passed through these lands, facing the fiercest resistance. Thus, were consecrated by fire and fury a people who became accustomed to fighting and surviving even in the most adverse circumstances. In the process, they acquired a fatalistic realism that can be summed up in one phrase, "*khadai pita lahe da, baki Ahmed Shahya da* (whatever you eat and drink is yours, the rest Ahmed Shah Abdali will take away)".

In the wake of the failed first war of independence in 1857, the British moved away from their traditional recruiting grounds by coining the "martial race theory". As a consequence, very heavy recruitment into the British Indian Army started taking place from undivided Punjab around the 1870s.

During World War I, the British drafted about half a million men from the province. This process of enlistment intensified during World War II with the numbers crossing a million. When the Second World War ended in 1945, most of these soldiers were demobilised and came back to their respective villages.

Against the will and wishes of the people, Punjab was partitioned in 1947. More than a million innocents were slaughtered between July and September of 1947 in the erstwhile British Punjab alone from Peshawar to Delhi. This was the direct outcome of mutilating a heavily militarised region without thinking through its implications. That is why Partition in Punjab is referred to as *Ujara* (devastation) and not *Batwara*.

Post Independence, millions started life afresh as refugees. Agriculture, armed forces and immigration became the principal vocations of the people of this region. Over a period of time, due to the recruitable male population policy in 1966, the share of the region in the armed forces started dropping and, as barriers to immigration became higher, agriculture soon became the mainstay for the people.

With war with Pakistan looming over the horizon in 1965, the armed forces were concerned that they would be constrained in their fight against Pakistan if there were internal disturbances in the undivided Punjab.

## Punjab ki Baat

Farmers' agitation is defined not by waywardness of the few, but by spirit and resilience of the many

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With war with Pakistan looming over the horizon in 1965, the armed forces were concerned that they would be constrained in their fight against Pakistan if there were internal disturbances in the undivided Punjab.

The Union government under Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri made three commitments to Sant Fateh Singh in return for giving up his threat to self-immolate at the Akal Takht on September 25, 1965. These assurances were the creation of a Punjabi-speaking state, open-ended public procurement and an assured return on agricultural produce. Thus, the Food Corporation of India established in 1965 started administering the Minimum Support Price regime and public procurement paradigm. These are the commitments that the farmers agitating peacefully for months, barring the obtuseness of a few on Republic Day, are seeking continuation of.

Incidentally, even today, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi along with the Union territories of Chandigarh and J&K have a 21.88 per cent share among troops and junior commissioned officers (JCOs) in the Army. Punjab alone sends 89,893 troops and JCOs — 7.78 per cent of the total strength. These numbers, unfortunately, are a far cry from the pre-1966 days. Incidentally, the collective population of this northwestern region is just 747 per cent of the country's population.

For the agitating farmers, what are the economics of agriculture? Conventional wisdom holds that 84 per cent of the farmers in this region have landholdings of between three and five acres only. Most farmers grow only two crops. Wheat sown in November is harvested in April and rice planted in June is reaped in early October.

One acre of land in a good year yields about 20-24 quintals of wheat. A quintal is equivalent to 100 kilograms. In a bad year, the yield

can go down by half or three-fourths, that is, to 7-10 quintals. At a minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 1,925 per quintal, a farmer can get about Rs 38,500 per acre.

However, input costs roughly come to about Rs 11,300 per acre. He thus earns about Rs 27,200 per acre for six months of hard work that translates into roughly Rs 4,530 per month. If a farmer has a plot of three acres, it comes up to Rs 13,590 per month. This does not take into account the wages of an entire family of four or five persons who would be toiling day and night.

The economics of the second crop are as follows. The yield of rice per acre is about 22-25 quintals in a good year. At an MSP of Rs 1,870 per quintal, it translates into a figure of Rs 46,750 per acre. With an input cost of Rs 13,800, the farmer earns about Rs 32,950 per acre for six months of hard work that translates into Rs 5,490 a month. Now if he has a three-acre plot, it means Rs 16,470 per month for the whole family.

Thus, in a good year, a family can earn about Rs 15,030 a month. They supplement this income with some dairy and poultry farming. This is with MSP and public procurement. Those without it are far worse off. However, if there is any unnatural occurrence, it can all go down the drain. These figures do not take into account the all-pervasive spectre of rural indebtedness. These are the meagre numbers the farmers are fighting for, braving the cold and COVID-19 and the government wants to take this away too.

Public procurement and MSP, a solemn assurance given as far back as 1965, is thus the safety net of the agrarian community. The NDA/BJP government now wants to dismantle this social security architecture. Given the ethos of the region, there is no way the farmers would allow their lands to be handed over to oligarchs and chaebols to impoverish them any further. That is exactly what these farm laws envisage. That is the essence of the agitation.

The writer is a Congress leader, lawyer, MP and former Union Information and Broadcasting Minister



CHANDRASHEKHAR AZAD

THE CONSTITUTION DRAFTED by B R Ambedkar opened up many pathways to emancipate and make the oppressed equal citizens in our nation. But looking back at the seven decades of the republic's existence, we realise that we have failed Indian women and Dalits.

The scenario in 2021 is more horrifying: Patriarchy is reinforced by elected members of legislatures by bringing in so-called "love jihad" laws to curtail the freedom of women in choosing their partners. The so-called harbingers of Indian cultural ethos have even rescinded the age-old custom of "swayam-varmavaram".

The gender and caste-based violence that women face was highlighted by the unimaginable brutality in the rape of a young Dalit woman in Hathras. Such incidents, even if innumerable, seem to have become inadequate reminders of the need to end violence against women, and Dalit women, in particular. The latest instance of rape and death of a 50-year-old anganwadi worker by a priest in Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh exposes the inefficiency of the state administration to halt the violence against women and its role in reinforcing the persisting feudal, casteist and patriarchal structures of our society.

Needless to say, government structures have always been non-responsive to cases involving Dalit women especially, owing to their unprivileged position in a caste society. The Dalit-Bahujan movement, which I am a part of, has always sought gender and social equality and exposed the failure of administration

## NO REPUBLIC FOR WOMEN

The constitutional promise of equal citizenship has been denied to women, Dalits

in responding to violence and crimes against hitherto marginalised people.

The caste structure in India is, undoubtedly, complicit in perpetuating gender oppression. Dalit women face multi-fold discrimination due to caste, class and patriarchal structures. The Brahminical social order has often treated women as gatekeepers to preserve caste purity. While upper-caste women were anointed as agents of caste purity, lower-caste women are considered polluted and, therefore, targets of assault and crime. Women are subjugated by the customs, rituals, and rules as defined by the Brahminical structure. Moreover, the impunity among the upper-caste men — complemented by state apathy in dealing with cases — accelerates the physical and sexual violence against Dalit women, evident in the rape and death of two Dalit teenage girls in 2014 in Badaun; two Dalit minor girls in Walayar in Kerala in 2017; and a 23-year-old Dalit girl in Unnai in 2019.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report "Crime in India 2019" recorded 3,59,849 crimes against women in 2017; 3,78,236 in 2018 and 4,05,861 in 2019 — a persistent rise. Eleven per cent of reported cases of rapes were committed against Dalit women in India. UP has been at the top in terms of violence against women at 56,011 in 2017; 59,445 in 2018 and 59,853 in 2019. The state has the largest share of crimes against women in India at 14.7 per cent. Likewise, UP tops with the dubious distinction of the highest number of cases in dowry deaths, acid attacks, cruelty

against women by husband or his relatives, kidnapping and abduction of women, and assaults on women with intent to outrage their modesty. The government in UP, though vigilant about the protection of cows, has failed miserably to make the state safe for women.

The root causes of gender oppression and sexual violence lie in religious scriptures that stand opposed to constitutional values. The complementary co-existence of a government with a reactionary leadership like that of Yogi Adityanath and a caste Hindu social order with a regressive outlook will undoubtedly exacerbate the existing caste and gender violence in India. Dr Ambedkar had foretold that "if Hindu Raj does become a fact, it will, no doubt be the greatest calamity for this country".

It is time to make a pledge to destroy, demolish and decimate the caste-based discrimination and patriarchy that ails this country and oppresses women. It's time that our commentators, who are more worried about the state of American democracy, take a deep look at the republic for women. And it's up to the polity and society to be resolute to bring in equality for women and the Dalits. Otherwise, the immediate future may not be peaceful. The Dalit movement, through its anti-caste struggle, not only seeks to achieve the annihilation of caste, but also the annihilation of oppressive gender structures and obscurantism in society and polity.

The writer is the Bhim Army chief, founder of Azad Samaj Party



## JANUARY 28, 1981, FORTY YEARS AGO

### ZIA ON KASHMIR

IN HIS ADDRESS to the Islamic summit meeting, Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq raised the Kashmir problem and said that "the problem of Jammu and Kashmir is a matter of continuing concern to the people of Pakistan and constitutes an impediment in the development of friendly relations with India". He said: "Pakistan and India are committed to the normalisation of relations between them on the basis of the Simla agreement of 1972 of which the settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir problem is an inseparable part. Both sides are bound by this agreement not to use force to resolve their problems." He also raised the problems of Muslim minorities in non-Muslim states, and called upon the

summit to pay attention to these problems.

### ECONOMIC POLICY

INDIRA GANDHI'S GOVERNMENT is planning to set up a special group which will take major decisions concerning economic policy and its implementation. While its composition and powers are yet to be decided, available information suggests that the group is to be given a fairly high status. The name of LK Jha, who is to give up the governorship of Jammu and Kashmir shortly, is being considered for the group's leadership. Whatever the decision on the name of the special group, it is clear it will be much more than an advisory body or a monitoring agency. Jha will not be joining the Cabinet, but he will

have the rank of a Cabinet Minister. This means he will have a big say in the direction of the economy.

### GJARAT POLLS

CONGRESS (I), the ruling party in Gujarat, improved its position while the Janata Party lost considerable ground as counting of votes polled in Sunday's municipal corporation elections in Ahmedabad, Baroda, Rajkot and Surat progressed. In Ahmedabad, Baroda, Rajkot and Surat (I) captured 16 of the 32 old city results which were announced today. The BJP got 10 seats while the Janata secured 2 and independent 1. Counting for parts of the remaining 73 seats will be taken up tomorrow and the rest on Thursday.

# THE IDEAS PAGE

## The pandemic plateau

Observations from CSIR's nationwide survey provide grounds for cautious optimism – the worst may be behind us. But it is still important to keep wearing masks, avoid crowded indoor spaces



SHEKHAR C MANDE  
AND ANURAG AGRAWAL

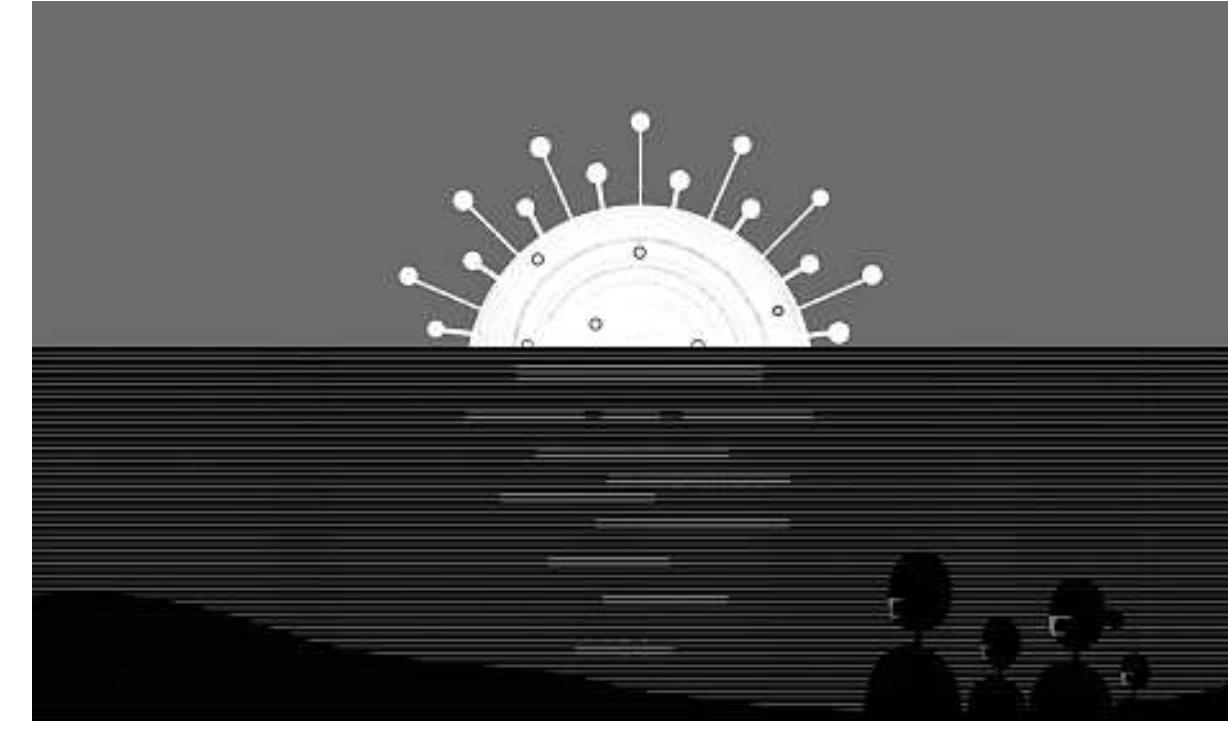
THE LAST year has been among the most disruptive in mankind's recent history. The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, which broke out about a year ago, has tested many governments as to their abilities to deal with extraordinary emergency situations rapidly. Moreover, it has also tested the abilities of the scientific community in terms of mitigating the situation and finding solutions at an unprecedented speed.

One of the important aspects of this pandemic is that an infected person can transmit the infection to others in the community in the pre-symptomatic but infectious stage. While the disease is severe or fatal in only a few, its spread in the community happens at a much higher rate than we know. The most striking evidence for this difference comes from serosurveys, where we test people for the presence of SARS-CoV2-specific antibodies – a reliable marker of infection and recovery.

In India, the first serosurvey was conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research in May 2020. This survey showed less than 1 per cent positivity. The lockdown had substantially contained the spread of the disease. Subsequently, with the unavoidable lifting of the lockdown, the disease started to spread. The serosurveys carried out later in highly-affected cities such as Delhi, Mumbai and Pune showed as high as 20–40 per cent population being affected, far greater than the known number of cases. It suggested that due to the emergence of large pools of recovered people with immunity, though we were far from herd immunity, outbreaks could become less severe after initial large waves.

Beyond these local surveys, it was important to understand the spread of the disease across the country in this intervening period. So, we decided to leverage the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and its 37 constituent laboratories and centres, which are spread all over the country and represent a wide range of ethnicities, geo-social habitats and occupational exposures, towards creating a cohort. The CSIR cohort includes permanent staff, families of staff members, students and temporary employees providing support services such as security, sanitation, housekeeping, etc. This is a diverse microcosm of India, encompassing multiple socioeconomic groups and has the advantage of permitting deeper assessments. Results from phase 1 of this longitudinal study covering the critical period of August to September 2020 were reported by CSIR recently.

In all, CSIR studied 10,427 adults out of which 1,058 people showed the presence of antibodies to one of the virus proteins. Interestingly, more than three-fourths of them had no recall of any symptoms whatsoever. This positivity rate of 10.1 per cent is a crude rate and the true rate could be higher as many asymptomatic infections do not lead to antibody formation. The survey also showed high seropositivity in densely-populated big cities compared to less densely-populated regions. This was expected since the pandemic in India,



as anywhere else in the world, originated in bigger cities with large numbers of travellers, and subsequently penetrated the community.

In regions where CSIR laboratories had 10 per cent or greater seropositivity, new cases seemed to be plateauing or declining. In hindsight, future outbreaks were seen in regions where seropositivity was low (less than 5 per cent). If the seropositivity of 10 per cent in CSIR laboratories were to be extrapolated for India, it would mean over a hundred million people had been infected and recovered by September 2020. Most of these would be in densely-populated urban areas. Since this group is likely to contain people with high exposures and contact with others, the ability of the virus to spread would be reduced since they would be difficult to reinfect. Indeed, the decline in the number of cases across India after October appears to support this.

Another interesting finding of the CSIR study was that the odds of a person being seropositive doubled if they were either using public transport or working in jobs such as security, sanitation, housekeeping, etc, where the interaction with other people is greater. The CSIR study had also collected careful background data about the different habits of people in order to correlate the risks of contracting the virus, and if this had any bearing on the spread of the disease. If any correlation were to emerge, it was also clear that correlations of habits of people may or may not have bearing on causation of the disease.

We further noted many interesting, thought-provoking facts.

We found that smokers were less likely to be seropositive, as were vegetarians or those with O blood group. This may be due to one or more of three reasons. First, they may be less likely to get infected. Second, they may get infected but fail to make antibodies. Third, they may quickly lose such antibodies. While there is some global evidence that smokers are less susceptible to catching the infection, if infected, they may develop more severe illness, especially those with lung disease. Moreover, smoking is known to be strongly correlated to many other diseases, including cancers, and should not be seen as a protective factor. It is carefully noted that our findings are

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only associations, not causal links, needing to be explored further.

The other important finding from the CSIR cohort was the ability to measure antibodies at different points of time in the same person. An interesting finding was that general antibodies were increasing at three months and remained positive at six months. To understand whether these antibodies meant immunity, an assay was performed that mimics the ability to block virus entry into cells in a test tube – what is called as the neutralising assay. While imperfect, it is a useful surrogate for the ability of the patient's blood to neutralise the virus. Such neutralisation activity was seen to have declined but was still positive at six months.

The study helped in understanding the trajectory of infections in India. The study indicates that with the pool of recovered people, with immunity to reinfection, we might get close to scenarios where the total immune fraction is high enough to reduce outbreaks by large amounts.

And what do the findings mean? Although this study is yet to be peer-reviewed, the observations are reassuring – the worst might possibly be behind us. Total infections must have grown further from August–September 2020 when our survey was done. A higher fraction of asymptomatic infections and recovery with immunity should have created pools of immune people in our big cities that were most affected. However, this may not yet have happened everywhere and caution must still be maintained. It also appears that a higher fraction of Indians has asymptomatic infections as compared to the West. The reasons for this difference are not clear and need exploration. Finally, it is important to follow COVID-appropriate behaviour such as wearing masks, avoiding crowded indoor spaces. We may have slowed down the virus spread, but many of us are still at risk. Hopefully, with the vaccination drive, this number will keep shrinking.

Mande is Director General, Council of Scientific & Industrial Research and Secretary, DSIR. Agrawal is Director, Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, CSIR

## The ecological is political

The Anthropocene era has placed an ethical challenge before the human race

MANAS RAY

WITH THE rapid advance of the manufacturing sector and deeper penetration of the global market since the Second World War – what is known as the Great Acceleration – the emission of carbon dioxide increased in geometric proportions. The Keynesian revolution from the 1940s to the beginning of the 1980s made massive investments in infrastructure with the aim of increasing demands. It has been observed that Keynesianism did not replace capitalism but made it ordinary, acceptable to the masses.

In the mid-1980s, the Thatcher-Reagan joint economic regime dismantled the welfare system of the previous decades and heralded the turn towards neoliberalism. The transformation of the social into a mere extension of the economy being complete, every human affair could be explained in market terms. With the rise of digital, virtual, and biotechnological systems from the 1990s, capital could operate as an integrative, hermetic bind transforming itself into a rationalised regime of the projective calculation for the market like never before. The combined result is humankind's entry into an era where everything they do will have a direct impact on the planetary history from now on. In other words, mankind has entered the Anthropocene era leaving behind that of the Holocene.

Is it possible even now for us as a collective to work out an escape from the impending doom? Can the Anthropocene be made live-

able for humans? Time has come to develop a species sense, the sense that we as a species were born through the longue durée of geological and biological changes. The weave through which we are related to one another is the weave of power be it at the global, national, professional, or familial level. But along with this, we need what may be called an ethical understanding at the level of species. Though not connected intrinsically, the issues of power and ethics can be brought on the same plane through patient reflection.

Mere criticism of capitalism will not suffice. We need to imagine a feasible global systemic alternative where the human considers itself a part of the natural order and actively cooperates with it. The planet is not for humankind's loot. The task is to reconfigure the political. The incorporation of the geobiological into the human calculus is oftentimes seen as an escape from the pressing issues of hunger and injustice. There is little awareness at present that unless the question of ecological impact is woven into the question of justice in human affairs, it will be of less and less practical relevance. The compass of the political must include ecological.

So far, human-social thinking has taken the natural and planetary world as constant, not affecting human affairs. The tree I see from my window will bloom at a particular time of the year, the planets and the sun will reside in their stately domains and have the same effect on our planet, and so forth. As a

matter of fact, those functions of the human that resembled the animal world like food, nutrition, and reproduction were left out from the centre of human knowledge. Only those aspects of the human beings that are specific to our species being like language, justice, and the fight for it were considered the proper domain of human investigation. Hence, the difference between human-historical time and the time of geology thus never bothered us. History became the study of human consciousness.

The irony is in their attempt to transcend nature, humans made an abrupt fall into nature, allowing fundamental earthly forces to dictate their lives and unleashing the beast of geophysical forces that cannot be controlled by human endeavour. The pandemic moves around the world at great speed while climatic change is a slow process occurring over centuries. Only a drastic reduction of the global population to half the present number in the next 30 years and a practice of ascetic life can save the planet. It is difficult but not impossible. The textures of our comportment as we conduct our lives and engage in different transactions with not only humans but nature at large deserves its due importance. This is the domain of spirituality. Today's politics begins from here.

The writer is former professor in cultural studies at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Putin's real problem is not his jailed opponent, but the Russian people whose dissatisfaction he harnesses. Their daily experiences do as much to erode the Kremlin's authority as Alexei Navalny's viral videos." — THE GUARDIAN

## Between vaccine and victory

People's reluctance to take the shots could be a key hindrance in achieving herd immunity sooner



SANTANU PRAMANIK  
AND SONALDE DESAI

Efficacy data of the sister vaccines of Covishield came from four ongoing blinded, randomised, controlled trials done across the UK, Brazil, and South Africa which were published in the general medical journal *The Lancet* on December 8. Between April 23 and November 4, 2020, roughly 24,000 participants were enrolled for an evaluation of the safety, immunogenicity and efficacy of this vaccine and data from more than 11,000 participants was included in the interim efficacy analysis. The overall efficacy of the vaccine was found to be around 70 per cent, which is above the WHO recommended threshold of 50 per cent. Approval of Covishield in India is based on these results as well as safety and immunogenicity data from the Covishield phase 2 clinical trial in India led by SII.

For Covaxin, Bharat Biotech undertook a large phase 3 clinical trial involving roughly 26,000 participants across 26 sites in India to assess its safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy. However, no efficacy data from this trial was available for approving the vaccine as the phase 3 trial started only in mid-November. A phase 2 trial of Covaxin involving 380 participants found tolerable safety outcomes and enhanced immune responses. However, the results from the phase 2 trial do not permit efficacy assessments.

The effect of any vaccine on the course of the COVID-19 pandemic is complex and there are many potential scenarios after mass vaccination starts. Clinical trials, particularly those conducted within an expedited timeframe, do not allow us to fully evaluate the ability of a vaccine to protect against severe disease and prevent death. Moreover, side-effects in specific populations may only emerge once mass vaccination starts with a larger sample size under real-life conditions for all individuals, without any exclusion criteria. Hence, it is crucial that the Serum Institute and Bharat Biotech, in collaboration with other research organisations, continue doing post-marketing surveillance studies of vaccine effectiveness and monitor the side effects over a longer period.

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ificant association was observed between age, gender of respondent and vaccine hesitancy. The less educated (0–4 years of education) are more hesitant to take the vaccine (52 per cent). Even after adjusting for education, Muslims and Scheduled Caste respondents are significantly more likely to register hesitancy in getting vaccinated. Hesitancy among minority groups is also seen in other countries. A recent PEW poll in the US found that while 61 per cent of White respondents would definitely or probably get vaccinated, only 42 per cent of Black respondents would. Improved trust in vaccine development and approval process, as well as the overall trust in government health systems, may play an important role in reducing vaccine hesitancy.

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velopment, testing and approval of COVID-19 vaccines have been achieved within record time. On the one hand, this is an unprecedented achievement, but on the other, it might lead to vaccine hesitancy due to concerns regarding compliance, protocols and approval process.

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of vaccine efficacy is the key in any vaccine approval process. Efficacy is defined as the percentage reduction in disease between participants who were vaccinated and those who received placebo in a randomised controlled trial set-up.

Pramanik is senior fellow and deputy director NCAER National Data Innovation Centre. Desai is professor and director, NCAER NDIC. Views are personal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### VIOLENT DAY

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'Law & Disorder' (IE, January 27). Those who indulged in well-planned vandalism in the capital wanted their acts to mar the Republic Day celebrations. Unfortunately, they have succeeded. The unsavoury images of farmers running riot on the roads of New Delhi took centre-stage. And the so-far peaceful agitation of the farming community has been thoroughly soiled by such acts.

Vijai Pant, Hapur

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'Law & Disorder' (IE, January 27). The chaos brought about by a so-called "section" of protesting farmers seems to have been orchestrated by someone very powerful. It is possible that sowing disorder was an effort by the state to turn the peaceful protests violent and render them unpopular. Or it could have been funded by the Opposition to prove how unsuccessful the government has been at managing the affairs of its people.

Komal Pugalia, Silchar

### DIGITAL DIVIDE

THIS REFERS to the article, 'A widening learning gap' (IE, January 27). The right to education under Article 21A of the Constitution has received a major setback during COVID. And the worst hit are the children from economically weaker sections and remote and rural

areas where "digital India" doesn't exist. Immediate action is required as children are the future of this country and their education should not be compromised at any cost.

Sarachana Sisodia, Delhi

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'A widening learning gap' (IE, January 27). A majority of children in rural India didn't have access to technology needed for online classes. It's the obligation of the government to address this issue. We cannot succeed when half of us are held back. Only urban citizens shouldn't be granted access to all the facilities.

Aditi Seth, Jabalpur

### IDEAS ONLINE

#### ONLY IN THE EXPRESS

#### AT VICTORIA MEMORIAL, AN OVERREACTION: ARINDAM GUPTA

#### • GIS IMAGERY FOR CITIZENS' AGENCY: SHILPA KUMAR

[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



MANAS RAY

WITH THE rapid advance of the manufacturing sector and deeper penetration of the global market since the Second World War – what is known as the Great Acceleration – the emission of carbon dioxide increased in geometric proportions. The Keynesian revolution from the 1940s to the beginning of the 1980s made massive investments in infrastructure with the aim of increasing demands. It has been observed that Keynesianism did not replace capitalism but made it ordinary, acceptable to the masses.

In the mid-1980s, the Thatcher-Reagan joint economic regime dismantled the welfare system of the previous decades and heralded the turn towards neoliberalism. The transformation of the social into a mere extension of the economy being complete, every human affair could be explained in market terms. With the rise of digital, virtual, and biotechnological systems from the 1990s, capital could operate as an integrative, hermetic bind transforming itself into a rationalised regime of the projective calculation for the market like never before. The combined result is humankind's entry into an era where everything they do will have a direct impact on the planetary history from now on. In other words, mankind has entered the Anthropocene era leaving behind that of the Holocene.

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## Three journalists booked over 'fake news' about UP Diwas event

ASAD REHMAN  
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 27

THREE JOURNALISTS have been booked in Kanpur Dehat district for allegedly running fake news on a TV channel about students of a government school shivering in the cold during an event held on January 24 on the occasion of Uttar Pradesh foundation day (UP Diwas), officials said Wednesday.

The police identified the channel as K News, but did not say if all the three journalists work for the channel. The three were identified as Mohit Kashyap, Amit Singh and Yasin Ali. An FIR was lodged against them at Akbarpur police station on January 25.

Videos of the students performing yoga and exercises in the cold at the government event in Eco Park have been shared widely

on social media. They were wearing shorts and half shirts. State technology minister Ajit Singh Pal, and other MLAs and officials attended the event.

In his complaint, based on which the FIR was registered, Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) Sunil Dutt wrote, "In the programme, students from the Basic Shiksha Department's Upper Primary School, Sarsi, under the Akbarpur Block performed yoga and other physical exercises. Mr Mohit Kashyap, Amit Singh and Yasin Ali without even being present at the event made unfiting comments and spread news that the children shivered while the DM and the BSA were busy at the event. It is not possible to do yoga in warm clothes and one needs loose clothes for it naturally... The students had taken off the warm clothes and put on loose clothes

during the exercise and yoga and had later worn warm clothes. The three spread the news through their channel without being present there and without checking the facts. This has resulted in the students, teachers and yoga guru's feelings being hurt. There is anger among the students over the incident. When I spoke to the journalist over the phone, Mohit Kashyap said they have done what they had to do and that I can do what I want."

District Magistrate Dinesh Chandra Singh told reporters, "I am sad that some journalists who were not even present here have circulated such information that the pupils were shivering."

Inspector Tulsi Ram Pandey said the journalists were booked under IPC sections 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) and 506 (criminal intimidation).

## Soldier killed, 3 injured in IED explosion in Kulgam

BASHAARAT MASOOD  
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 27

ONESOLDIER was killed and three others suffered injuries in an IED explosion in South Kashmir on Wednesday, the year's first militant attack in the Valley.

Police said the low-intensity IED was placed inside an abandoned school building – at Subhanpora village of Kulgam district – frequented by the soldiers.

On Wednesday morning, it exploded with the soldiers inside the school.

"Preliminary investigation revealed that a rudimentary IED with a low-powered explosive and ball bearings was planted in an abandoned building inside the school premises, where the Army jawans used to visit on routine basis," the police said in a statement. "The IED was planted by terrorists probably during the night hours."

Four soldiers injured in the blast were rushed to a nearby hospital. They were then shifted



Security personnel inspect the area after the militant attack in Kulgam on Wednesday. PTI

to the Army's 92 Base Hospital in Srinagar, where one of them died. In this incident, 04 jawans of 24 RR (Rashtriya Rifles) sustained injuries and were evacuated to nearby hospital for the treatment of their injuries," the police statement said. "Among the injured one Army jawan succumbed to his injuries and attained martyrdom."

The school building was sub-

stantially damaged in the explosion. Soon after the blast, a joint team of J&K Police, Army and paramilitary forces cordoned off the area and launched a hunt for suspects. No one has been arrested so far.

Police have registered a case. "Investigation is in progress and officers continue to work to establish the full circumstances of this terror crime," the police said.

## Ground-breaking ceremony of Ayodhya mosque held on R-Day

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 27

WITH THE hoisting of the national flag and planting of nine fruit-bearing plants on Republic Day, the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation (IICF) Trust marked the ground breaking ceremony for the construction of a mosque and other amenities on the five acres allotted in Ayodhya's Dhamnipur village.

IICF office-bearers said the Tricolour was hoisted at 8.45 am on Tuesday. The event was attended by IICF chief trustee Zafar Ahmad Farooqi, five other trustees and local villagers. Last month, during unveiling of the proposed blueprint of the project, Trust authorities had said that in Islam, there is no tradition of a grand celebration for the foundation stone laying ceremony of a mosque.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, IICF secretary and spokesperson Athar Husain said as per an early estimate, the entire project will cost nearly Rs 110 crore, including Rs 100 crore for the hospital.

"There was a lot of enthusiasm among the local people. Some people who have committed major donations joined in. These people want to contribute for the hospital. The thumb rule for the hospital is that nearly Rs 50 lakh is required for each bed. Our plan is to construct a 100-bed hospital in phase-1 and then increase the capacity to 200 beds. So we will need nearly Rs 100 crore for the hospital. Around Rs 5-7 crore will be needed for the mosque and related projects," he said.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU  
**TIRUNELVELI CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

TAMILNADU SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT  
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

E-Procurement Notice / One Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Bid No.:55/2020-21

1. The Government of India has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed below.

2. Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding procedures agreed with the World Bank. Bidding is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the World Bank's Guidelines Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers, January 2021.

3. Bidders from India should, however, be registered with the Government of Tamilnadu or other State Governments/Government of India, or State/Central Government Undertakings. Bidders from India, who are not registered as above, on the date of bidding, can also participate provided they get themselves registered by the time of contract signing, if they become successful bidders. Bidders are advised to note the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) and minimum qualification criteria (Section III – Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of the contract. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of the World Bank's Guidelines setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

4. The Commissioner invites online bids for the construction of works detailed below in the table. The bidders may submit bids for any or all of the works indicated therein.

5. Bidding documents are available online on [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) from 29.01.2021 to 18.02.2021 at free of cost.

6. For submission of the bid, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the Certifying Authorities authorised by Government of India for issuing DSC. Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-procurement in this Project, may obtain the same from the website: [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) at free of cost.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security of the amount specified for the work in the table below, drawn in favour of The Commissioner, Tirunelveli City Municipal Corporation Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding document and shall have to be valid for 45 days beyond the validity of the bid. Procedure for submission of bid security is described in Para 9.

8. Bids must be submitted online on [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) on or before 15:00 hours on 18.02.2021 and will be opened online on 19.02.2021 at 15:30 hours. Any bid or modifications to bid (including discount) received outside e-procurement system will not be considered. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time. The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids.

9. The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand drafts towards the cost of bid document and registration on e-procurement website (if not previously registered); (b) original security in approved form; and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document with The Commissioner, Tirunelveli City Municipal Corporation, No. 1, SH High Road, Tirunelveli – 627 001, Tamilnadu before the opening of the bid i.e. before 19.02.2021, either by registered post/speed post/courier or by hand, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive and will not be opened.

10. A pre-bid meeting will be held on 10.02.2021 at 11:00hrs. at the office of The Commissioner, Tirunelveli City Municipal Corporation to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in ITB Clause 7.4 of 'Instructions to Bidders' of the bidding document. Bidders are advised to download the bidding document prior to the pre-bid meeting in order for bidders to have a good understanding of the scope of work under this contract for discussion and clarification at the pre-bid meeting.

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

**TABLE**

Package No.	Name of Works	Bid Security * (Rs.)	Cost of Document (Rs.)	Period of Completion
1	2	3	4	5
I	Providing B.T.Surface at Sasthri Nagar, Gomathi Nagar II, Srinivasa Nagar, Thirumangai Nagar 1st to 5th streets and Annamalai Nagar, Annamalai Nagar extension and Gandhimathi Nagar in Ward No: 48 in Tirunelveli town area and Providing BT Surface at Kiruba Nagar Ward 12. Providing BT Surface at Muppiddathammam East Street Ward 14. Providing BT Surface at Ambekkar Nagar Ward 16. Providing BT Surface at Sathri nager 23th Street & 28th Cross Streets and adjacent Street Ward 16. Providing BT Surface at Sivan North Car Street Ward 22. Providing BT Surface at old Police station Road Ward 22. Providing BT Surface at Prasanna vinayagar Kovil street ward no.24. Providing BT Surface at Meda Police station Road Ward 24. Providing BT surface at MCC Approach Road at Compost Yard in Paliyam zone	7,13,000/-	Nil	6 Months
II	Providing and Renewal of B.T.Surface at 1) Chidambaram nagar North Extension cross street, 2) Gokul Nagar, 3) Chidambaram nagar south Extension, 4) Nammappa nagar, 5)Thamarai street, 6) Selvavignesh nagar, 7)Chidambaram nagar North Main road, 8) Krishnaghar Las cross street, 9) Karaiyuppu (RSA Nagar) at Ward No. 1, 2 & 3 at Thachanur Zonal Office and Puriyuppu (T.S.B. Surface at 10) Gnaniyappa Nagar, 11) Periyakothba Pallivasal South & North West Street and Basheerappa Street,12) Kutty Moopan Street & Samayana Sheik Moopan Street in Ward No. 33, 36 & 38 at Melapalyam Zonal Office	7,87,000	Nil	6 Months

Bid security 1% of Estimate cost.

DIPR/603/TENDER/2021 Commissioner, Tirunelveli City Municipal Corporation

कार्यालय अधिकारी संभिलाना मर्यादा खण्ड-3,

मध्य गंगा नदर निर्माण खण्ड-3,

अमरगढ़।

इ-प्रीव्हायेंसेन्ट/अल्पकालीन निवाद सुनवा संस्था-02/इ-प्रीव्हायेंसेन्ट/2020-21

महाराष्ट्र सरकार उत्तर प्रदेश की ओर से निवादित वार्ता को देते हुए अल्पकालीन निवाद विवर एवं संस्थानीकरण विवर विवरण में व्यक्त की जाएगी एवं प्रकार विवरण में व्यक्त की जाएगी एवं जारी किया जाएगा। इ-प्रीव्हायेंसेन्ट/टेंडरकार्ड विवरण में व्यक्त की जाएगी।

निवादित वार्ता विवर दिनांक 28.01.2021 को प्राप्त की जाएगी वार्ता दिनांक 28.01.2021 को आमतः 12.00 बजे तक इनान्हें/प्राप्त की जाएगी। अतः अल्पकालीन निवाद की जाएगी।

निवादित वार्ता विवर दिनांक 28.01.2021 को प्राप्त की जाएगी वार्ता दिनांक 28.01.2021 को आमतः 12.00 बजे तक इनान्हें/प्राप्त की जाएगी।

अल्पकालीन निवाद करने के लिए प्रत्येक वार्ता की विवरण विवरण की जाएगी।

अल्पकालीन निवाद करने के लिए प्रत्येक वार्ता की विवरण विवरण की जाएगी।

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Park Won-soon died last year

SOUTH KOREA  
Seoul ex-mayor harassed his secretary: report

A TOP human rights watchdog in South Korea has released a report confirming that the former mayor of Seoul, who disappeared in July only to later be found dead, had sexually harassed and verbally humiliated a secretary. The National Human Rights Commission led an investigation into the allegations against the former mayor, Park Won-soon, whose body was found on a wooded hill in the South Korean capital just one day after one of his secretaries filed a police report accusing him of making unwanted physical advances and sending her obscene messages and photos late at night. In a statement, the watchdog said the victim's claim was credible. NYT

PAKISTAN  
Owner of Raj Kapoor's ancestral home refuses to sell at govt rate

THE OWNER of Indian film legend Raj Kapoor's ancestral home in Peshawar has refused to sell the building at the rate fixed by the provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, saying the prime-location property has been severely undervalued. Earlier in the month, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government had approved the release of Rs 1.5 crore for Kapoor's ancestral home, with the aim to turn it into a museum in honour of the movie star. PTI

GERMANY  
Governor says sorry for 'little Merkel' remark

A GERMAN state governor has apologised for referring to Chancellor Angela Merkel as "little Merkel" during a recent online event, saying he had unintentionally displayed macho behaviour. Bodo Ramelow, who governs the state of Thuringia, told German weekly *Die Zeit* that he regretted using the term "Merkelchen" while talking with other politicians and the public on the social networking app Clubhouse. *Die Zeit* on Wednesday quoted Ramelow saying that he should have used the diminutive form only in reference to male politicians. AP

## THE WORLD



## MEANWHILE

## INDONESIAN VOLCANO ERUPTS

Indonesia's most active volcano erupted Wednesday with a river of lava and searing gas clouds flowing nearly 10,000 feet down its slopes. No casualties were reported. The sounds of the eruption could be heard 30 km away, officials said. It was Mount Merapi's biggest lava flow since authorities raised its danger level in November.

## ONLY 5 GOP SENATORS JOIN DEMS IN VOTING TO GO FORWARD WITH TRIAL

## Republicans rally against impeachment trial, signalling likely acquittal for Trump

NICHOLAS FANDOS  
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 27



Senator Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader, at the Capitol on Tuesday. NYT

SENATE REPUBLICANS rallied Tuesday against trying former US President Donald Trump for "incitement of insurrection" at the Capitol, with only five members of his party joining Democrats in a vote to go forward with his impeachment trial.

By a vote of 55-45, the Senate narrowly killed a Republican effort to dismiss the proceeding as unconstitutional because Trump is no longer in office. But the numbers showed that loyal Republicans are again poised to spare him from conviction, this time despite his role in stirring up a mob that violently targeted lawmakers and the vice president Jan. 6 as Congress met to fi-

nalise the election.

"I think it's pretty obvious from the vote today that it is extraordinarily unlikely that the president will be convicted," said Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, one of the five Republicans who voted to proceed to trial. "Just do the math."

It would take two-thirds of

Republicans who joined Democrats in voting to reject the constitutional objection and proceed were Senators Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah, Ben Sasse of Nebraska and Patrick Toomey of Pennsylvania. All five had said they were open to hearing the House's impeachment case, which was adopted in a bipartisan vote a week after the attack.

With the facts of the case still spilling forth and the meat of the trial delayed for two weeks, senators could change their views. Several Republicans who voted Tuesday to uphold the constitutional challenge, which would have effectively killed the trial, rushed afterward to clarify they remained open-minded about the trial, which next convenes February 9. NYT



## SENATE NOD FOR BLINKEN AS SECRETARY OF STATE

Washington: The US Senate on Tuesday confirmed President Joe Biden's nominee, veteran diplomat Antony Blinken, to serve as secretary of state. Blinken is a long-time Biden confidant who has been confirmed by the Senate before, most recently to serve as No 2 at the State Department during former President Barack Obama's administration. REUTERS

Omar Sheikh's letter says he had 'minor' role in Daniel Pearl killing

Admission upends 18 years of denials

KATHY GANNON  
ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 27



Ahmad Saeed Omar Sheikh had been acquitted in the case by a Pakistani court

IN A dramatic turn of events, a man convicted and later acquitted in the 2002 killing of American journalist Daniel Pearl admitted a "minor" role in his death, upending 18 years of denials, the Pearl family lawyer said Wednesday.

A letter handwritten by Ahmad Saeed Omar Sheikh in 2019, in which he admits limited involvement in the death of the *Wall Street Journal* reporter, was submitted to Pakistan's Supreme Court nearly two weeks ago. It wasn't until Wednesday that Sheikh's lawyers confirmed their client wrote it.

The high court is hearing an appeal of a lower court's acquittal of Sheikh, charged with murder in the death of Pearl. The appeal was filed by Pearl's family and the Pakistan government.

The 38-year-old reporter from Encino, California, was abducted Jan. 23, 2002. His body was later found in a shallow grave in a southern Karachi neighbourhood.

Pearl family attorney Faisal Siddiqi called Sheikh's confirmation that he authored the letter a "dramatic development" demanding the conviction and death penalty be reinstated.

"This is very, very important because for the last 18 years the position of Omar Saeed Sheikh is that he did not know Danny Pearl, he never met Danny Pearl,"

he said in an interview with The Associated Press. "He has taken a position of complete ignorance regarding this case, but now in a hand-written letter he has admitted to at least a limited role."

"He has not asked that he be acquitted. He accepts his guilt but asks that his sentence may be reduced," he added.

In the hand-written letter, a copy of which the AP has received, Sheikh writes "my role in this matter was a relatively minor one, which does not warrant the death sentence".

He also admits to knowing who killed Pearl, naming Pakistani militant Atta-ur-Rahman, alias Naeem Bokhari, who has since been executed in connection with an attack on a paramilitary base in southern Karachi.

Sheikh's lawyer, Mehmood A. Sheikh, who is no relation, said his client wrote the letter — dated July 25, 2019 — under duress and denies he knew Pearl or had any connection with Pearl. AP

## Biden aims for most ambitious US effort on climate

MATTHEW DALY & ELLEN KNICKMEYER  
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 27

IN WHAT would be the most ambitious US effort ever to stave off the worst effects of climate change, President Joe Biden is aiming to cut oil, gas and coal emissions and double energy production from offshore wind turbines through executive orders Wednesday.

## Racial profiling by French police challenged in class action

ELAINE GANLEY  
PARIS, JANUARY 27

IN A first for France, six non-governmental organisations launched a class-action lawsuit Wednesday against the French government for alleged systemic discrimination by police officers carrying out identity checks.

The organisations, including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, contend that French police use racial profiling in ID checks, targeting Black people and people of Arab descent.

They served Prime Minister Jean Castex and France's interior and justice ministers with formal legal notice of demands for concrete steps and deep law enforcement reforms to ensure that racial profiling does not determine who gets stopped by police.

The lead lawyer in the case, Antoine Lyon-Caen, said that the legal action is not targeting individual police officers but "the system itself that generates, by its rules, habits, culture, a discriminatory practice."

"Since the shortcomings of the state (concern) a systemic practice, the response, the reactions, the remedies, the measures must be systemic," Lyon-Caen said at a news conference.

The issue of racial profiling by French police has festered for years, including, but not only, the practice of officers performing identity checks on young people who are often Black or of Arab descent and live in impoverished housing projects. AP

## A significant shift in approach

**EXPLAINED** BIDEN'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS MARK A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN THE US GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH TO DEALING WITH CLIMATE CHANGE. APART FROM LAYING OUT SPECIFIC MEASURES, THE ORDERS ALSO MAKE CLIMATE CHANGE A CORE PART OF ALL FUTURE DECISIONS ON FOREIGN POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY.

The orders awaiting his signature target federal subsidies for oil

and other fossil fuels and halt new oil and gas leases on federal lands

and waters. They also intend to conserve 30 per cent of the country's lands and ocean waters in the next 10 years and move to an all-electric federal vehicle fleet.

Biden has set a goal of eliminating pollution from fossil fuel in the power sector by 2035 and from the US economy overall by 2050, speeding what is already a market-driven growth of solar and wind energy and lessening the dependence on oil and gas. AP

## GLOBAL CORONAVIRUS CASES SURPASS 100 MILLION

## Countries tackle Covid-19 vaccine shortages

REUTERS & AP  
JANUARY 27



Harris receives a vaccine dose on Tuesday. AP

■ US Vice President Kamala Harris received her second dose of Moderna's vaccine against the novel coronavirus on Tuesday at the National Institutes of Health near Washington.

EU would "insist on them" coming back to the negotiating table to explain the delay in deliveries once the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine gets approved for use by the European Medicines Agency.

Wednesday's talks with the EU Commission and member states were slated to be the third in as many days, as an ever angrier EU is demanding an explanation about the delays.

Amid growing frustration over vaccine shortages, President Joe Biden announced that the US would ramp up deliveries to hard-pressed states over the next three weeks and expects to provide enough doses to vaccinate 300 million Americans by the end of the summer or early fall.

As richer nations race ahead with mass vaccination campaigns, Africa is still scrambling to secure supplies as it grapples with concerns about more-infectious variants of the virus first identified in South Africa and Britain.



Health workers prepare to start vaccination in Kathmandu on Wednesday. Reuters

## Nepal kicks off inoculations with vaccine sent from India

SHIRISH B PRADHAN  
KATHMANDU, JANUARY 27

NEPAL ON Wednesday launched a nationwide Covid-19 vaccination drive with the one million doses of vaccine provided by India.

Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli inaugurated the vaccination campaign at his official residence in Baluwatar. At the same time, government hospitals across the country vaccinated doctors and other front-line health workers.

Speaking at the inaugural programme, Oli said all Nepalis would get the vaccine free of cost within three months.

Dr Sagar Rajbhandari, director of Sukraraj Tropical and Infectious Disease Hospital, Teku, was the first among the front-line workers to receive the jab, according to Health Ministry sources.

According to officials, around 430,000 frontline workers will be inoculated in 65 districts across the country.

The one million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine donated by India last week was jointly de-

veloped by the University of Oxford and the pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, and produced by the Serum Institute of India.

Oli had last week thanked the Indian government for vaccines.

"I thank Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi ji as well as the Government and people of India for the generous grant of one million doses of COVID vaccine to Nepal at this critical time when India is rolling out vaccination for its own people," Oli tweeted.

"Nepal appreciates this gesture from a friendly neighbour," he added. PTI

GURDIP SINGH  
SINGAPORE, JANUARY 27

A 16-YEAR-OLD Singaporean boy of Indian ethnicity was detained last month under the Internal Security Act (ISA) after planning to use a machete to attack Muslims at two mosques in March, on the anniversary of New Zealand's Christchurch attacks.

The teenager, who was not named, is the youngest person to be detained under the ISA for terrorism-related activities, the Internal Security Department (ISD) said on Wednesday.

He is the first detainee in the city-state to be inspired by far-right extremist ideology, Channel News Asia reported, citing the ISD media release.

The ISD said that the teen was influenced by the 2019 terror attacks at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand in which 51 people were killed.

The teen had planned to carry out his attacks on March 15 this year, on the anniversary of the Christchurch attacks.

He was self-radicalised, motivated by a strong antipathy towards Islam and a fascination with violence," the ISD said.

He watched the live-stream video of the attack on the two mosques in Christchurch on March 15, 2019, and read the manifesto of the attacker, Brenton Tarrant, it said. He had also watched ISIS propaganda videos, and came to the erroneous conclusion that ISIS represented Islam, the ISD said. PTI

## Auschwitz survivors mark anniversary virtually

KACPER PEMPEL & JOANNA PLUCINSKA  
OSWIECIM, JANUARY 27

survivors at every anniversary," Turski told Reuters in a Zoom interview from his Warsaw home.

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and Memorial preserves the Auschwitz death camp set up on Polish soil by Nazi Germany during World War Two. More than 1.1 million people, most of them Jews, perished in gas chambers at the camp or from starvation, cold and disease.

Wednesday's ceremony marking the camp's liberation will take place virtually starting at 1500 GMT, with speeches by survivors, Poland's President Andrzej Duda and Israeli and Russian diplomats, as well as a debate on the Holocaust's influence on children. Other virtual ceremonies will also take place to mark Holocaust Remembrance Day. REUTERS

## FIRMS INSPIRED BY CRYPTOCURRENCY ARE CREATING SOCIAL NETWORKS WITHOUT ANY CENTRAL AUTHORITY

## They found a way to limit Big Tech power: using Bitcoin design

NATHANIEL POPPER  
SAN FRANCISCO, JANUARY 27

JACK DORSEY, Twitter's chief executive, wrestled this month with the question of whether his social media service had exercised too much power by cutting off Donald Trump's account. Dorsey wondered aloud if the solution to that power imbalance was new technology inspired by the cryptocurrency Bitcoin.

When YouTube and Facebook barred tens of thousands of Trump's supporters and white supremacists this month, many flocked to alternative apps such as LBRY, Minds and Sessions. AP



A movement seeks to replace some of the web's fundamental building blocks in ways that would be harder for tech giants to control. Reuters

Companies are now finding ways to use blockchains, and similar technology inspired by it, to create social media networks, store online content and host websites without any central authority in charge. Doing so makes it much harder for any government or company to ban accounts or delete content.

These experiments are newly relevant after the biggest tech companies recently exercised their clout in ways that have raised questions about their power.

Facebook and Twitter prevented Trump from posting online after the Capitol rampage January 6, saying he had broken their rules against inciting violence. Amazon, Apple and Google stopped working with Parler, a social networking site that had become popular with the far right.

While liberals and opponents of toxic content praised the companies' actions, they were criticised by conservatives, First Amendment scholars and the American Civil Liberties Union for that.

That has prompted a scramble for other options. Dozens of startups now offer alternatives to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Amazon's web hosting services, all on top of decentralised networks and shared ledgers. Many have gained millions of new users over the past few weeks. NYT

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2021

# E.EXPLAINED

EXPLAINED THE PANDEMIC

# Viruses, their variants, and vaccines

Over the past week, significant new research has been published on the variants of the novel coronavirus that have emerged in several countries. Two of India's most eminent virologists, who have been explaining a range of issues around the virus and vaccine in *The Indian Express*, summarise the new findings, and evaluate the concerns that they raise.



## EXPERTS EXPLAIN

SHAHID JAMEEL & VIRANDER S CHAUHAN

From The Indian Express panel of specialists, exclusive insight

SARS-COV-2 VARIANTS have emerged independently in several countries, and research published over the past week indicates that the virus is changing more quickly than was once believed – and that it may continue to develop towards evading currently available vaccines. We deconstruct the science, summarise the breaking research, evaluate the concerns, and suggest a prescription for India.

### Why do viruses mutate?

Like all life, viruses carry a genetic code in the form of nucleic acids – either DNA or RNA. When cells multiply, the DNA within them replicates as well, to make copies for the new cells. During replication, random errors are introduced into the new DNA, much like spelling errors when we write. Just as we can spell-check, our cells carry enzymes to 'proof-read' and correct these mistakes to maintain the fidelity of our genetic material.

While the errors in DNA virus genomes can be corrected by the error-correcting function of cells in which they replicate, there are no enzymes in cells to correct RNA errors. Therefore, RNA viruses accumulate more genetic changes (mutations) than DNA viruses.

Evolution requires not just mutations, but also selection. While most mutations are deleterious to the virus, if some allow a selective advantage – say better infectivity, transmission, or escape from immunity – then the new viruses out-compete the older ones in a population. The mutations can be synonymous (silent) or non-synonymous (non-silent); the latter also changes an amino acid (protein building block) at that position in the coded protein.

### How much has SARS-CoV2 mutated?

Coronaviruses have an RNA genome with two unique features. At 30,000 nucleotides (nucleic acid units) they have the largest genome among RNA viruses. This allows coronaviruses to produce an enzyme that can correct RNA replication errors. Consequently, coronaviruses have rather stable genomes, changing about a thousand times slower than influenza viruses, which too are RNA viruses that cause respiratory illness. In a January 21, 2021 preprint on *bioRxiv*, researchers from ACTREC, Navi Mumbai, analysed over 200,000 SARS-CoV-2 genomes to find 6.6 non-silent and 5 silent mutations per sample. They found 13 mutations hotspots that change in at least 40,000 or more samples. From 3,361 Indian Covid-19 patient samples, the researchers found comparable rates of 5.2 non-silent and 4.4 silent mutations per sample.

A mutation called D614G emerged in late January 2020 to change the amino acid at position 614 in the virus' Spike protein from aspartate (D) to glycine (G). Because this variant infected and replicated better and produced fitter viruses, it now accounts for over 99 per cent of the virus circulating globally. Other mutations are now emerging in this background.

Viruses with mutations within the receptor-binding domain (RBD) of the Spike protein have the most potential to evade antibodies that develop as a result of natural infection or vaccination. The RBD binds the cellular receptor allowing the virus to infect cells, and anti-RBD antibodies neutralise the virus. Such mutations were recently found in variant viruses that emerged in the UK, South Africa and Brazil.

As of January 26, about 29,000 infections are attributed to UK variants from 63 countries, many due to local transmission. These viruses carry 17 non-silent mutations, eight in the Spike protein.

The South African variant includes 668 viruses reported from 26 countries, with local transmission mainly in southern Africa and the UK. These viruses carry nine non-silent mutations, six in the Spike protein.

The Brazil variant includes 30 viruses from eight countries, transmitting locally only in Brazil. These viruses carry 16 non-silent mutations, 11 in the Spike protein.

Three key RBD mutations – K417N/T, E484K, and N501Y – are found in variants that emerged in South Africa and Brazil. The UK variant has the N501Y mutation, but has another called P681H outside the RBD, which too increases infectivity.

### How are vaccines tested for effectiveness against emerging variants?

Indirect tests are done in laboratories to assess if an emerging variant might escape antibodies developed after a natural infection or vaccination.

Serum (the blood components that contain antibodies) from recovered patients or vaccinated people, and antibodies known to neutralise the original virus, are tested to determine whether the variant viruses evade antibodies. Serial dilutions of the serum or antibodies are separately mixed with a fixed amount of the original and variant viruses, and the mixture is added to cells in culture. After a period of incubation, cells are washed and stained. Cells infected and killed by viruses multiplying within them appear as clear zones (plaques) on a dark background.

The effectiveness of a serum or antibody is expressed as an inhibitory concentration (IC) or plaque reduction neutralisation titer (PRNT) value. The IC<sub>50</sub> or PRNT<sub>50</sub> value is the reciprocal dilution of serum or antibody that neutralises 50 per cent viruses in the sample.

Since infectious viruses require containment facilities (called biosafety level 3; BSL3), these assays are sometimes done with

pseudoviruses. These are constructed to carry the SARS-CoV-2 Spike protein on another virus background, and contain reporters that are easily visualised (e.g., green fluorescent protein) or quantified (e.g., luciferase).

### Are the emerging variants susceptible to vaccines?

A number of lab studies published over the past week suggest that some SARS-CoV-2 variants evade antibodies triggered by vaccines and natural infection. An international team, which includes researchers from the African Health Research Institute and the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban, tested six people who had recovered from Covid-19 before the emergence of the new variant in South Africa. Convalescent antibodies in these people were six to 200 times less effective in neutralising the variant virus.

In a separate study posted on *bioRxiv* on January 19, researchers at the South African National Institute for Communicable Diseases in Johannesburg used pseudoviruses to show that South African variants completely escaped neutralisation by therapeutic antibodies. In further tests, the South African variant was fully resistant to serum from 21 of 44 recovered Covid-19 patients.

There is also proof of several re-infections with this variant in South Africa, driven by the ability of new variants to evade immunity developed against the original virus.

In a January 19 *bioRxiv* preprint, researchers from Pfizer and BioNTech show the serum from 16 volunteers taking their vaccine to equally neutralise the Wuhan virus and the UK variant.

Researchers from the University of Cambridge reported on January 20 that while serum from people given the Pfizer/BNT vaccine effectively neutralised pseudoviruses carrying the N501Y Spike mutation, 10 of the 15 vaccinees showed reduced neutralisation of pseudoviruses carrying the full set of Spike mutations from the UK variant.

Researchers at Rockefeller University in New York also reported in *bioRxiv* on January 19 on antibodies and memory in 20 volunteers given the Moderna or Pfizer/BNT mRNA vaccines. They found both vaccines to elicit similar responses, which were reduced by a "small but significant margin" against variants carrying the E484K, N501Y, or K417N/E484K/N501Y combination of mutants. They further found each of the mutations to abolish or reduce neutralisation to 14 of 17 potent monoclonal antibodies.

Interestingly, wild type viruses grown in the presence of vaccine-elicited antibodies gave rise to the same mutations, driving home the point that variant viruses evolved following immune selection in patients recovering from infection.

In a paper in the journal *Science* on January 25, researchers at the University of

Washington, Seattle, mapped RBD mutations that affect binding to therapeutic antibodies used to treat Covid-19 patients. Their work shows how the Spike RBD can evolve in a persistently infected patient to evade antibodies, and that mutations escaping the antibodies are already present in SARS-CoV-2 strains in circulation.

The consensus from these recent laboratory studies is that emerging variants, especially the one from South Africa, could pose a challenge to current vaccines. There is no information yet for the Brazil variant that shares some of the same changes. However, these studies have only tested antibody responses, whereas vaccines also raise cellular immunity to eliminate infection.

### Can new vaccines be developed to fight variants?

The evidence at this time, though of concern, does not indicate that current vaccines are failing. But this has to be watched carefully, and all efforts made to limit transmission between people, which drives mutations and the emergence of variants. Both Moderna and Pfizer/BioNTech have agreed that their vaccines offered reduced protection against the South African variant. The two companies are reported to be working on developing fresh vaccines to cover these variants. (*The New York Times*, January 25)

Should new vaccines be needed, the mRNA platform offers the best chance of speedy development. These vaccines were the first to receive emergency use approval, and have already been administered to millions of people globally. Would regulators require fresh human clinical trials for each variant vaccine built on an already approved platform? This would be critical to the speed at which vaccines against emerging variants can be deployed.

### What should India do in this situation?

Only the UK variant viruses have so far been reported from India – and that too, in travellers. There is no reported local transmission, but considering its increased infectivity, this is likely to happen. The evidence so far suggests that current vaccines would still protect against the UK variant, even if with reduced efficacy.

In a January 26 preprint on *bioRxiv*, scientists from ICMR-National Institute of Virology and Bharat Biotech tested serum from 38 recipients of their vaccine, Covaxin, against a UK variant. The results show no significant difference, suggesting that the vaccine would work equally well on the UK variant. (*Report*, right)

With cases already going down, India should strictly implement masks and limit crowds while aggressively tracing contacts of people infected with the UK variant. The US has put a ban on travel from South Africa and Brazil. India must also be vigilant of people with a history of travel to South Africa since October 2020, and Brazil since December 2020.

Finally, the only way to catch emerging variants – whether imported or homegrown – is increased genomic surveillance. So far, there are only about 5,000 SARS-CoV-2 sequences from India in public databases, which accounts for merely 0.05 per cent of confirmed cases. The setting up of an inter-ministerial group – Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSAACOG) – to increase genomic surveillance is a step in the right direction.



Bharat Biotech's vaccine at District General Hospital in Aundh, Pune. Arul Horizon/File

## Covaxin is effective against UK variant, shows study: what this means for India

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS & PRABHA RAGHAVAN

PUNE, NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

COVAXIN, THE indigenously developed vaccine against the novel coronavirus, can work against the new UK variant, a new study by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Institute of Virology (NIV) has said.

### Study finding

Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech conducted a test of its Covid-19 vaccine, Covaxin, against the UK strain of the virus. The "plaque reduction neutralization" test (PRNT50) involved collecting the serum – the protein-rich liquid separated from blood after it is clotted – of 38 people who had received the vaccine. The sera was then tested against the UK variant of the virus as well as a heterologous strain of the virus that Covaxin was previously tested against.

"Our study evidently highlighted comparable neutralization activity of vaccinated individuals' sera against variant as well as heterologous SARS-CoV-2 strains. Importantly, sera from the vaccine recipients could neutralise the UK-variant strains discounting the uncertainty around potential escape," the researchers said in the study published online on Tuesday in *bioRxiv*, a preprint server for biology. ("Neutralization of UK-variant VUI-202012/01 with COVAXIN vaccinated human serum")

"It was reassuring from the PRNT50 data generated in our laboratory that the indigenous BBV152/COVAXIN, following its rollout in vaccination program, could be expected to work against the new UK-variant. It is unlikely that the mutation 501Y would be able to dampen the potential benefits of the vaccine in concern," the study said.

### Significance

India has seen a rising number of cases of infection with the UK variant; on January 23, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said that at least 150 people have tested positive for the mutant strain. This is a concern not just because the UK strain has been found to spread more quickly than the more common strain

of the virus, but also because British Prime Minister Boris Johnson had said on January 22 that there was "some evidence" to suggest that this variant was associated with a "higher degree of mortality", making it more deadly.

The UK strain was one of the main reasons that Bharat Biotech received restricted emergency approval in India despite Covaxin not having completed enough large-scale human trials to show even interim information on its efficacy (ability to bring down symptomatic COVID-19 cases in those vaccinated).

The pre-print findings are the first set of evidence of the vaccine's ability to work against the UK mutant strain.

ICMR Director General Dr Balram Bhargava told *The Indian Express* that the data generated in the laboratory was "reassuring".

"If the mortality is 10 per 1,000 for the regular one then it is 13 for this variant of coronavirus. Hence, it is great that we were able to isolate and culture the UK variant within a week's time and test with sera of Covaxin-vaccinated people. It is reassuring that the vaccine can work against the new UK variant," Dr Bhargava said.

Dr Samiran Panda, one of the researchers and head of ICMR's Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases division, said, "The serum samples were collected from vaccine recipients and have been able to neutralise the UK variant, which is good news."

### Caution

The findings of the study are still to be peer-reviewed. While the data collected from 38 people looks promising, there is no clarity on the vaccine's efficacy yet, as it is being administered to priority groups in "clinical trial" mode. Greater clarity is expected to emerge later this year, when Bharat Biotech will have enough information to say how effective the vaccine is in preventing those inoculated from showing serious symptoms, even if they do get infected.

Also, the pre-print findings show the vaccine's ability to protect against the UK strain only. There are various other mutant strains of the virus that pose a threat to vaccination programmes around the world, with a variant from South Africa being of equal concern.

## What an upcoming expedition to Ram Setu could reveal about the structures of history and myth

ANJALI MARAR

PUNE, JANUARY 27

In a couple of months from now, Indian scientists are expected to begin a first-of-its-kind expedition to put a date to the chain of corals and sediments in the Indian Ocean known as Ram Setu or Adam's Bridge. The 48-kilometre bridge-like structure between India and Sri Lanka finds mention in the Ramayana, but not much about its origins is proven scientifically.

A central advisory board on archaeology, functioning under the Archaeological Survey of India, recently approved the proposal for the expedition submitted by the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, a constituent laboratory of the central government's Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR).

### The Project

CSIR-NIO will lead the three-year study. "The idea is to see whether Ram Setu is a man-made structure or not. The most important aspect of the project is to establish its age, scientifically. Once it is known, the information can be verified and correlated with its mention in the Ramayana and similar scriptures," NIO Director Prof Sunil Kumar Singh said.

### The Plan

The project is likely to commence by the end of March. An initial survey using underwater photography will look for inundated habitation in the area. A geophysical survey



The Adam's Bridge between India and Sri Lanka from space. Jeff Schmaltz/NASA

Carbon dating techniques, which are now available in India, will be primarily used to determine the age of the structure; the scientists will also study its material composition, outline the sub-surface structure, and attempt to excavate remnants or artifacts, if any, from the site.

### The Experience

The NIO has been studying a part of Dwarka, which lies under the sea off the coast of Gujarat. It has so far traced large quantities of scattered stones at depths between 3 and 6 metres. Stone anchors too were found at the site, suggesting the existence of an ancient harbour. The NIO has earlier attempted to trace the missing shore temples of Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu.

Several shipwreck studies, including one of the Odisha coast, are ongoing. A port near Goa is being considered for similar scientific study.

The seas off India's 7,500-km coastline are a treasure trove of data on changing climate, evolution of underwater fauna, coastal lives, and habitations, and hold great potential for scientific exploration.

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**CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD**

**INDIA ACTIVE CASES** 176,498

Date	Active Cases
Jan 17	200,528
Jan 26	176,498

LAST 10 DAYS

Note: The Jan 26 figure in this graph is based on the government update on Jan 27

**INDIA TOTAL CASES** 10,689,527

Source: Ministry of Health & family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on Jan 27



SENSEX: 47,409.93 ▼ 937.66 NIFTY: 13,967.50 ▼ 271.40 NIKKEI: 6,600.98 ▼ 53.03 HANG SENG: 13,673.29 ▼ 197.70 FTSE: 28,635.21 ▲ 89.03 DAX: 29,297.53 ▼ 93.73



GOLD

₹ 48,421



RUPEE

₹ 72.92



OIL

\$ 56.07



SILVER

₹ 65,614

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market; gold per 10 g, silver per 1 kg; Brent crude as of 0000 IST

International market data till 1900 IST

## BUDGET WATCH GOLD DEPOSIT, LOAN

Norms of scheme to be tweaked to nudge fund allocation away from physical buying

SUNNY VERMA  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

THE GOVERNMENT is planning to tweak the existing gold deposit and gold metal loan schemes to wean away investors from excessive investment in physical gold. The changes will make it eligible for a larger number of people to open gold deposit accounts as the minimum amount of deposit required in these gold accounts will be reduced substantially and other changes introduced to make these more attractive.

Despite the government's emphasis on gold monetisation over the last few years, including issuing gold bonds as part of its borrowing programme, investment in physical gold and purchases of jewellery continues to outpace investment through financial channels. Sources said the existing scheme will be made far from attractive from investment convenience and taxation aspects. "A number of amendments have been finalised in existing revamped Gold Deposit Scheme, revamped Gold Metal Loan Scheme and India Gold Coin Scheme. These changes have been recently reviewed by the Finance Minister (Nirmala Sitharaman)," said a government official. The Finance Ministry has held a series of discussions on these schemes over the last few months.

"There has been discussions at the highest levels on these schemes in the government, to make them more favourable to the smallest of investors, including people wanting to buy gold for jewellery purpose," the official said. The government could unveil these changes in the Union Budget on February 1. Under the revamped gold

### MINIMUM AMOUNT OF DEPOSIT

The changes will make it eligible for a larger number of people to open gold deposit accounts as the minimum amount of deposit required in these accounts will be reduced substantially.

deposit scheme, investors can earn 2.25 per cent interest on medium- and long-term gold deposits having 5-7 years and 12-15 years tenure. Gold is accepted in the form of raw gold including gold bars, coins, jewellery excluding stones and other metals under the scheme. But investors need to bring in minimum of 30 grams of gold, which is roughly worth Rs 1.5 lakh at current prices under the scheme. Sources said this amount will be substantially reduced to ensure that large number of people are able to open gold deposit accounts. The minimum requirements of 30 grams could be reduced to 1 gram. Interest earnings and capital gains under the scheme will continue to be exempt from capital gains tax, wealth tax and income tax.

Amendments are also being planned in gold metal loan (GML) scheme, which is used by jewellery manufacturers to borrow gold metal and settle the GML with the sale proceeds obtained. Banks offer GML for 180 days in case of domestic jewellery manufacturers and for 270 days in case of exports. The government has been regularly issuing sovereign gold bonds as part of its overall borrowing programme to support debt requirements as well as to provide a safe avenue for gold ownership without physical possession.

## Information, incentives, institutions key to limit air pollution: World Bank

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

A WORLD Bank study on air pollution in three major cities — Delhi, Beijing and Mexico City — has found that the key to policy and behaviour change to improve air quality depended on: high-quality information to generate popular support for pollution mitigation; a strong incentive

**BRIEFLY**  
₹12,351 crore  
to 18 states

New Delhi: The Finance Ministry has released Rs 12,351 crore to 18 states for giving grants to rural local bodies.

Petrol over ₹100  
in Rajasthan

New Delhi: Premium petrol crossed Rs 100 a litre in Rajasthan's Singanagar, while in Delhi it hit Rs 86.30. PTI

Power Grid files  
InVIT IPO

New Delhi: Power Grid has filed a draft offer document with Sebi, to monetise some assets via its infrastructure investment trust (InVIT). FE

737 MAX gets  
nod in Europe

London: Boeing Co's modified 737 MAX is safe to return to service in Europe, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency said. REUTERS

programme to ensure implementation of measures to curb pollution; and for institutions to work together to create air pollution management strategies.

The study noted that while air pollution in a number of developing countries had reached a turning point, South Asian countries including India, Pakistan and Nepal were witnessing a rise in air pollution relative to growth in incomes according to the report.

**OFFICE OF THE TRANSPORT  
COMMISSIONER-CUM-CHAIRMAN  
STATE TRANSPORT AUTHORITY, ODISHA, CUTTACK.**

J.J.32

Ltr. No. LXVII-24/2018(RS)/975/TC Dtd: 22.01.2021

**CORIGENDUM NOTICE****REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)**

REFERENCE LTR.NO. LXVII-24/2018(RS)/13/TC, DTD. 01.01.2021  
In reference to the above, please refer to corrigendum on RFP for development of system for Intelligent Enforcement Management System on NH-16 between Panikoli & Rameswar wherein ANPR cameras will be installed to monitor disobeying vehicles and generating e-challan. For details, please visit <http://odishatransport.gov.in> and/or <http://www.odisha.gov.in> for amendments corresponding to queries, modifications and submission of responses.

Sd/-  
Transport Commissioner,  
Odisha  
OIPR-38003/11/0006/2021

**PARADIP PORT TRUST****e-TENDER CALL NOTICE**

Name of the work: "Cleaning of Debris from Roads, Berms, Backup space and disposal of Dredging materials from the stretch from TT-8 Junction to MPB via CQ and EO for the year 2020-21". EMD cost: Rs. 1,99,305/- Last date and time of submission of Bid: 15.02.2021 up to 17:15 Hrs. For details, please refer our Website <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.

Executive Engineer  
Harbour Works Division No. 1  
PPT/PR/375/20-21 Dt. 25/01/2021

**RITES LIMITED**

(A Government of India Enterprise) CIN No.: L74899DL1974GOI007227

**NOTICE INVITING E-RE-TENDER**

The General Manager/EXPOTECH, RITES Ltd. invites Open tender online bid in single packet system for the following:

Item & Quantity	Engagement of freight forwarder for export of consignment as mentioned below ex. Mumbai Sea Port to Beira sea port, Mozambique on CIF basis:
	• 06 Cape Gauge Locomotives and its spares ex. BLW, Varanasi, U.P. • Approx. 300 CBM spares ex. BLW, Varanasi/RITES Ware house, Delhi

Tender Reference RITES/EXPO/MOZ/LOCO/122020

Last date &amp; time of submission of bid 06.02.2021 at 18:00 Hrs.

The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website <http://riteslt.com> and CPP portal [\*\*UJVN Limited\*\*](https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>Addendum/Corrigendum, if any, shall be hosted online only.</a></div>
<div data-bbox=)

H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharanji Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006

Telephone: 0135-2763808 ; Fax: 0135-2763508

CIN NO. U40101UR2001SC025866, Website : [www.ujvn.com](http://www.ujvn.com)

RO. No. 84

DATE EXTENSION Date: 27.01.2021

E-Tender No. 21/EE(Maint.)/Khdri/2020-21-Procurement of Various

T&amp; P items of Khodri Power station.

Due to unavoidable reason above tender dates in tender documents of the above tender shall be read as below, all other terms and conditions of the tender shall remain unchanged:

Last date for submission of bid 06.02.2021(upto 16:00 Hrs)

Date of opening of bid 09.02.2021(11:00 Hrs.)

For downloading tender documents and other details, kindly visit portal "<https://www.uktenders.gov.in>"

Executive Engineer (Maintenance)

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

**West Central Railway****E-TENDER NOTICE**

Date - 25.01.2021

E-Tender is invited from reputed and experienced contractor by the undersigned for and on behalf of the president of India, for the following:-  
**Tender No. - ELECT-GEN-T-01-2021, Name of Work - Habibganj: provision of Railway electric power supply at ACWP (Automatic Coach Washing Plant) site. (Electrical work). Completion Period - 02 Months, Estimated cost in Rs. - 322355.16, Date and Time for Closing of tender - 19/02/2021 at 11:00 hrs., Validity of offer - 45 Days, The details of Complete tender documents and its related information may be seen at <https://www.reps.gov.in> and notice board of this office. Manual offer, for above said tender is not acceptable and if any manual offer submitted will not be considered. Corrigendum / Updating, if required, will be uploaded on website, it may be seen at above said URL and Notice board of this office, till the date of closing of tender.**

Sr. Div. Electrical Engineer (General) West Central Railway, Bhopal

रेल यात्रा के दौरान शिकायत हुई 138 पर एवं सुधा हुई 182 पर सम्पर्क करें

**JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG****NOTICE INVITING E-PROCUREMENT TENDER**

The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Dharampur Bharati District Mandi (HP) on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invite the item rate/lump sum contract bids from the eligible Contractors/Firms. Bidders should be registered with Central Govt. or State Govt. or Central Govt. or State Government under takings. The bidders who have experience in construction of similar work and have established organization for taking up such work and who satisfy the qualification criteria of bid document need only apply. The scope of the work will be as under:

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time	Cost of Form
1.	Providing CAD works to Lift Irrigation Scheme to Baroti, Mandap Jodhan area & their adjoining villages in Tehsil Dharampur District Mandi HP	29,14,83,067/-	29,14,83/-	One year	2500/-

## 1. KEY DATES WILL BE AS UNDER:

a	Date of Online publication	25.01.2021 at 5:00 PM
b	Downloading of e-tender Documents	From 25.01.2021 at 5:00 PM to 09.02.2021 at 5:00 PM.
c	Date of submission of e-tender	From 25.01.2021 at 5:00 PM to 09.02.2021 at 5:00 PM.
d	Physical submission of earnest money deposit and cost of tender documents	Upto 11:00 A.M. on 10.02.2021
e	Date of opening of bids:	
1)	Cover-1 Eligibility Criteria	On 10.02.2021 at 11:30 A.M.
2)	Cover-2 Financial Bid	Shall be intimated separately
f	Site Visit	From 28.01.2021 to 01.02.2021 along with the Assistant Engineer/Concerned Junior Engineer Jal Shakti Sub Division Mandap & Thira
g	Pre-Bid Meeting	On 05.02.2021 at 11:00 AM in the Office of Engineer-in-Chief Jal Shakti Vibhag, Jal Shakti Bhawan Tuktiandi Shimla. The queries of the bidders to be discussed during Pre-bid shall be submitted till 4:00 pm on 04.02.2021. No queries shall be entertained afterwards.

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website [www.hptenders.gov.in](http://www.hptenders.gov.in)

Executive Engineer  
Jal Shakti Division Dharampur Bharati

5349/HP

**GOVERNMENT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER: CHAYANGTAJO DIVISION**  
**PWD, AP:**

No. CD/DRG-03/2020-21/608

Date 25.01.2021

**PRESS RELEASE****NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

The Executive Engineer, Chayangtajo Division, PWD AP invites on behalf of Governor of Arunachal Pradesh Item Rate Contract Single Stage Bidding Process under One Cover System (Both Technical Bid and Financial Bid) from eligible bidders of appropriate class as per conditions laid down in the Arunachal Pradesh District Based Entrepreneurs and Professionals (Incentives, Development and Promotional) (Amendment) Act, 2020 for the execution of work as detailed in table below.

**TABLE**

Sl. No.	NIT No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Cost of Bidding Document (in Rs.)	Period of Completion of work	Eligible class of contractor
1	CD/DRG-03/2020-21/5	C/o Community Hall at Chankyu & Saliwa Yangfo.	Rs. 96,13,844.00	Rs. 96,138.00 for APST Contractors & Rs. 1,92,277.00 for Non-APST Contractors	Rs. 1000.00	12 (Twelve) Months	Class IV & III

The Tender form and other details can be obtained from the office of the Executive Engineer, Chayangtajo Division, PWD AP, Camp- Seppa on all working days on payment of non refundable Rs. 1000.00 (Rupees One thousand) w.e.f. 28.01.2021. The last date of receipt of application to purchase tender form will be 03.02.2021 at 1600 Hrs.

**Intending bidder should produce following original documents before tender form issuing authority and the attested copy of same document should be enclosed along with the application to purchase tender form:-**

1. Valid firm registration for required class of Contractor.

2. Permanent Residential Certificate (PRC).

Note : Detail information of the work and conditions of contract may be seen in the tender document.

Sd/-

Executive Engineer  
Chayangtajo Division  
PWD AP, Chayangtajo

DIPR NO. ARN/16082-84

Government of Jammu & Kashmir  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DIVISION (PHE) BIJBHARA**  
E- NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS  
(e-mail: phebijbhara230@gmail.com Telephone/Fax: 01932-234230)

## Notice Inviting e-Tender

Fresh e-NIT S. No.29/PHB of 2020-21

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of J&K e-tenders (Single Cover System) on Item Rate Basis are invited from Reputed and resourceful contractors/ Firms/Companies and other state Governments for the following works, which should be uploaded on the Procurement web portal <http://jtktenders.gov.in> for the subject work(s) referred below to be received by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Bijbhara and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed e-NIT /Tender Documents/ PWD Form No. 25 doable are accepted. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement portal <http://jtktenders.gov.in>.

The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/Non-Transferable) shall be in the shape of e-Challan or Treasury Challan/Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	EMD (in Rs.)	Cost of TD (in Rs.)	Time of Completion	Class of Contract
1.	Retrofitting of WSS Thirman by way of providing Laying/Fitting of pipes, concrete protection works at head site. Replacement of existing pipes, Chamfer/PST/cleaning Tank, improvements to existing pipe system and Repairs to existing barbed wire and ornamental grill around various structures including successful commissioning of entire system and maintenance for a period of 3 years including 01 year DLP after successful completion (under Jal Jeevan Mission).	36.19	72380	500	30 Days	AAY/BEE
2.	Retrofitting of WSS Kachmulla by way of providing, laying/Fitting of pipes, improvements to existing pipe network. Chemical plastering to existing service Reservoir and successful commissioning of entire system and maintenance for a period of 3 years including 01 year DLP after successful completion (under Jal Jeevan Mission).	24.60	49200	300	20 Days	BEE/CEE
3.	Retrofitting of WSS Brimmar by way of providing, laying/Fitting of pipes, improvements to existing pipe network. Providing and Laying Filter media to existing 0.30 lac gallons SSFP and successful commissioning of entire system and maintenance for a period of 3 years including 01 year DLP after successful completion (under Jal Jeevan Mission).	36.02	72040	500	30 Days	AAY/BEE
4.	Retrofitting of water supply scheme Pathribal Panchthan by way of providing, laying/Fitting of pipes, capacity masonry ST and improvements to existing pipe network/ realigning of existing intake main from paddy fields incl successful commissioning of entire system and maintenance for a period of 3 years including 01 year DLP after successful completion (under Jal Jeevan Mission).	79.43	158860	1000	60 Days	AAY
5.	Retrofitting of WSS Gawan by way of providing, laying/Fitting of pipes, construction of crate protection works at head site. Revamping of 0.30 lac gallons SSFP. RCC Jacketing to collection Tank and improvement existing pipe system including successful commissioning of entire system and maintenance for a period of 3 years including 01 year DLP after successful completion (under Jal Jeevan Mission).	17.86	35720	200	15 Days	BEE/CEE
6.	Retrofitting of WSS Naray by way of providing, laying/Fitting of pipes, construction of crate protection works at head site. Revamping of 0.30 lac gallons SSFP. RCC Jacketing to collection Tank and improvement existing pipe system including successful commissioning of entire system and maintenance for a period of 3 years including 01 year DLP after successful completion (under Jal Jeevan Mission).	69.11	138220	1000	60 Days	AAY

## Position of AA : Accorded Position of Funds: Available

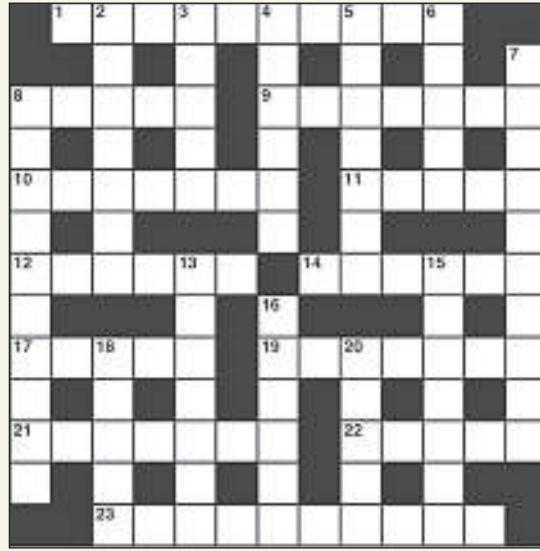
The Bidding documents consisting of eligibility criteria, specification, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the e-procurement Portal "<http://jtktenders.gov.in>" as per schedule of dates given below:

Sl. No.	Description	DD	MM	YYYY	Time




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CROSSWORD 4339



ACROSS

- 1 Appropriate change of accent is made (10)
- 8 Supply a trace-out (5)
- 9 Martine changes apparel (7)
- 10 Vain yet possibly showing simplicity (7)
- 11 Equally determined to gain an advantage (5)
- 12 Unit is possibly Roman naturally placed (2,4)
- 14 It's worn by a woman for a dance (6)
- 17 It comes back to beat a giant (5)
- 19 Little devil learning to beg (7)
- 21 Making a submission to a higher authority (7)
- 22 They are driven to join things (5)
- 23 In touch certainly and holding one's share of the deal (4-2-4)

DOWN

- 2 Gets messing about in boats (7)
- 3 In favour of church power (5)
- 4 Stragglers revealed in street lights (6)
- 5 A stirring instruction to the player (7)
- 6 The first woman to get two points draws level (5)
- 7 A rest is not arranged for paper sellers (10)
- 8 Firm belief may lead to imprisonment (10)
- 13 One isn't shaken though it may make one shake (7)
- 15 Geological term for beach wear possibly (7)
- 16 Creature ailing badly (6)
- 18 Consumer items that are cut and polished (5)
- 20 A blow Judy had to contend with (5)

Solutions Crossword 4338: Across: 1In part, 4Abbes, 9Stadium, 10Upper, 11Eroto, 12Liberty, 13Presumption, 18Rangoon, 20Award, 22Howes, 23Express, 24Ernest, 25Tendon. Down: 1Instep, 2Plaza, 3Ruinous, 5Blurb, 6Esparto, 7Strays, 8Small-minded, 14Run-down, 15Trapsie, 16Bridge, 17Edison, 19Oasis, 21Ahead.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below 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.

I \_ where the last man \_ - Thomas Edison (5,4,3)

BVAER



EEMITT



CUOST



LUYFFF



Answer: BRAVE SCOUT, METTE FLIPPER

SOLUTIONS: Start where the last man left off - Thomas Edison

CORRIGENDUM-2

Please refer RFP for Management of Enterprise Wide Loyalty Programme, No. SBI/EWLP/RFP/001/2020-21 dated 01/01/2021, Notice of which was published on 01/01/2021 in this newspaper. Please also refer Corrigendum Notice dated 15/01/2021 which was published on 16/01/2021 in this newspaper. Corrigendum-2 details are available on our websites: <https://bank.sbi>, <https://www.sbi.co.in> under 'Procurement News' and <https://etender.sbi>/

Place: Mumbai

By: General Manager (Debit Cards)

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely Pooja, D/o Ramher Singh, R/o H. No. 83, Vill-Kheda Kalan, Delhi, Age: 21 years, Height: 5'3", Built: Thin, Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Wearing: Sky Blue Colour Suit and Blue Colour Salwar and Sandal in her feet has been missing from her home since 12.01.2021. In this regard a DD No. 77A dated 12.01.2021 has been registered at P.S. Alipur, Outer-North Distt., Delhi.

Pooja  
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this girl please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in

SHO Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax : 011-24368639

DP/748/ON/2021

P.S. Alipur,

Outer-North Distt., Delhi

Ph.: 011-27202265/7065036325

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Storm Water Drain, (West Zone), 9th Floor, Jayanagara Shopping Complex, Jayanagara 4th Block, Bengaluru - 560 011.

No: EE/SWD/WEST/TEND/01/2020-21 Date: 27.01.2021

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IIFT) (Two Cover System) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only) (STD-KW-4) - 2nd Call

The Executive Engineer, (SWD) West Zone, BBMP Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible contractors registered in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagar Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES/National Highway or any State Government Organizations for the construction of works detailed in the table below.

Name of the Work	Amount put to Tender (₹. in Lakhs)	EMD (in ₹.)
Construction of RCC Retaining Wall on LHS of V-200 at CH:9700m in Manasanagara beside Government School in Ward No:128.	102.60	NIL-(Declaration as in Annexure to be Submitted)

Calendar of Events : (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the e-procurement portal of the Government of Karnataka from 29.01.2021. (2) Pre-Bid Meeting on 08.02.2021 at 4:00 pm. (3) Last Date for Receipt of the Filled Tender Document is 12.02.2021 at 4:00 pm. (4) Date of Opening of Technical Bid is on 16.02.2021 at 4:30 pm. (5) Date of Opening of Financial Bid: Will be intimated at a later date. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or the website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer SWD (West Zone)

STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.



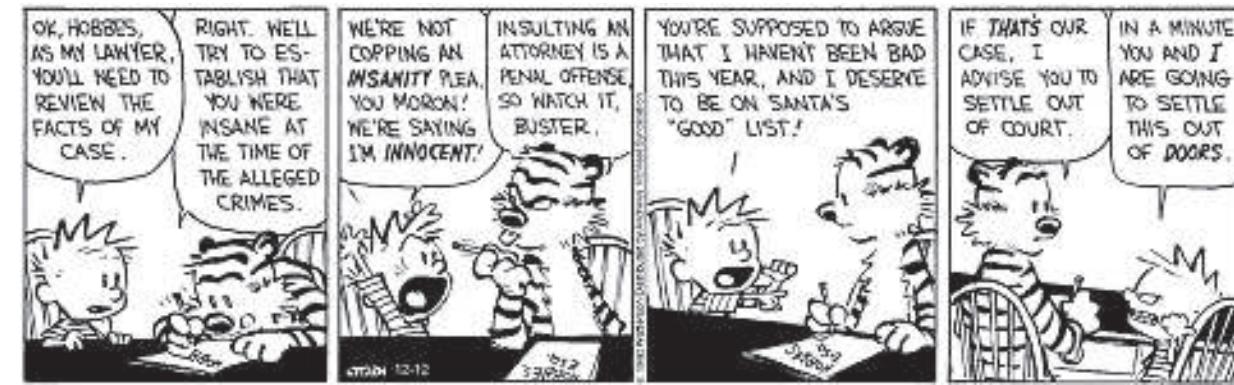
6 Feet

Maintain Hand Hygiene

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



DAY TODAY

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You have a tough choice to make, perhaps one that affects you and your alone as much as other people. Whichever side of the fence you come down on, you will open yourself up for a set of very interesting personal experiences. It's also time to take a sober look at a couple of suggestions that you've been treating rather frivolously.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

We have to face the fact that you may not be affected by current circumstances in the same way as other people. It's possible, therefore, that you'll have to watch while partners take the limelight, but not for long. The advantage is that you could be left in peace to get on with your own schemes.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 22)

Someone is enchanting you. But, from their point of view, they may be more under your spell than you are under theirs. Whatever the truth of the matter, it seems certain that a meeting of minds is inevitable. And, out of that, could come a new, solid commitment.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

You may be on tenterhooks. The obvious response to your concerns is 'relax, it might never happen'. You may find this unsympathetic but then, in more ways than one, you have been here before, haven't you? In fact, and here's a strange twist, what you're thinking about might already have happened – without your noticing.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

It should be particularly easy to express yourself at the moment. Even for those who are not interested in what you have to say, your views will eventually prove to be deeply pertinent, prophetic even. In general, though, you can begin to wind down the pressure in a number of areas.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

You are probably spending far too much, not to mention thinking about money more than is really necessary. After a momentary lapse, you may come to realise that your security relies more on emotional contentment than the quantity of coins in your pocket.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

It is inevitable that money will loom large in your consciousness. Some may pick up bargains. Others will make a smart long-term investment. But remember that if you do have to spend extra cash, it should be on items you need rather than want.

BY PETER VIDAL

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Today's planetary formation is like a sort of small birthday shared by everyone born under your sign all at the same time. After a period of contemplation, work out what your top priority is and make a personal wish. Implement whatever you decide without delay.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

Forget the real world - it's time for some heavy day-dreaming. If you have chores and responsibilities you really can't shelve, then make whatever time for yourself you can. In love, play it cool – but don't be too fussy. And don't pretend that feelings don't matter.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

Your charms are definitely coming to the fore again, which will be very useful as far as your long-term interests are concerned. One thing would say is that you must be prepared to lay out some cash up front if you are pursuing important schemes.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

There is no reason for any unpleasantness, so don't allow yourself to be easily provoked. Authority needs to be respected and, in your turn, must exercise power with dignity. There'll be moments when you have to stand back and let partners take first place – it's all in the timing.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Although you, and people around you, may be rather edgy, you need to be making stalwart resolutions about where you are going, and how. Travel influences are exceptionally strong, so take the opportunity to develop all overseas and long-distance contacts.

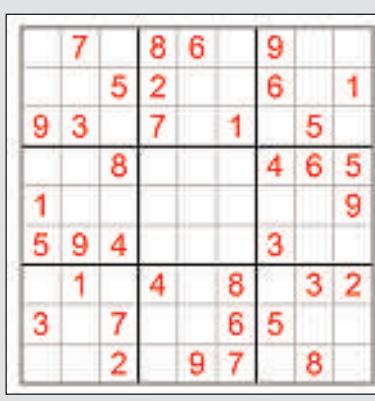
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SUDOKU 4366

Difficulty Level  
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 4365



GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU TENKASI MUNICIPALITY

TAMILNADU SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)  
E-Procurement Notice  
(One Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)  
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Bid No.: 1039/2020/E1 Date: 27.01.2021

- The Government of India has received financing from the World Bank towards the cost of Tamil Nadu Sustainable Urban Development Project and intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contracts for construction of works as detailed below.
- Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding procedures agreed with the World Bank. Bidding is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works and Non-Consulting Services under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers, January 2011.
- Bidders from India should, however, be registered with the Government of Tamilnadu or other State Governments/ Government of India, or State/Central Government Undertakings. Bidders from India, who are not registered as above, on the date of bidding, can also participate provided they get themselves registered by the time of contract signing, if they become successful bidders. **Bidders are advised to note the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) and minimum qualification criteria (Section III – Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of the contract.** In addition, please refer to paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of the World Bank's Guidelines setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.
- The Commissioner, invites online bids for the construction of works detailed below in the table. The bidders may submit bids for any or all of the works indicated therein.
- Bidding documents are available online on [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) from 28.01.2021 to 18.02.2021 at free of cost.
- For submission of the bid, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the Certifying Authorities authorised by Government of India for issuing DSC. Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-procurement in this Project, may obtain the same from the website: [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in). A non-refundable fee of Rs. ....(inclusive of tax) is required to be paid (to be submitted along with other documents listed in paragraph 9 below) before the opening of the bid i.e., before 19.02.2021. The mode of payment shall be in the form of DD drawn in favour of **The Commissioner, Tenkasi Municipal Corporation** payable at ENAS, Tenkasi.
- All bid documents must be submitted in a sealed envelope and the amount specified for the work in the table below, drawn in favour of **The Commissioner, Tenkasi Municipal Corporation**. Bid security will have to be valid in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding document and shall have to be valid for 45 days beyond the validity of the bid. Procedure for submission of bid security is described in Para 9.
- Bids must be submitted online on [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) on or before 15:00 hours on 18.02.2021 and will be opened online on 19.02.2021 at 15:30 hours. Any bid or modifications to bid (including discount) received outside e-procurement system will not be considered. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time. The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids.
- The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand drafts towards the cost of bid document and registration on e-procurement website (if not previously registered); (b) original bid security in approved form; and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document with **The Commissioner, Tenkasi Municipal Corporation**, Anakalai Street, Tenkasi 627811, Tamilnadu before the opening of the bid i.e., before 18.02.2021, either by registered post/speed post/courier or by hand, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive and will not be opened.
- A pre-bid meeting will be held on 05.02.2021 at 15:00 hrs. at the office of **The Commissioner, Tenkasi Municipal Corporation** to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in ITB Clause 7.4 of Instructions to Bidders of the bidding document. Bidders are advised to download the bidding document prior to the pre-bid meeting in order for bidders to have a good understanding of the scope of work under this contract for discussion and clarification at the pre-bid meeting.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to this bid.

TABLE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Storm Water Drain, (West Zone), 9th Floor, Jayanagara Shopping Complex, Jayanagara 4th Block, Bengaluru - 560 011.  
No: EE/SWD/WEST/TEND/01/2021 Date: 27.01.2021  
INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IIFT) (Two Cover System) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only) (STD-KW-4) - 2nd Call  
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Name of the Work Amount put to Tender (₹. in Lakhs) EMD (in ₹.)

Construction of RCC Retaining Wall on LHS of V-200 at CH:9700m in Manasanagara beside Government School in Ward No:128.

