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Sindhu hopes to give her best and win gold at Tokyo Olympics  
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## NEARBY



**Sedition charges invoked against agitating farmers**  
CHANDIGARH  
The Haryana police have invoked sedition charges against a group of protesting farmers who allegedly damaged the official vehicle of Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa in Sirsa on July 11, during a demonstration against the farm laws. Sirsa's SSP Arpit Jain confirmed that sedition charges under Section 124A of the IPC had been invoked against them.  
NEWS PAGE 8

## June WPI inflation eases to 12.07%

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**  
Inflation based on the Wholesale Price Index slowed marginally to 12.07% in June, from May's record 12.94%, official data showed.  
The government said the "high rate of inflation" was primarily due to the low base effect - the WPI had seen a year-on-year deflation of 1.81% in June 2020 - and the rise in prices of fuels, including petrol and diesel, and manufactured products.  
FULL REPORT ON PAGE 14

# Govt. directs private centres to step up the pace of vaccination

States asked to monitor progress; Health Minister rubbishes claims of shortage

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**

The slow pace of COVID-19 vaccination by private centres in some States is a "cause of serious worry", Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said on Wednesday.  
Mr. Bhushan said he had directed the States to review the status and progress of vaccine procurement by these centres on a daily basis. Many private COVID-19 vaccination centres (PCVCs), he said, had not placed any indent for the earmarked quantum of vaccines.  
Mr. Bhushan chaired a meeting with the Health Secretaries and senior immunisation officials of 15 States and Union Territories during which the areas of concern were highlighted, including delay in ordering and lifting of doses and payment.  
He directed them to ensure that the indents for the earmarked quantum of vaccines were placed with the vaccine manufacturers at the earliest.  
Senior health officials of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Delhi, Punjab and Haryana participated in the videoconference. Nodal representatives from the vaccine manufacturers Bharat Biotech and Se-



**Virus protection:** People waiting in the observation area of a Delhi hospital after receiving the COVID-19 shot on Wednesday. • AFP

rum Institute of India (SII) were present. The State governments and the PCVCs were advised to ensure that the gap between the indent quantity and the payment towards their procurement was reduced to zero. Some States/PCVCs had not physically lifted the vaccines that had been paid for. They should ensure the lifting of the dispatched doses immediately, he said.  
A release issued by the Union Health Ministry said that in some States, wherever vaccine doses had been lifted by the PCVCs, their actual administration was seen to be less than the quantity lifted.  
The States and the PCVCs

were advised to review this and ensure that the unutilised vaccine doses were quickly administered.  
The Ministry said more than 39.59 crore doses had been provided to the States and the Union Territories so far, through all sources and a further 30,250 doses were in the pipeline.  
**'Unutilised vaccines'**  
"Of this, the total consumption, including wastage, is 38,07,68,770 doses (as per data available at 8 a.m. on Wednesday). More than 1.51 Cr (1,51,52,450) balance and unutilised COVID Vaccine doses are still available with the States/UTs and private

hospitals to be administered," it stated.  
Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, in a series of tweets, rubbished allegations by the State governments of vaccine shortage due to the Union government not ensuring adequate supplies. "11.46 cr. doses of vaccine were made available to States govts. in June so that vaccination can be done through government and private hospitals," he said. "This availability has been increased to 13.50 crores in the month of July."  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8  
NO ROOM FOR COMPLACENCY, SAYS MHA PAGE 10

## Delhi Police fined ₹25K for 'farcical' probe

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH NEW DELHI**  
A local court here imposed a cost of ₹25,000 on Delhi Police while questioning the fairness of the probe conducted into a case of a man who suffered a gunshot injury in his left eye during the riots last year. The court said the probe had "been done in a most callous and farcical manner".  
DETAILS ON PAGE 2

## SC notice to Centre, U.P. on Kanwar Yatra

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**  
The Supreme Court on Wednesday took suo motu cognisance of a media report that the annual Kanwar Yatra is likely to be held from July 25, amid rising fears of a third COVID wave.  
"We were a little disturbed given today's headline in *The Indian Express* of July 14 about the 'Kanwar Yatra', which is likely to be held from July 25. This court has taken suo motu cognisance of the report and thus issues notice to the Union of India and the States of U.P. and Uttarakhand to file their early response," a Bench, led by Justice Rohinton F. Nariman, said.  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## Haryana 'excess deaths' seven times official toll

Huge undercount during second wave

**Moderate excess**  
Haryana's excess deaths - 60,397 during the pandemic period, calculated by comparing baseline mortality during with pre-pandemic years (2018 and 2019) were 7.3 times more than the official COVID-19 tally recorded in the State till May 31, 2021. This multiple was slightly more than that of T.N. and Karnataka and lower than that of A.P. and M.P.

State	Excess deaths <sup>1</sup>	COVID-19 tally	Multiple <sup>1</sup>
A.P.	1,95,422	10,930	17.9
M.P.	1,92,004	8,068	23.8
Tamil Nadu <sup>2</sup>	1,54,965	24,232	6.4
Karnataka	1,25,732	29,090	4.3
Haryana	60,397	8,303	7.3
Kerala <sup>3</sup>	4,178	9,954	0.4

<sup>1</sup>Baseline mortality: Average of 2018 and 2019 figures | <sup>2</sup>Based on State's official COVID-19 tally | <sup>3</sup>Reconciled COVID-19 death toll released by State

**SRINIVASAN RAMANI CHENNAI**  
The number of "excess deaths" registered by the Civil Registration System (CRS) in Haryana ever since the COVID-19 pandemic hit (from April 2020 to May 2021) was 60,397, which is 7.3 times the official reported figure of 8,303 COVID-19 deaths for the same period.  
This high number was largely due to the deaths registered in April 2021 (28,276) and May 2021 (46,108). In this period which coincided with the second wave, the excess deaths were around 46,283, compared with the registered COVID-19 tally of 5,148, leading to an undercount factor of 9. The overall tally in Haryana, as of July 12, is 9,556.  
The excess deaths were calculated based on the month-wise number of deaths registered in the online CRS from January 2018 to May 2021, which was accessed by *The Hindu*. Not all excess deaths would be related to COVID-19 but a bulk of them are, during the pandemic. The mortality figures registered online for 2018 and 2019 - 1,85,842 and 1,88,910 - were 96.1% and 97.3% of the deaths mentioned in the annual reports on "Vital Statistics in India based on CRS" 2018 and 2019 respectively.  
The undercount factor (7.3) and the excess deaths for Haryana (60,397) were lower compared with those from Madhya Pradesh (23.8 and 1,92,044) in the same period and for which complete data have been made available so far.  
FARIDABAD ON TOP PAGE 10

# SC to examine plea challenging sedition

**KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL NEW DELHI**  
The Supreme Court will examine a petition filed by a retired Major-General who said a nearly 60-year-old judgment of the court that helped sedition survive in the Indian Penal Code was behind time

and needed a relook.  
A Bench, led by CJI N.V. Ramana, on Wednesday listed the case for hearing on July 15 and asked Major-General S.G. Vombatkere (ret'd.), represented by advocates P.B. Suresh and S. Prasanna, to serve a copy of his petition to Ator-

ney General K.K. Venugopal.  
The petitioner argued that the 1962 judgment in the *Kedar Nath* case, which upheld Section 124A (sedition), a relic of the colonial legacy, was given at a time when doctrines such as 'chilling effect' on free speech were unheard of.  
CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

The *Kedar Nath* judgment was delivered during an era when the scope and inter-relationship of fundamental rights such as liberty, equality and dignity were "rather restrictive", the plea said.

## 'Afghanistan's future can't be its past'

**SUHASINI HAIDAR TASHKENT**  
The world will not legitimise a Taliban regime that comes to power in Kabul by force, indicated External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Wednesday, amid rapid advances made by the militant group on towns and border checkpoints in various parts of Afghanistan.  
Speaking at the "Contact Group" meeting of the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in Dushanbe, Mr. Jaishankar said the future of Afghanistan "cannot be its past", referring to the previous takeover of the country by the Taliban in 1996. The group also issued a joint statement decrying the violence.  
"The world is against seizure of power by violence and force. It will not legitimise such actions," Mr. Jaishankar told the meeting, which included Ministers from Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.  
Instead, Mr. Jaishankar said, peace negotiations would need to result in an "acceptable compromise" that reflected the Doha, Moscow and Istanbul-Heart of Asia processes, and produced an "end state" that ensured a democratic and neutral Afghanistan.

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# Court fines Delhi Police ₹25K for 'farcical' probe into riots case

It says officials have 'miserably failed' in their statutory duties

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

A local court here has imposed a cost of ₹25,000 on the Delhi police while questioning the fairness of the probe conducted into a case of a man who suffered a gunshot injury in his left eye during the north-east Delhi riots in February last year.

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav censured Delhi Police for resisting registration of an FIR based on the complaint of the victim, Mohammad Nasir, a resident of North Ghonda in Delhi.

"It is clearly evident that defence for the accused per-

sons named in the complaint of respondent [Mr. Nasir] has been sought to be created by the police," the judge remarked while dismissing Delhi police's appeal against an October 21, 2020, order of a trial court here directing registration of an FIR.

## Bhajanpura SHO

"Seeing the matter from any angle, I have not been able to persuade myself about the efficacy and fairness of the investigation carried out in the matter," the judge remarked, adding that the investigation has "been done in a most casual, callous and farcical manner".

The judge further noted the police "did not bother to look into the grievance of the respondent that he was being constantly threatened by the accused persons".

The court directed the DCP (North-East) to deposit the fine with the Delhi Legal Services Authority within a week. It also said the fine amount should be recovered from the Station House Officer of Bhajanpura police station and his supervising officers, "who have miserably failed in their statutory duties in this case".

The incident in question took place on February 24 last year, when Mr. Nasir was bringing his sister home from Max Hospital in Shalimar Bagh. When their cab reached Khajuri Chowk, they saw chaos and fires all around. The police officials present there advised him to avoid the normal route. They took a detour, but were stopped by rioters near Rubber Factory Chowk. They were allowed to proceed af-



Policemen stand in front of vandalised shops following riots in north-east Delhi's Bhajanpura on February 24, 2020. •FILE PHOTO

ter Mr. Nasir told the rioters his name was Krishna.

The cab driver, however, insisted that he didn't want to go any further due to the situation, so, Mr. Nasir and his sister left the cab at Gokulpuri flyover. On reaching the street of his house, he noticed a mob of around 100-

150 people carrying rods, pistols, petrol bombs and swords etc, which was allegedly being led by the owner of M/s Tyagi Store.

Mr. Nasir alleged that since he belonged to a different community, Naresh Tyagi fired at him as a result of which he suffered gunshot

injury in his left eye.

He was taken to Guru Tegh Bahadur Hospital where he was operated upon and subsequently discharged on March 12, 2020.

On March 19, 2020, he gave a written complaint to the Bhajanpura SHO in which he named Naresh Tyagi, Subhash Tyagi, Uttam Tyagi, Sushil, Naresh Gaur and their other accomplices as the assailants. However, no FIR was registered by the police. Mr. Nasir then approached the trial court on July 17, 2020.

In the meantime, an FIR was lodged at the Bhajanpura police station on the statement of an Assistant Police Sub Inspector with regard to the incident of rioting in the area on February 24, 2020.

It was also recorded in the FIR that Mr. Nasir had suf-

fered gunshot injuries at the spot on the date and time of the incident. It was further stated that besides him, six more persons: Ali Hasan, Altaf, Javed, Aman, Faizi and Adnan, had also suffered gunshot injuries. The court noted that all the injured persons were taken to hospitals by their family members and not by the police.

## Police response

The police said all the accused persons named by Mr. Nasir had been thoroughly interrogated, "however, no evidence was found against them". Police said Naresh Tyagi and Uttam Tyagi were not present in Delhi at the time, as they had gone to their native place for attending family functions. Sushil was present in his office on duty and nothing was stated

about Naresh Gaur.

"Perusal of the case diaries reveals a very shocking state-of-affairs," the court said. While the incident against Mr. Nasir happened at North Ghonda, the FIR was lodged in respect of Mohanpuri, Maujpur.

"The factum of seven persons... having suffered gunshot injuries was in the due knowledge of the investigating agency, however, for reasons best known to it, Section 307 of Indian Penal Code (attempt to murder) and Section 25 of the Arms Act were not invoked initially at the time of FIR registration," the court noted.

The court also questioned why the police were unable to trace any eyewitnesses in the case despite the medico-legal case of Mr. Nasir clearly having his address.

## Man arrested for passing on files to ISI

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 34-year-old man was arrested from Rajasthan for allegedly obtaining sensitive documents from an Indian Army official and providing it to Pakistani intelligence agency ISI, officials said on Wednesday.

The suspect, Habeeb Khan, who hails from Bikaner, was nabbed by the Delhi Police Crime Branch from Pokhran, where he had been working as a vegetable supplier on contract basis, they said.

Preliminary investigation has revealed that the suspect used to fish out sensitive documents from an Army official posted at the Pokhran army base camp and further provided them to ISI, a senior police officer said.

## Notice to govt. after plea for DMC chief's removal

Zakir Khan abused his power: petition

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government on a petition seeking removal of Zakir Khan from the post of Chairman of the Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC) for allegedly abusing his position.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh also issued notice to the DMC and Mr. Khan on the petition and listed it for further hearing on August 31. The petition was filed by one Abdul Amir Amiro, who complained that Mr. Khan after assuming office as the Chairman of DMC in August last year has been "continuously exercising the abuse of his position and power".

The plea contended that



members of the commission including its Chairman being 'public servant' should not get associated with political party.

The petition claimed Mr. Khan, who was formerly an AAP leader, was holding meetings with its members and has been taking part in party rallies. It said Mr. Khan has "knowingly misused his power and position to act upon as an agent of AAP for propagating the political party".

## City gets above average rain for the season

Partly cloudy sky with light rain forecast for today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Rain continued to lash the city under the influence of the south-west monsoon on Wednesday with the maximum temperature settling at 35 degrees Celsius, which is normal for the season.

The Capital received 26.1 mm of rainfall between 8 a.m. and 5.30 p.m., and 28.5 mm of rainfall in the preceding 24 hours. The minimum temperature settled at 26 degrees Celsius, which was one degree below normal. The Met department has forecast partly cloudy sky with light rain or thundershowers on Thursday.

Isolated to scattered rainfall can be expected till July 16 and enhanced rainfall from July 17.



Heavy waterlogging during monsoon rain in Delhi on Wednesday. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Despite the monsoon arriving over two weeks late, deficit rainfall has been covered and Delhi has now received more than the average rainfall for the season, IMD data show.

The rain was, however, not equally distributed across the city with Palam receiving 2.4 mm on Wednesday while the Ridge re-

corded 107.4 mm of rainfall.

## Waterlogging complaints up

The Public Works Department (PWD) on Wednesday received 10 waterlogging complaints every hour, up from 7 complaints on Tuesday. Significant waterlogging was reported from more than a dozen arterial points located in north and east

Delhi, including ITO, with at least 70 calls logged till 5 p.m., the PWD said.

The complaints, according to the PWD, originated in relation to the Azadpur area and Azadpur Mandi, ITO to Bhairon Marg, Jhilmil underpass, GTK bus depot, Nangia Park, Punjabi Bagh underpass, Shahdara and Zahkara among others.

## For women, bus ride back home becomes an ordeal

Limited seats due to COVID-19 norms leaves them stranded for hours at bus stops, raising safety concerns

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI

Striking a balance between women's safety and COVID appropriate behaviour has turned out to be a challenge for the police. Women commuters allegedly have to wait for over an hour for public transport after sunset as most buses refuse rides citing limited number of seats.

A Delhi government official said the 50% limit on seating capacity on public transport, including State-run buses as well as the Delhi Metro, was in accordance with the guidelines issued by



Women waiting for a bus at Rail Bhavan bus stand on Wednesday. •R.V. MOORTHY

the Centre to control the spread of the pandemic.

Sandhya Sharma, a resident of Laxmi Nagar said: "My work ends at 6 p.m. but I reach home, which is just four kilometres from my of-

office, at 8 p.m. because most of the buses didn't stop at ITO as they are all running at full capacity. My pocket doesn't allow me to hire an autorickshaw daily."

Shweta Gupta, a student, said while returning home after visiting a doctor, she and her mother didn't get a bus after two hours of waiting. "Buses are free for women but there is no space. Either buses don't stop at bus stops or marshal comes out and signals space for one passenger only," she said.

As a bus approaches the bus stop at Pragati Maidan, passengers keep an eye on

the bus marshal's signal to know how many seats are vacant. This starts a frenzy among those waiting to board. In the commotion, women and children are left behind as men push their way in to the vehicle.

"COVID appropriate behaviour applies only inside the bus but not at the bus stop or while boarding. I wouldn't dare to go near the bus as men fight for space and never think of the women waiting late night at a bus stop. Anti-social elements pass comments and last-mile connectivity is also an issue for women during late night,"

said Kusum Rana, a passenger waiting at ITO bus stop.

## Increased patrolling

Chinmoy Biswal, PRO of Delhi Police, said they have already increased patrolling in isolated stretches and they will raise the matter with authorities for more buses during peak hours.

A Delhi govt. official said the Graded Response Action Plan, which had standard operating procedures related to all activities, including public transport, had been prepared by all stakeholders to prevent the possible spread of COVID-19.

## 'Vacant parking spaces to be offered to food trucks'

Noida Metro looks to augment revenue

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

In a bid to augment non-fare box revenue, the Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) on Wednesday said that the vacant parking spaces at metro stations will be offered to food truck vendors. The vendors will be required to pay a fixed licence fee or rental fee to avail the designated space.

Vendors will be permitted to operate between 9 a.m. and 10.30 p.m. daily, according to the NMRC. Officials said that the NMRC has issued an Expression of Interest (EOI) to invite applications from interested stakeholders.

"The mobile food or food truck service vendor will pay NMRC a fixed licence fee or rental fee to avail the designated space at parking

area which shall be decided by the NMRC. The minimum tentative space proposed to be provided for installation of each food truck is 25 square meters and the maximum available space shall vary station wise," officials said.

According to the NMRC, a total of 15 stations were offered for food, recreational, utility truck facility under the EOI.

## Monthly fee

The monthly licence fee varies from ₹390 to ₹600, excluding taxes and is dependent on the "band" category of the location. Out of the 15 stations being offered for the facility, two are on band 1 category, nine stations in band 2 category and four stations in band 3 category, according to officials.

## Extra 5.6 km on Rithala-Narela line on anvil

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Following a joint inspection of a proposed Rithala-Narela corridor, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said that a single alignment was not enough to serve the entire area.

An additional 5.6 kilometre corridor may be planned subject to government clearances, the Delhi Metro said.

"The DMRC has suggested that one single alignment cannot serve the entire area with just one corridor," said Anuj Dayal, DMRC spokesperson.

Mr. Dayal added, "Therefore, in addition to the original corridor already proposed between Rithala and Narela (22.9 km), a spur of 5.6 km length from Puth Khurd to Holambi Kalan may be planned."

**उद्योग संचालनालय भोपाल**  
(सूक्ष्म लघु एवं माध्यम उद्यम विभाग म. प्र.)  
क्र. 2474 दिनांक: 09/07/2021

**औद्योगिक भूखंडों के ई-नीलामी से आवंटन हेतु आवेदनों का आमंत्रण**

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भूखंड हेतु ई-नीलामी की प्रमुख शर्तें इस प्रकार हैं

- भू-खंडों का आवंटन "मध्यप्रदेश एमएसएमई औद्योगिक भूमि तथा भवन आवंटन एवं प्रबंधन नियम 2021" के तहत किया जायेगा।
- प्रत्येक भू-खंड हेतु आवेदन शुल्क रूपये 5000/- होगा एवं जीएसटी राशि पृथक से देय होगी। आवेदन शुल्क वापसी योग्य नहीं है [नियम 11 (i)]
- आवेदन शुल्क के अतिरिक्त आवेदित भूमि हेतु आवेदन दिनांक को प्रचलित प्रबन्धी की 25 प्रतिशत अग्रिम राशि ऑनलाईन जमा करानी होगी जो आवंटन के समय समायोजन योग्य होगी। [नियम 11 (1) (iv)]
- नीलामी के लिये बेस प्राइस भूखंड की प्रबन्धी तथा विकास शुल्क का योग होगा। [नियम 12 (i) (अ) (i) (1)]
- ई-नीलामी में भाग लेने हेतु Class 3 Digital Signature होना आवश्यक है।

नियम, प्रक्रिया एवं भू-खण्डों आदि की विस्तृत जानकारी विभाग की वेबसाइट [mpmsme.gov.in](http://mpmsme.gov.in) से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

**सहायक संचालक**  
**कृते उद्योग आयुक्त**  
G-14508/2021

**ODISHA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**  
**ADVERTISEMENT NO.06 of 2021-2022**  
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- Application fee- Rs. 400/- for candidates other than SC, ST and PWD candidates.
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**CUTTACK**  
DATE:- 14/07/21  
D-55:

**SECRETARY**  
**ODISHA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION, CUTTACK**  
QIPR-12092/11/0033/2122

**झारखण्ड सरकार**  
**पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग**

**ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट सूचना**  
**(प्रथम आमंत्रण)**

**ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या - (तेनुघाट) (JJM) 09/2021-22 तिथि - 13.07.2021**

क्र.	विवरण	अंदाजित मूल्य
1	Name of the Work :- Detailed survey, designing and drawing, Construction of R.C.C. Intake Well cum Pump House, R.C.C. Gangway 70 M long and 3.00 M wide, 13.50 MLD Capacity Conventional Water Treatment Plant, RCC Elevated Service Reservoir - 9 nos., RCC Ground Service Reservoir - 1 no. Staff Quarter, Compound Wall, S.H. Crossing, Pump House, Supplying and laying Raw and Clear Water rising main and Distribution Network, House Connection, Supplying and Installation of VT and Centrifugal pump motor. Five years operation & maintenance with allied works etc. all complete job for <b>Kasmar and Adjoining Village Rural Water Supply Scheme</b> under D.W. & S. Division <b>Tenughat</b> on turnkey basis. For the year 2021-22.	11353.02 लाख
2	प्राकृतिक राशि	113.54 लाख
3	अवधन की राशि	10000.00
4	परिमण विपन्न का मूल्य	33 माह + 3 माह (द्वयल रन की अवधि)
5	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	19.07.2021 समन 02.00 बजे अपरालन तक
6	वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि	27.07.2021 समन 12.30 बजे अपरालन तक
7	प्री ब्रीड मिटिंग की तिथि	10.08.2021 समन 05.00 बजे अपरालन तक
8	निविदा प्राप्ति (ऑन लाइन बिडिंग) की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	12.08.2021 समन 04.00 बजे अपरालन तक
9	पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, तेनुघाट/ओडिशा अभिविभागे पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता अंशक धनवाद/क्षेत्रीय मुख्या अभिविभागे, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग दुमका प्रखंड दुमका के कार्यालय में परिमाण विपन्न का मूल्य एवं अवधन की राशि की मूल प्रति जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	
10	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	13.08.2021 समन 04:00 बजे अपरालन
11	निविदा खोलने का स्थान	ओडिशा अभिविभागे कार्यालय पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता अंशक, धनवाद।
12	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम/पदनाम :- ईं राम प्रवेश राम, कार्यपालक अभिविभागे, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, तेनुघाट।	
13	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले कार्यालय का टेलिकॉन नं०	9430153040, 9430475767
14	ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट सेल का हेल्प लाइन नं०	0651-2480345

नोट - केवल ई निविदा ही स्वीकार किये जायेंगे।  
ऐसे सम्बद्धक जिन्हें पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग झारखण्ड सरकार का निबंधन प्राप्त नहीं है वे भी निविदा में भाग ले सकते हैं व शर्तें कि वेसे सम्बद्धक को कार्य आवंटित की तिथि से दो माह के अन्दर पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग झारखण्ड सरकार से निबंधन पत्र प्राप्त कर लेना अनिवार्य होगा। अधिक जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट <http://jharkhandtender.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।

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PR 249517(Drinking Water and Sanitation)21-22\*D

**Timings DELHI**

**THURSDAY, JUL. 15**  
RISE 05:34 SET 19:21  
RISE 10:22 SET 23:08

**FRIDAY, JUL. 16**  
RISE 05:35 SET 19:21  
RISE 11:23 SET 23:41

**SATURDAY, JUL. 17**  
RISE 05:35 SET 19:21  
RISE 12:24 SET 00:00

**Delhi Weather**

	max	min
Delhi City	35	26
Safdarjang	35	26
Palam	34	27

**Delhi Palam Today**  
34°C Light rain or thunderstorm likely at some places with cloudy sky and warm and humid day.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
35°C Rise in day temperature likely. Thunderstorm likely at some places with cloudy sky.

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# Final phase of Khori Basti demolition begins

SC order to free land from encroachers by July 19 will be adhered to, says Faridabad Commissioner

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT FARIDABAD**

The Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF) on Wednesday kicked off the final phase of demolition at Khori Basti here with less than a week to go for the Supreme Court deadline to remove encroachment on 170-acre forest land. The drive was, however, called off for the day mid-way due to heavy rain.

MCF Commissioner Garima Mittal said the target for the day was achieved before the drive was abandoned due to rain, adding that the Supreme Court order to free the land from encroachers till July 19 would be adhered to "in letter and spirit". She, however, evaded questions on the number of houses demolished, saying that she could not share the "operational details". She said the drive would continue in the days to come.

## Temporary shelter

Ms. Mittal said a camp was being organised for those eligible for the rehabilitation policy of the Haryana govern-



Municipal Corporation of Faridabad kicked off demolition on Wednesday. The drive was, however, called off midway due to heavy rain. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ment and a temporary shelter was also set up through Red Cross for those in need of immediate shelter.

The Faridabad district administration had on Tuesday announced a policy to rehabilitate those having Haryana voter identity card, Parivar Pechan Patra or electricity bill, but the activists objected to it saying that the govern-

ment should not resort to "pick and choose" and extend rehabilitation policy to all. Social activist Meenu Verma said only 1,000-odd residents were eligible for the rehabilitation policy.

Earlier, the demolition squad of the municipal body comprising 17 excavators began the drive in the morning. More than 3,000 police personnel, including three Deputy Commissioners of Pol-

ice, 12 Assistant Commissioners of Police, and staffers from Traffic Police, Crime Branch and Rapid Action Force, were deployed for the demolition under the supervision of Nodal Officer Anshu Singla, Deputy Commissioner of Police, NIT.

The Supreme Court had on June 7 ordered demolition of the structures in Khori Basti on the forest land with-

in six weeks. The demolition was being carried out in bits and pieces since the SC order, and several FIRs were also registered.

## Activists demand

The social activists and political leaders have been demanding that Khori Basti residents be rehabilitated before the demolition and compensated.

The colony has 5,158 houses, 80 shops, five educational institutes, 36 social, public utility and religious structures and two industrial units. Most of the residents are migrants from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Punjab and other States. Most of them bought plots through local real estate agents to settle on the land in early 1990s.

Former Lok Sabha MP and Congress national spokesperson Udit Raj also held demonstrations in Delhi along with Khori Basti residents earlier this month seeking to revoke the court order and save the houses from demolition.

# 160 oxygen plants being set up in city

L-G holds review meeting with officials

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal Wednesday reviewed the status and progress of work related to the installation of PSA oxygen plants in Delhi where he reiterated that the Capital should not face the same situation as that during the second wave of COVID-19 infection.

According to sources present at the meeting, the Delhi Chief Secretary and other senior government officials were present where Mr. Bajjal was informed that a total number of 160 PSA plants with a capacity of 148.11 MT were being installed in various government and private hospitals in the city.

The L-G, according to a source, inquired if this figure of 160 plants was normative or was based on demand or limited by supply constraints and was informed that the figure was based on requirements of around 150 MT posed by hospitals.



L-G Anil Bajjal

While 66 plants, including 17 under the PM CARES Fund were being set up Delhi government hospitals, 10 were being installed in Central government and 84 in private hospitals, a source said the L-G was informed.

Of these, Mr. Bajjal was told, 36 at Delhi government hospitals had been commissioned while 27 were expected to be commissioned by August 31. In relation to the remaining three, where plants were expected to arrive by September 30, commissioning would be completed by October 15.

## Cong. calls for audit of DJB

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**

The Delhi Congress on Wednesday called for an audit of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and alleged that the people of the Capital were dependent on the water tanker mafia for potable water due to the mismanagement of the agency.

It said that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal came to power promising 20,000 litres of free water per family. However, since Delhi was not receiving adequate water supply, those who were not getting regular water supply had to depend on the water mafia.

Leader of the Congress party in the South Corporation Abhishek Dutt alleged that people are getting dirty water with high ammonia. He demanded a plant be established on the Yamuna to filter the water.

## Rainwater harvesting discussed at MPD meet

Next webinar to be held on July 16

**STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI**

In the third webinar conducted by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on the draft Master Plan for Delhi (MPD) 2041, senior officials discussed issues pertaining to physical infrastructure and spatial development framework.

"The major suggestions provided by stakeholders during the webinar were rainwater harvesting for parks and other open public places, fire safety compliance in commercial centres developed and maintained by agencies, management of existing dhalaas by local bodies, physical infrastructure provisions in Green Development Area (GDA), deve-

lopment of decentralised wastewater treatment systems and sanitation system," officials said.

## Other demands

The land-owning agency added that other suggestions put forth by stakeholders who attended the webinar pertained to the issue of water demand and wastewater treatment in future regeneration schemes, managing water demand and reducing wastage of water and focus on the use of treated water.

The next webinar is scheduled to be held on July 16 and will cover aspects like plan monitoring and evaluation and development control norms.

## Govt. to begin single-window facility for e-vehicle chargers

Delhi will be first city to get this service, says DDC official

**STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI**

Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi vice-chairperson Jasmine Shah on Wednesday said that Delhi will soon be the "first city" in India where anyone can get an electric vehicle (EV) charger installed by making a phone call or applying online.

The Delhi government has taken an important step towards empanelment of private charging infrastructure providers for EVs, he said. The empanelment will be accompanied by the rollout of a single-window facility for installation of EV chargers in residential spaces, institutional buildings such as hospitals and also malls and

theatres among other places.

The decision to implement a single-window facility and empanel vendors through discoms for smooth rollout of EV chargers in private and semi-public places was taken on Wednesday at the Charging Infrastructure Working Group meeting of Delhi government chaired by Mr. Shah.

"We have received requests from many apartment societies, RWAs, mall owners etc. that they wish to install EV chargers but don't know how to. This innovative process will enable quick and efficient installation of EV chargers," he said.

The roll-out plan also includes disbursement of a grant of 100% for the purchase of

charging equipment up to ₹6,000, per charging point for the first 30,000 charging points, as per the Delhi EV policy.

## Join hands with Google

In a related development, the Delhi government announced it had joined hands with Google to integrate Delhi's public transit system onto the Google Maps platform today.

Once the project kicks off, the government stated, static and dynamic location data of Delhi buses will be available for passengers in real-time. A bus user will get information of all the routes and bus stops, all bus arrival and departure times in real-time and even by bus numbers.

## 'Vaccine stock to last for less than a day'

Capital reports 77 new COVID-19 cases

**STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI**

The COVID-19 vaccine stock of the city will last for less than a day as per a vaccination bulletin released by the Delhi government on Wednesday.

The Capital had faced a similar situation on Monday and a day later, the Health Minister Satyendar Jain said that 500 vaccination centres were shut due to shortage in the city.

A total of 1,29,054 doses of vaccines were administered in the city on Monday, as per the bulletin.

The total number of vaccine doses administered in Delhi till date, includes 69,57,233 first doses and 21,31,485 second doses, the government's vaccination

bulletin said. Meanwhile, the city reported 77 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total cases to 14,35,281, according to another bulletin.

There was only one death reported and the total number of deaths stood at 25,021.

A total of 76,095 tests were done in a day and that test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.1%. Of the total cases, 14,09,572 people have recovered and there are only 688 active cases.

The Delhi government did not release the daily health bulletin on Tuesday and it was later released on Wednesday morning. As per the bulletin, there were 76 new cases and two deaths.

## With flying colours



**Budding artist:** Raihan Rajiv Vadra, son of Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and businessman Robert Vadra, displaying his work during his first solo photography exhibition 'Dark Perception: An Exposition of Light, Space and Time'. The exhibition is up at the Bikaner House in New Delhi. \*R.V. MOORTHY

## BJP protests outside Raj Niwas for DTC probe

L-G assures party delegation of action

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI**

The BJP on Wednesday staged a sit-in protest outside Raj Niwas demanding that Lieutenant-Governor Anil Bajjal grant permission sought by the Anti-Corruption Branch to probe the alleged DTC bus purchase scam worth ₹5,000 crore.

A BJP delegation led by Delhi party chief Adesh Gupta, Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and Rohini MLA Vijender Gupta, who filed a complaint regarding the alleged scam, met the L-G over the issue but decided to sit-in protest outside his office after the L-G did not allegedly give them "a satisfactory assurance".

"The very Kejriwal government which came to power on the basis of removing corruption is now encouraging it and rather spearheading it. [Mr.] Kejriwal had the knowledge about it but kept quite as he was himself involved in it," the Rohini MLA alleged.

The enquiry committee constituted by the L-G, the BJP delegation argued, had found illegalities in the DTC bus purchase deal tender and the ACB had already sought permission from Mr. Bajjal to probe the issue but were yet to get permission.

"The L-G assured us of justice and we have been assured that the file related to the matter is being referred to the Centre for further action," Mr. Gupta said.

## AAP collects 1 lakh signatures against policies of civic bodies

BJP hits back saying AAP leaders live in 'illusionary world'

**STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI**

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Wednesday claimed that the party has collected 1 lakh signatures as part of its ongoing campaign against the BJP-governed municipal corporations' "harsh" new policies against traders and "increase" in taxes.

"A few days ago, we told you about the new policies introduced by the municipal bodies and the many taxes that have been increased through which thousands of rupees are being taken from the shopkeepers. Be it the commercial tax, trade licence fee or the money being taken from shopkeepers under the name of garbage removal or the annual sum

**Shopkeepers, especially in markets, have a lot of resentment against the municipal bodies**

**SAURABH BHARADWAJ**  
AAP chief spokesperson

of ₹30,000 being taken from clinics just to remove their garbage. Because of these reasons, shopkeepers, especially in city markets, have a lot of resentment against the municipal bodies," AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj said.

He said that the party had started a signature campaign under which party workers and councillors have been visiting different markets as well as shops

across the city to collect signatures of shopkeepers.

"Shopkeepers and doctors are openly saying that the kind of loot and plundering that is being done by the civic bodies clearly shows that the BJP knows that it is very difficult for it to win the next elections. Hence, they are trying to loot as much money as they can," Mr. Bharadwaj added.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said AAP leaders "live in their illusionary world" and want everyone to believe what they dream. "I am, myself an Old Delhi-based trader and have not heard of any campaign amongst traders here or any other prominent market," he said.

## Denied ex gratia, families of two policemen move HC

They died of COVID-19; govt. letter states one officer was not on pandemic duty, hence not eligible

**HEMANI BHANDARI NEW DELHI**

The families of two Delhi police officers, who died of COVID-19 last year, have approached the High Court after the Delhi government allegedly denied them ex gratia as announced earlier.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Shesh Mani Pandey was posted in Crime Branch's fingerprint bureau and died of COVID-19 on May 30 last year. His family had applied for the ex gratia, which was an-

nounced by the government for the kin of those who died of COVID-19 while on duty.

In a letter dated October 7, it was stated that the case had been examined and "is not found covered under the Cabinet decision No. 2835 dated May 13, 2020, as the deceased was performing his routine duty assigned to him and was not deployed for COVID-19 duty, which is a mandatory condition to become eligible for grant of ex gratia of ₹1 crore".

Pandey's son Krishna Kumar Pandey said he finally decided to approach the court as he felt it was unjustified. "My father did not have the option of work-from-home and had to go to work. He visited a murder spot in Central Delhi and that is most likely where he caught the virus," the son said, adding that he also lost his grandfather to COVID-19 in May this year, exactly a year after his father died. "We lost two members to the virus.

My mother now lives with me in Madhya Pradesh and my brother is studying in Delhi," he said.

On July 7, the HC ordered the lawyer representing the government to file a reply, on whether guidelines on who is to be paid the ex gratia were laid down, in four weeks and gave the next date of hearing in October.

Constable Amit Kumar Rana's family approached the HC in June. He died on May 5 and was the first officer in the

force to succumb to COVID-19. His wife Pooja approached the court asking for ex gratia, which Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had tweeted about right after the officer's death.

The family of the constable said the next court hearing is later this month. Ms. Pooja had written to Mr. Kejriwal on the matter. "If a Chief Minister will not fulfil a promise he made, then I may never be able to trust anyone ever again," she wrote.

## REGIONAL APPOINTMENT

Adv. No - 43/2021

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**THE HINDU**  
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## Ramping up supply

Spikes, dips in vaccination rates are normal, but India needs to guard against slackening

Less than a month after the Centre revised its vaccination policy and took over the responsibility of vaccine procurement from the States, old worries of a supply constraint appear to have resurfaced. The Centre's CoWIN database shows that the weekly pace of vaccination has declined to nearly 60% of what was seen in the week after June 21, causing several States, particularly in South India, to complain of a shortage. On June 21, the first day of the new policy, 91 lakh doses were administered and until June 27, it was about 4 crore. The period July 5-11 saw only 2.3 crore vaccine doses dispensed. The Centre's move to take over vaccine administration followed a chaotic April-May when the second wave roiled India with unprecedented ferocity. This was also the time that saw a surge in vaccine demand and the country being unable to deliver because of an underestimation of the need and demand. The heady week of June 21-27 saw 60 lakh vaccines a day becoming the norm. However, the last time India crossed that daily figure was July 3. At least 86 lakh doses have to be administered every day if all Indian adults are to be fully vaccinated by the year end. Beginning this week, the daily doses have again slipped to 30-40 lakh though this is better than in May when India struggled to provide even 20 lakh doses a day.

There are two major concerns with the slackening pace. One, India still has managed to inoculate only 33% of its adult population with at least one dose; just about 8% have been fully vaccinated. At this rate, it is impossible for the Centre to deliver on its stated goal of inoculating all Indian adults by the year end. Second, the signs are apparent everywhere of an uptick in cases. The U.S. — the only country with more cases than India — after a month of reporting less than 15,000 cases a day is now, like India, seeing over 40,000 cases a day. There has also been a rise there in daily deaths. A similar acceleration is also visible in the U.K. and both these countries have vaccinated a large fraction of their adults. India, while better off than in May, still averages about 800-1,000 deaths a day. So, it is far from being out of the woods even as economic activity appears to have near-normalised in many parts. The Centre continues to put the onus on States for planning but does not address a concern of inadequate Covaxin supplies. It has ordered at least eight crore doses since January but only 4.7 crore have been administered. The concerns over a third wave have been voiced but meaningful preparedness entails having enough vaccines. While daily vaccination rates will see spikes and dips, aggressive publicity measures and campaigns are necessary to boost vaccination, as was seen in end June. The Centre and States must work towards sprucing this up.

## Showing the way out

Nepal has a new Prime Minister after the Supreme Court overrules Mr. Oli again

In what must be a *déjà vu* moment for outgoing Prime Minister K.P. Oli and President Bidya Devi Bhandari, the Supreme Court of Nepal set aside their dissolution, in May, of the House of Representatives. The apex court had in February overruled Mr. Oli's decision to dissolve the House in December 2020 as well. But this time, the ruling was more than just a rap on his knuckles. The judgment also paved the way for Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress to be appointed as Prime Minister after recognising his claim based on signatures of 149 lawmakers across different parties affirming their support. The five-member Constitutional Bench also provided the way out of the unending political deadlock in the House by allowing individual lawmakers to ignore their party whips during a trust vote that is a must win for Mr. Deuba. The inability of Mr. Oli and Mr. Deuba to win trust votes, prior to the dissolution decision by Ms. Bhandari, was because the support for them in the 275-member House divided both the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (UML) and the Opposition Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) as rebel lawmakers risked suspension. The court's decision earlier in the year to de-recognise the merged Nepal Communist Party was another factor too. Mr. Oli had minority support within the merged NCP, but his faction retained the endorsement of the bulk of the legislators in the de-merged UML. The rebels, led by Madhav Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal, were limited to a smaller faction. The other component of the NCP, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist-Centre), meanwhile endorsed Mr. Deuba's candidacy, while the JSP was split vertically, with the Mahantha Thakur-Rajendra Mahatole faction supporting Mr. Oli as opposed to the Baburam Bhattarai-Upendra Yadav-led faction.

It remains to be seen whether the lawmakers will now vote based on their individual agency with the fear of suspension gone. There is no guarantee that Mr. Deuba will win a trust vote as he must secure the support of the rebel factions within the UML and the JSP. The Madhav Nepal-led faction, which has not endorsed Mr. Oli and welcomed the judgment, has also been a mercurial force undecided on joining hands with the Opposition in this new situation. Nevertheless, this is a blow to Mr. Oli whose brinkmanship and authoritarian tendencies have come at a difficult time for Nepal's reeling from the COVID-19 outbreak. It is also a stinging rebuke to Ms. Bhandari whose actions as President rubber stamping her former party colleague Mr. Oli's decisions have called into question her role as a constitutional functionary. Mr. Deuba has his task cut out, but a firm message of unity and consultative governance can bring about political stability, something that has long eluded Nepal during both its constitutional monarchy and its republican periods.

# Making welfare conditional is a stamp of coercion

A simple reading of U.P.'s draft population control law is that it will grossly impinge on the right to reproductive freedom



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

On Sunday, the government of Uttar Pradesh released a "Population Policy" in which it stated its intention to bring the gross fertility rate in the State down from the existing 2.7 to 2.1 by 2026. To achieve this, the government says it will consider the enactment of a new piece of legislation. One such law that might be on the anvil is an ominous proposal released just days earlier by the State's Law Commission (<https://bit.ly/3xGHZTF>).

**Incentives and disincentives**  
This draft law, titled the Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill, 2021, seeks to provide not only a series of incentives to families that adhere to a two-child norm, but also intends on disidentifying families that breach the norm from benefits and subsidies. These recommendations are rooted in a culture of coercion. They are also steeped in myth. Experiences from across the world demonstrate that laws of this kind simply do not work. They invariably instil an attitude of discrimination, with a burden imposed disparately on the most vulnerable groups in society.

The draft Bill echoes the U.P. government's new policy in claiming that the State's ecological and economic resources are limited. According to it, unless population growth is regulated, the State will be unable to guarantee the provision of basic rights to all citizens. It also invokes some of the now-usual buzzwords: sustainable development, it says, cannot be

achieved without government-imposed birth control.

To these ends, the draft postulates an array of measures. It promises public servants who undergo sterilisation and adopt a two-child norm several benefits. These include two increments during their service, subsidy towards the purchase of a house, maternity, or paternity leave, with full salary and allowances, as the case may be, for up to 12 months, and free health care and insurance coverage for the spouse.

This is as far as the "incentives" go. The draft Bill also contains a list of punishments. It terms these euphemistically as "disincentives". A person who breaches the two-child norm will be debarred from securing the benefit of any government-sponsored welfare scheme and will be disqualified from applying to any State government job. Existing government employees who infringe the rule will be denied the benefit of promotion. And last, transgressing individuals will be prohibited from contesting elections to local authorities and bodies.

It is worth pondering over whether regulation of population is necessary at all. But assuming such regulation is a legitimate governmental aim, the first question that we must ask of the new proposal is: why. After all, experiences from other States in India show us that there are more efficacious and alternative measures available to control the growth of population, including processes aimed at improving public health and access to education.

Indeed, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare conceded as much before the Supreme Court late last year. Through an affidavit filed in court, the central government argued that "international experience shows that any coercion to have a



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certain number of children is counter-productive and leads to demographic distortions". The Government further confirmed that India was committed to its obligations under international law, including the principles contained in the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, 1994.

### Pledge on right

Foremost in those principles was a pledge from nations that they would look beyond demographic targets and focus instead on guaranteeing a right to reproductive freedom. Since then, in India, the Supreme Court of India has recognised this right as an inalienable promise. In *Suchita Srivastava & Anr vs Chandigarh Administration* (2009), the Court found that a woman's freedom to make reproductive decisions is an integral facet of the right to personal liberty guaranteed by Article 21. "It is important," the Court wrote, "to recognise that reproductive choices can be exercised to procreate as well as to abstain from procreating".

This ruling was endorsed by the Supreme Court's nine-judge Bench verdict in *K.S. Puttaswamy vs Union of India* (2017). A reading of the plurality of opinions there shows us that the Constitution sees a person's autonomy over her body as an extension of the right to privacy. In his judgment, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud held that privacy partakes different connota-

tions. These include decisional autonomy, which comprehends, among other things, liberty over "intimate personal choices such as those governing reproduction". Justice S.K. Kaul similarly declared in his separate judgment that the right to procreation was an important constituent of "the privacy of the home".

Like all other fundamental rights, the right to privacy is not boundless. But, as *Puttaswamy* clarifies, any restriction placed on the right must conform to a doctrine of proportionality. This requires first, that the limitation be rooted in statute; second, that the state show us that the objective of its law is founded on a legitimate governmental aim; third that there are no alternative and less intrusive measures available to achieve the same objective; and fourth, that there exists a rational connection between the limitation imposed and the aims of the statute. The logic here is simple: in pursuing public interest, it is essential that governments ensure that individual liberties are encroached upon to the lowest degree possible. A simple reading of U.P.'s draft law will show us that, if enacted, it will grossly impinge on the right to reproductive freedom. The government will likely argue that there is no violation of privacy here because any decision on sterilisation would be voluntary. But, as we ought to by now know, making welfare conditional is a hallmark of coercion. If we want the idea of India as a welfare state to mean something, the right to access basic goods cannot be made provisional on a person sacrificing her bodily autonomy.

By all accounts, therefore, the proposed law will fall foul of a proportionality analysis. If nothing else, the Union government's concession in the Supreme Court demonstrates that there are several

alternative, less-intrusive means available to regulate population.

### Negative consequences

But the new proposal is also worrying because it is likely to bring with it a host of other deleterious consequences.

For instance, an already skewed sex ratio may be compounded by families aborting a daughter in the hope of having a son with a view to conforming to the two-child norm. The law could also lead to a proliferation in sterilisation camps, a practice that the Supreme Court has previously deprecated. In *Devika Biswas vs Union of India* (2016), the Court pointed to how these camps invariably have a disparate impact on minorities and other vulnerable groups.

As is so often the case with bad laws in India, though, this draft Bill may find support from some past judgments of the Supreme Court. In this case, the Government may point to the judgment in *Javed & Ors vs State of Haryana & Ors* (2003), where the Court upheld a law that disqualified persons with more than two children from contesting in local body elections. But not only is the present proposal far more disproportionate — in that it virtually sanctions civil death for those that violate the norms it fixes — the judgment in *Javed* can no longer be seen as good law.

For one thing, its reasoning flies in the face of *Puttaswamy*. But as rousing as the nine-judge Bench verdict is, its legacy depends on how its findings are applied. For the judgment to have tangible value and meaning, any law of this kind, which invades upon our most personal and ethical choices, must be seen as repugnant to the Constitution.

Suhrith Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

## Five years later, Brexit continues to divide

The Brexiteers who forecast a clean break with the European Union underestimated many key issues



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN & JULIUS FEIN

The British referendum five years ago was supposed to settle the United Kingdom's historical love-hate relationship with Europe, but while the full consequences of Brexit will not be analysed for decades, the U.K. remains as divided as ever, and the way people voted in 2016 forms a large part of their identity. The referendum dominates British politics as the most significant event since the Second World War, resulting in two general elections, ousting two premiers and threatening the political geography of the U.K.

### Loose ends

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson needed a rapid departure from the European Union (EU), and the Withdrawal and Trade and Cooperation Agreements of December 2020 were rushed through. Problems were soon apparent. The U.K. imports 70% of

the fish it consumes; the industry only contributes 0.12% of GDP and employs 0.1% of the workforce (<https://bit.ly/317emwG>), but has political traction. In May, after 60 French fishing boats massed to blockade Jersey over fishing rights, naval units from both Britain and France deployed off Jersey, a farcical reminder of the loose ends of Britain's exit from the EU.

### Case of Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland, part of the U.K. but in the EU's single market, and therefore obliged to follow EU rules, is another case in point. The EU's external border would be in the Irish Sea between Britain and Northern Ireland, and goods for Northern Ireland would need to be inspected there, which is politically untenable for the U.K. The alternative would be that the EU would itself impose inspections to protect its single market and structure a border either on the island of Ireland or between Ireland and the EU, which are both equally unfeasible.

Tensions predictably arose between Britain and the EU over the import of chilled meat products from Britain to Northern Ireland, with Britain seeking an extension of the transition arrangements from June 30 by three months. No



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one believes that this can be a lasting solution. It seems Britain is questioning Brexit agreements rather than following them, while boasting about its COVID-19 immunisation compared to the EU and the success of the City of London in maintaining its status against hostile EU legislation and incentives for banks to move to European capitals. To supporters of Brexit, it looked as if the EU wanted to punish Britain for leaving, if only to discourage its other members from doing the same. Thus, after membership of the EU for almost 50 years, mutual trust is lacking, and two versions of a rules-based order are colliding. This was apparent during the G-7 summit, when bilateral meetings between Mr. Johnson and EU leaders lacked warmth. The EU conceded the Northern Ireland postponement and persuaded its member States, especially France and Germany that are losing patience with Bri-

tain, to avoid a trade war over British sausages. Such recriminations may become a permanent feature of U.K.-EU relations as a small nation plays a poor hand against the world's largest trading bloc while seeking trade deals with distant countries, which even official forecasts suggest will produce negligible benefits.

### Scotland's calculations

In Scotland, the National Party, which seeks an exit from the U.K., has grown in popularity since the Brexit vote. Scots voted in the referendum by 62% against 38% to remain in the EU, but were dragged out by the overall result. For many Scots, leaving the U.K. is the clearest path back to the EU, and anticipate that among other benefits, the EU will grant Scotland least developed status and subventions on the scale enjoyed by the Irish Republic. This is as much an anti-Westminster stance as an effort to join the EU since the chances of an independent Scotland jumping the queue of EU applicants and of all member States approving Scottish membership are not great. Nevertheless, the prospect of a break-up of the United Kingdom is of grave concern to London. Meanwhile, a vote on reunification in Ireland seems more probable

now than at any time since the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 which brought an uneasy peace to fratricidal factions in the North.

### In perspective

The International Monetary Fund warned that the British economy faced a 10% GDP decline in 2020 (<https://bit.ly/3raZXUs>) In first quarter 2021, food and drink exports to the EU declined by nearly 50% (<https://bit.ly/3yUv4j1>) and export of services also shrank. At least 500 British companies have relocated to Europe (<https://bit.ly/3ejG746>). The Brexiteers who forecast a clean break with the EU either underestimated or ignored the practical inconveniences of leaving, including the vast paperwork involved in exporting and importing with the EU, but the success of British COVID-19 vaccination compared with the EU's bungled efforts has enabled Brexiteers to claw back some ground.

In sum, most people have accepted Brexit though few are satisfied with the divorce settlement. No version of Brexit will satisfy everyone, and it has left the United Kingdom less united.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary. Julius Fein is a British historian

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### No stocks

The report that vaccination has declined substantially as States say that they have no doses is disturbing (Page 1, July 14). The only way to battle the novel coronavirus is through complete vaccination. With lockdowns being lifted, and the threat of a third wave looming large in the backdrop of new variants, is India really prepared? If lessons have not been learnt from the tragic aftermath of the second wave, then it is clear that we, as a nation, have not learnt anything. In the months ahead, which will be marked by a series of festive events, all-out efforts are required to ensure that the situation does not get out of hand.

BALASUBRAMANIAM PAVANI, Secunderabad

Visuals of the suffering during the second wave are still fresh in our minds. The State and central

governments should do their bit in ensuring that COVID-19 appropriate behaviour is the norm. The penalties for violations can help to change the situation to some extent. The State of Uttarakhand has done well to cancel the Kanwar Yatra, which would have been another super spreader event. All types of gatherings should be curtailed by the authorities for at least six months. It is a collective responsibility to combat the pandemic especially when vaccine stocks are running low.

D. D.V.G. SANKARARAO, Nellimarla, Andhra Pradesh

The report is disheartening as it must be read in conjunction with the Centre's grand plan to fully vaccinate the country by December. The tall claims of vaccination availability have now fallen like a pack of cards. Urgent measures must be initiated by the Government, especially after the new Minister of Health

has taken charge. If we need to curb the third wave, only mass vaccination can prevent an upsurge.

D. JAYASEKHARAN V.P., Pappannur, Kammur, Kerala

It is not only a shortage of vaccines but also vaccine hesitancy, especially among marginalised sections, that needs immediate attention. The Governor of Telangana has done her bit by getting herself vaccinated at a tribal settlement. The ball has been set rolling and government officials must keep the momentum going. Film stars and local leaders should also take the lead.

P. SATYA LAKSHMI, Secunderabad

### Back to school

The writers of the article, "Prioritising school reopening on the road to recovery" (Editorial page, July 13), have marshalled solid facts on the need to reopen schools especially as, in the context of many parts

of India, the prolonged shutdown has impacted the nutritional needs of children. But a via-media solution is needed. First, the Union government can expedite its approval for vaccination of the age group 12-15. The Government can explore the possibility of giving options to parents for online learning or in-person schooling. Parents, particularly in the rural areas, may prefer in-person schooling as many of them have to go out to work. The Government could also introduce a shift system. For example, if there are six sections in a class, three sections may be operated on a rotational basis. Online learning for an indefinite period is clearly no substitute for in-person schooling. Constant exposure to electronic devices can affect the child's health while "in-house incarceration" may end up causing obesity and other serious health issues. It also deprives children of social

skills. 'Back to school' should be the norm after observing COVID-19 appropriate protocols.

V.N. GOPAL, Chennai

### EV policy

With Maharashtra unveiling its new Electric Vehicle (EV) policy in an attempt to go green, one can observe the similarities with the Norwegian government's EV road map. Norway's plug-in car segment has been at the top of its game mainly because of policy incentives, tax exemptions and the role of dedicated EV NGOs. Although Maharashtra has drawn fine inspiration from the same, it is crucial to note the vast differences in the population, area and market share between India and Norway. Hence, we must tread the EV path carefully and apply policies that are suitable to the Indian geopolitical scenario.

RUJUTA ASHTEKAR, Thane, Maharashtra

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### Yashpal Sharma

In the passing of Yashpal Sharma, India has lost a doughty cricketer ('Sport' page, July 14). It was his performances in the 1983 World Cup that stood out. I remember his innings in the semi-final against England and being stunned by his outrageously imperious and dismissive flick for six off the bowling of Bob Willis.

More than anything else, perhaps that shot epitomised the self-belief and confidence that this young team had in itself. I also recollect that just before the semi-final, one of the English commentators said, "India is going to meet England in the semi-final and that's a bit of luck for England." That shot of Sharma's was a fitting reply to the rather parochial observation of the commentator. V.V. Koushik, Chennai

# People's voice and Kashmir's future

The all-party conference failed because it completely ignored Kashmiri sentiments



A.G. NOORANI

The all-party conference on Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) revealed the failure of the strategy crafted by the Government of India. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has long urged the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution. But the constitutional coup went miles beyond that. It abrogated Article 35A as well, broke up the State of J&K by lopping off Ladakh, and reduced the rest to a Union Territory. It is unthinkable that any other State would have received the treatment meted out to J&K whose 'special status' was an eyesore.

But the elephant in the room was the law on delimitation of the constituencies. It trumpeted the real object of the coup loud and clear, which was to wipe out the political set-up in J&K and establish a new political order. To accomplish this, virtually the entire political class of Kashmir had to be put out of action, the press muzzled, assemblies banned, tourists given marching orders, schools and colleges shut, and electronic communications suspended.

## Abrogation of Article 370

Article 370 cannot be abrogated even by Parliament, let alone by the President. Even the letter of Article 370 bars that. But there is a profound reason which fundamentally bars such a result. To cite an example, insurgency erupted in Mizoram on February 28, 1966. The Mizo National Front (MNF) led by Laldenga began an armed insurgency and declared independence the next day. On June 30, 1966, the Mizoram Accord was signed. It said: "Notwithstanding anything contained in the Constitution, no Act of Parliament in respect of (a) Religion or social practices of the Mizos, (b) Mizo customary law or procedure, (c) Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, (d) Ownership and transfer of land, shall apply to the State of Mizoram unless the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram by a resolution so decides." On February 20, 1987, the 53rd Constitution Amendment came



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into force inserting Article 371G which reads thus: "Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, no Act of Parliament in respect of (i) Religious or social practices of the Mizos, (ii) Mizo customary law and procedure, (iii) Administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, (iv) Ownership and transfer of land, shall apply to the State of Mizoram unless the Legislative Assembly of Mizoram by a resolution so decides."

The two are identically worded because Article 371G gives legal force to an accord between the Union and the MNF. Parliament cannot repeal it or even amend it unilaterally.

Article 370 stands on a higher footing. It gives legal force to an accord between the Union and a State of the Union and the parleys were held by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and his deputy, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. They began at Patel's residence on May 15, 1949 and ended in mid-October with an agreed text. But it was moved in an altered form in the Constituent Assembly on October 17, 1949 by N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar in the absence of Sheikh Abdullah who happened to be in the lobby. He rushed to the House.

Article 370 made Kashmir's Constituent Assembly the sole authority to accord consent to any addition to the Centre's power and to further extension to Kashmir of India's Constitution. The Assembly first met on October 31, 1951 and was formally dissolved on November 17, 1956. Article 370 enabled the State government to accord its concurrence only subject to J&K's Constituent Assembly's concurrence. This was abused to make the State government and even the Governor alone to be the consenting authority.

The result? Ninety-four of the 97 entries in the Central List were ap-

plied to Kashmir leaving a balance of three. So much for the 'special status'. The Constitution is studded with 'special' provisions for Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Goa (Article 371A-1). Kashmir had an elected Sadr-E-Riyasat. The Centre replaced him with a Governor it nominated.

We have high legal authority for challenging the 'laws' of August 5, 2019. After the First World War, countries of the British Empire were restive about their independence. In 1926, the Earl of Balfour devised a formula which pleased all. The autonomy of those countries was recognised simultaneously with their loyalty to the British Crown. This was incorporated in the Statute of Westminster passed in 1931 by the British Parliament. It said that no law it passed would extend to the Dominions unless they had so wished (Section 4). In 1935, the Privy Council held that "the Imperial Parliament could, as a matter of abstract law, repeal or disregard Section 4 of the Statute. But that is theory and has no relation to realities. In truth, Canada is in enjoyment of the full scope of self-government" (*British Coal Corporation v. The King*).

## Areas of 'special status'

Areas of 'special status' abound the world over. Scotland joined England in 1707 to form Great Britain. It held a referendum on its independence without its being called 'treason'. Quebec held two referenda on secession in 1980 and 1995. All three failed.

For historic reasons, the German-majority South Tyrol is partly Italy. Its autonomy is guaranteed by an Austro-Italian accord. The Swedish-majority Aaland Islands are a Finnish territory under an accord of 1921.

The autonomy of both territories (Aaland Islands and South Tyrol) is internationally guaranteed.

Indonesia quelled militancy in Aceh by an accord on August 15, 2005 based on "special autonomy". Newfoundland signed the Terms of Union with Canada on December 11, 1948 after a referendum. Denmark conferred home rule on Greenland in 1979. On June 12, 2009, Denmark enacted an Act on Greenland Self-Government to confer greater power than that of our States.

Fifty years ago, Sheikh Abdullah told former Foreign Secretary Y.D. Gundevis, "Only that person who enjoys the confidence of the Government of India can be Chief Minister of Kashmir". A 'special status' worse than, say, Kerala or Tamil Nadu, which can have Chief Ministers that the Centre does not approve of.

The Supreme Court's record on Kashmir is uninspiring. The matter is too politicised. The petitions must be withdrawn in favour of a political, peaceful, constitutional approach. The Gupkar Declaration of August 4, 2019 must be amplified in a Convention.

On July 9, 1953 Maulana Azad offered to Sheikh Abdullah that the Government of India "is willing to declare that the special position given to Kashmir will be made permanent without any conditions". Abdullah replied on July 16, "If such a declaration had been earlier, it would have strengthened my hands". Now, "if I fail to gain the confidence of my people here, I will not be able to render my service to my friends." The people matter more than they did in 1953. Statesmanship lies in crafting a solution acceptable to them.

Time is running out. The Delimitation Commission visited Kashmir to fulfil the vision of the BJP's Vision Document - more seats for Jammu. A lot depends on the statesmanship of Farooq Abdullah, Mehbooba Mufti and Mirwaiz Mohammad Umar Farooq. Their objectives should be two-fold: to work for the restoration of Kashmir's identity and pride and help to complete the four-point formula which former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf had built four-fifth. The all-party conference failed because it ignored Kashmiri sentiments.

A.G. Noorani is a constitutional expert

# No pseudoscience, please

Astrology exploits the vulnerability of the human mind and should not be taught as a mainstream course by universities



HAMID DABHOLKAR

The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) is India's premier national institute for improving access to education. Recently, IGNOU launched a degree course in astrology. This obsession with astrology is not a new phenomenon in a country which recently sent a spacecraft in orbit around Mars. A similar decision was taken by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 2001, which was withdrawn after widespread opposition. In this context, all the citizens of this country who are concerned about the status of education and the role of scientific temperament in education need to take a stance about this decision.

## Content of syllabus

Let us start by examining what is covered by the IGNOU syllabus.

Even a casual look at the syllabus gives us an understanding of the unscientific nature of the course. The syllabus includes the study of horoscopes, which are determined by the state of different planets at the time of our birth and which apparently impact all the things that we do throughout our life. It also includes how to decide on an auspicious time for initiating a specific task. It claims to train its students in how to nullify the ill effects occurring due to specific problems in their horoscope. The range of problems for which astrology can offer solutions has no limit. It provides solutions on when one needs to apply for a job to ensure a good result to even determining the time a nation has to take a decision to start a war!

Let us try and evaluate the three basic assumptions of astrology on which this syllabus is based. The first assumption is that the planets around us in the universe have a continuous effect on human life. The second assumption is that the result depends on the time of birth of the person and the third assumption is that the future of a person depends on all this and can be changed by solutions offered by an astrologer.

Let us now look at the main objections by astronomy (the science of the universe) to these assumptions. As per astrology, nine *Navagrahas* affect our lives. All of us know that four of these *Navagrahas* are not even *grahas* (planets). The sun is not a planet but a star. The moon is the natural satellite of the

earth. Rahu and Ketu, which are claimed to be the most dangerous planets in astrology, are not even planets but points of intersection of the paths of the sun and the moon. The Milky Way, in which the sun and solar system are included, has countless stars other than the sun. It is not very difficult to appreciate how unscientific and potentially dangerous it will be to allow something like astrology as a mainstream course.

Next, let us look at the time of birth. The nature of a horoscope is dependent on the time of one's birth. And the time of birth used for this purpose by astrology is the time when the baby takes the first breath outside the mother's womb. Modern science tells us that the baby is actually born when the sperm and ovum come together to form the embryo, and it grows for the next nine months through different stages.

How do all these *Navagrahas* have any impact on the baby when it is inside the mother's womb and start affecting it only when it comes out? Astrologers have no answer. It is a simple observation that thousands of children are born in the world every second and their futures are not the same. What will be in their horoscope when a human being gives birth to a baby, say, on the moon or Mars tomorrow? The most serious effect of depending on astrology is that it takes human agency out of our lives.

## Science and pseudoscience

While we are on the path to astrology, Elon Musk, an American businessman, has started a project to humanise Mars under the SpaceX mission. The robotic rovers sent by NASA to Mars are collecting information and sending it back to earth. Stephen Hawking stated that the search for a habitable planet like earth in the universe should be the priority of astronomical research. Against this background, one needs to learn to differentiate between astrology, which is a pseudoscience, and astrophysics, which is a robust scientific discipline. Astrology exploits the vulnerability of the human mind while people face uncertainty. On the other hand, astrophysics depends on the core scientific principles of precise observations, hypothesis, experimentation and results based on all these. In an era where pseudoscience has started becoming the new normal, it's our responsibility as citizens to oppose such decisions and demand the withdrawal of such a course.

Hamid Dabholkar is a psychiatrist and member of the rationalist movement, Maharashtra Andhashradha Nirmulan Samiti

# Awards cannot be doled out

Care needs to be taken to ensure that only those deserving of awards receive them

M.P. NATHANAEL

The Delhi Chief Minister recently wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi urging him to consider awarding an "Indian Doctor" the Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honour. "By an 'Indian doctor', I mean the entire medical community - all doctors, nurses and paramedics should be given the award, collectively," he wrote. He requested the Prime Minister to change the rules if the current rules do not permit conferment on any group as such.

While this is a great gesture, changing the rules would open a Pandora's box and erase the sanctity attached to this prestigious award. There is no doubt that doctors need to be honoured for their relentless and dedicated service during the pandemic. But there were many who also fleeced patients and the kin of the deceased by exploiting their helplessness and desperation. Many private hospitals charged exorbitant amounts for treatment. Should these plunderers also be grouped with those who worked selflessly and be part of the honour?

## Paying compensation

Rather than eulogising their services, the Chief Minister could have at least ensured that the doctors and nurses were paid their salaries on time. Several doctors and nurses went on strike because they were not paid. According to the Indian Medical Association, 798 doctors died in the second wave. With Delhi recording the highest number of such fatalities (128 doctors), the Chief Minister should have paid an ex gratia amount of ₹1 crore to each of them. The Delhi government had, in April 2020, announced ₹1 crore in ex gratia for families of front-line workers who die of the infection while on duty. But most of the families of the doctors have not been paid. Nor have the kin of policemen who died of the infection while on duty. The wife of a deceased constable knocked on the doors of Delhi High Court claiming the promised amount. The hearing is scheduled for July 28.

While doctors and paramedics rendered yeoman service during the

pandemic, other front-line workers, including the police, too contributed at grave risk to their lives.

Meanwhile, while the local courts in New Delhi have reprimanded the Delhi Police for their handling of the riots and fined them ₹25,000 for mishandling of cases related to the riots, 25 personnel of the Delhi Police have staked their claim for the President's Police Medal for Gallantry, citing their role in the Delhi riots last year. Among them is the then Deputy Commissioner of Police, Ved Prakash Surya, who was seen standing next to BJP leader Kapil Mishra when Mr. Mishra was delivering a controversial speech a day before the riots broke out. Even the Joint Commissioner of Police has entered the fray.

## Choosing the awardees

Every individual will exaggerate his role in the riots to stake his claim. Much would depend on the projection of the individual's role in a manner that would be convincing enough to consider the case for award of a medal. In such rigmarole, the possibility of the wrong persons getting awarded cannot be ruled out. The deserving ones who are left out get demoralised and shy away from exposing themselves to risk.

According to a senior official of Delhi Police, a high-powered committee of senior officials goes through every case thoroughly. Depending on the degree of bravery displayed by each, a few are recommended for the gallantry medals while others are recommended for the Police Commissioner's Commendation Disc.

There is always a proclivity for officers to garner gallantry medals as these carry monthly allowances and other perks such as free travel by train with a companion and even a rent-free landline telephone. Officers cannot operate in isolation and they are accompanied by their subordinates. Utmost care needs to be taken to ensure that the deserving among the lower ranks are not left out when they have displayed bravery in dealing with unruly elements at grave risk to their own lives.

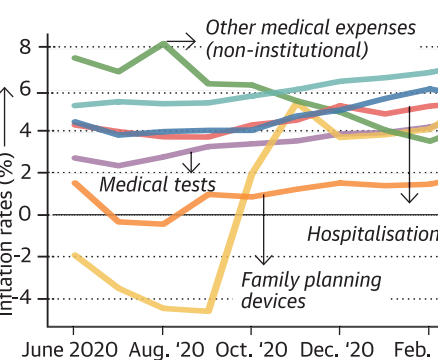
M.P. Nathanael is Inspector General of Police (Retd), CRPF

## DATA POINT

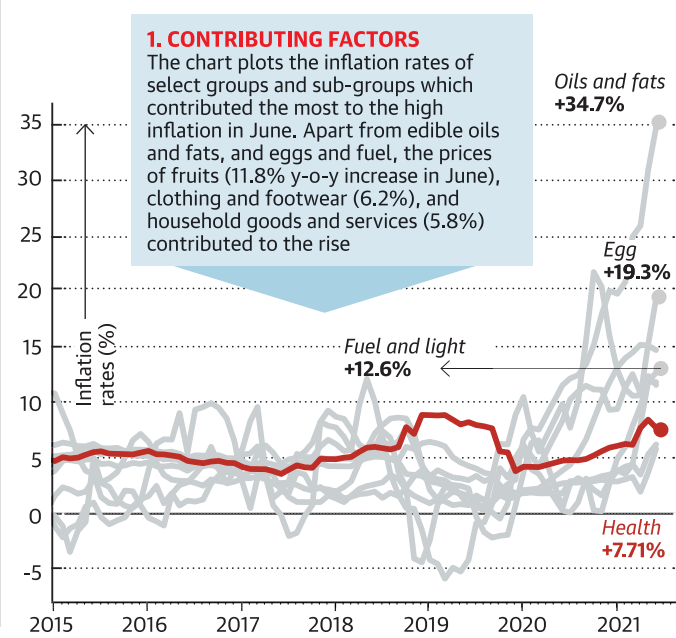
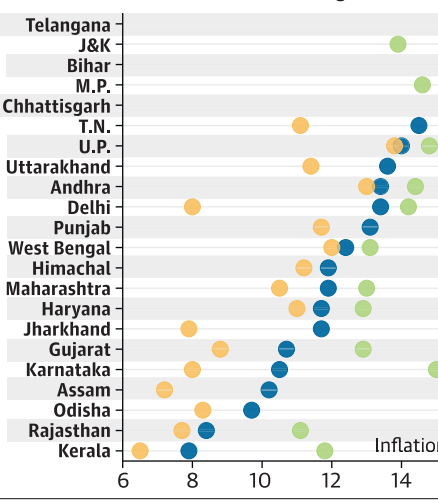
### A bill of health

The retail inflation rate remained high at 6.26% in June 2021, above the RBI's upper limit for the second consecutive month. A sharp surge in the cost of edible oils (34.7% y-o-y increase in June) followed by significant increases in the prices of egg, fuel and light, fruits, and transportation contributed to the high inflation in June. In parallel, health costs expanded too, especially during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Health inflation increased to 8.4% and 7.7% in May and June 2021, respectively, from 3.8% in December 2019. A closer look at the health sub-group points to a consistent increase in the prices of medicines (8.6% y-o-y increase in June), medical tests (6.2%), hospital charges (5.9%), and consultation fees (4.5%). Health expenditure increased the most in Telangana and least in Kerala. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan, Sumant Sen and Jasmin Nihalani

**2. HEALTH COSTS** | The chart plots the inflation rates for all the items listed under the health sub-group. While the prices of most medical items increased, the cost of spectacles increased the most (9.6% y-o-y) in June

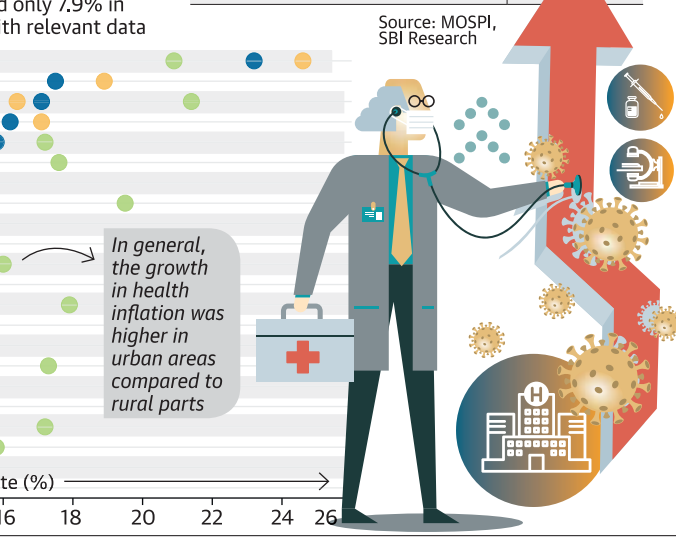


**3. STATE-WISE DATA** | The graph shows the % growth in the health inflation index in June 2021 compared to June 2019 across rural, urban and all regions of select States. In this period, health inflation increased to 23% in Telangana and only 7.9% in Kerala, which was the lowest among the States with relevant data



**4. COVID-19 IMPACT** | According to SBI Research, the total health expenditure is likely to increase by ₹66,000 crore due to COVID-19, which is 11% of the health expenditure incurred in FY20. The report said this increased health expense will "also result in a squeeze in expenditure on other items of discretionary consumption". The report also argued for a better way to measure inflation during a pandemic given the changes in the spending pattern of consumers during a health crisis

Health expenditure estimate (₹ crore)	
Price effect (impact of inflation)	15,000
Quantity effect (impact of hospitalisation)	35,000
Income effect (impact of reduced income)	16,000
Total impact due to increased health expenditure	66,000
Health expenditure in FY20	6,00,000
<b>Total impact as % of health expenditure</b>	<b>11%</b>



## The Hindu

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 15, 1971

### Family planning in China

(From an Editorial)

When the Chinese communists first came to power, they argued that China as a socialist State had no need to worry about the population problem. But a more sober attitude has prevailed since the collapse of the "great leap forward" in 1958 and to-day the two-child family is advocated, with the right age for marriage fixed at 25 for women and 28 for men. It is this ideal is realised, a stable population would result. China-watchers based in Hongkong have estimated China's population at 830 millions in 1970 and the crude birth and death figures at 43 and 21 per thousand, yielding a growth rate of 2.2 per cent. Even this would mean that China would reach the billion mark by 1980 and 1.6 billion by the end of the century. Mr. Edgar Snow, the American writer and friend of Mao Tse-tung, has reported after another visit to China recently that the present population is somewhere between 750 and 800 millions and that the rate of growth is about 2 per cent. The Chinese planners hope to cut the rate to one per cent, though even this would yield a billion-strong population by 2000 A.D.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 15, 1921

### Education of Depressed classes.

We have received a copy of the handbook on the education of Depressed classes in Mysore published by the Inspector-General of education in the State. The book is intended to serve as a guide to departmental officers and to others who are interested in the question. The theory that the average Depressed class boy is inherently backward in receiving education is refuted as a mere fiction and the argument is advanced that given the necessary help, sympathy, opportunity and the special handling that is essential in view of the ages of enforced illiteracy through which he has passed, he can successfully compete with the rest in the end. "What is necessary is to awaken him from his lethargy so far as education is concerned, wean him from the evil habits that are more often the effects rather than causes of his degradation, and raise him from the mental dependency to which has sunk for want of opportunity and encouragement for generations, in short to give him a moral and mental tone in keeping with the physical that is in him and to get him to face life with faith in himself and his future."

FROM PAGE ONE

## Private centres asked to step up vaccination pace

The Minister said the States knew when and in what quantity they would get the doses. The Union government had done this so that they could chalk out the vaccination work up to the district-level by planning properly and people did not face any problem.

“Regarding the availability of the vaccine, I have come to know from the statements and letters of various State governments and leaders. This situation can be better understood by an actual analysis of the facts. Useless statements are being made to create panic.”

## SC to examine plea challenging sedition

“The doctrine of ‘chilling effect’ on speech considers the probability of a legal provision causing psychological barriers in the free exercise of the right... This doctrine had not sufficiently developed in 1962. Even in the U.S., the doctrine was established only as late as 1967... The most concrete pronouncement on a statutory provision causing a chilling effect on speech is as recent as 2015 in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*,” he submitted.

In the judgment, the court had reasoned that without Section 124A, the state would be in jeopardy if the government was subverted. It, however, said that Section 124A would apply only to expressions that either intended to or had the tendency to cause violence

were punishable as ‘sedition’.

The maximum punishment was life imprisonment. The offence was classified as ‘cognisable’ and ‘non-bailable’.

The petition said Section 124A criminalised expression based on vague terms such as ‘disaffection towards government’ and ‘contempt towards government’.

“The provision, by employing phrases like disaffection and contempt toward government, which are incapable of precise definition, causes a chilling effect on speech, constituting an unconstitutional invasion into the right of free speech,” it said.

## ‘Future of Afghanistan cannot be its past’

The representatives of the SCO countries, including Mr. Jaishankar, will travel on Thursday to Tashkent along with the representatives of nearly 40 countries for a “Central and South Asia” connectivity conference that will see Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani take centre stage together for the meeting hosted by Uzbekistan President Shovkat Mirziyoyev. U.S. Special Envoy on Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad will also attend the meeting.

Mr. Jaishankar is expected to call on Mr. Ghani on Thursday and meet Mr. Khalilzad during his two-day

stay in Tashkent. While the original focus of the conference was to be on projects like the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan railway projects and transit trade agreements, and the Uzbekistan-Iran-India trilateral on the Chabahar project connecting Central and South Asia, the security situation is expected to be at the top of the agenda, given the developments in the past week.

On Wednesday, Taliban claimed it had also taken control of the main Chaman-Spin Boldak crossing with Pakistan, while the Afghanistan government said the attack had been repelled.

## SC notice to Centre, U.P. on Kanwar Yatra

The report suggests contradicting steps taken by the Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh governments over the conduct of the yatra. While Uttarakhand has suspended the event, arrangements are reported to be in full swing in Uttar Pradesh.

The court referred to the recent statement by Prime Minister Narendra Modi that it was up to every individual

to prevent the third wave, and there was no room for compromise.

“Given the disparate political voices, all speaking at the same time, it is important that the relevant Secretary, Union of India, respond to this news report,” the court ordered.

The court fixed the next hearing of the suo motu case on July 16.

## 3 militants killed in Pulwama

One of them is a Lashkar-e-Taiba commander from Pakistan, say police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

Three Lashkar-e-Taiba militants were killed during an anti-militancy operation in Pulwama of south Kashmir on Wednesday, the police said.

“The bodies of three LeT terrorists were retrieved from the site of encounter. They were identified as LeT commander Aijaz, alias Abu Huraira, a resident of Pakistan, Javeed Ahmad Rather from Tahab in Pulwama and Shah Nawaz Nazir Ganie from Samboora in Awantipora,” Inspector-General of Police Vijay Kumar said.

The operation started around midnight after specific information was generated by the Srinagar police about the presence of terrorists on New Colony Hospital Road.

“The operation was suspended due to darkness while the cordon remained intact. Taking advantage of the darkness, the terrorists



Standing guard: CRPF personnel seen near the site of a gunfight between security forces and militants in Pulwama district of south Kashmir on Wednesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

tried to escape but couldn't. In the early hours, repeated announcements were again made to the hiding terrorists to surrender. However, the terrorists opened fire, which was retaliated,” the police said.

They said the security forces recovered incriminat-

ing material, arms and ammunition, including 2 AK rifles and a pistol, from the site of encounter.

### Houses damaged

Local people said two multi-storey residential houses were damaged in the operation.

A curfew was imposed in Pulwama town and the Internet was snapped “as a precautionary measure”. Eyewitnesses said local protesters clashed with the security forces after the operation was called off.

However, there were no reports of any casualties.

## Central DA, dearness relief hiked to 28%

DA hike was frozen due to pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the effective increase of dearness allowance to the Central government employees and dearness relief to pensioners from 17% of basic pay/pension to 28% with effect from July 1.

Announcing the decision taken at a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said it was a major decision for the benefit of 48.34 lakh Central employees and 65.26 lakh pensioners.

The dearness allowance hike was frozen with effect

from January 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he pointed out.

“In view of the unprecedented situation which arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic, three additional instalments of DA to Central government employees and dearness relief to pensioners, which were due from 01.01.2020, 01.07.2020 and 01.01.2021, had been frozen,” a government statement said.

The increase of 11% reflected the three additional instalments arising on January 1, 2020, July 1, 2020 and January 1, 2021, it said, adding that the actual rate for January 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 would remain 17%.

## Can exam fees be refunded, HC asks CBSE

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Central Board of Secondary Education whether it would refund the examination fees taken for Class X and Class XII examinations as they stood cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justice Prateek Jalan directed the Central Board of Secondary Education to decide within eight weeks on the petition by Deepa Joseph, mother of a Class X student of a school here, who had paid ₹2,100 as fee.

## India, Russia to hold 2+2 Ministerial meet

Russian envoy says details of possible visit of Putin being discussed

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

India and Russia will hold the first 2+2 Ministerial meeting later this year before a summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russian envoy Nikolay Kudashev said on Wednesday.

On India-Taliban Talks, another senior Russian Embassy official said it was India's sovereign decision and it was useful to deal with everyone in the region. “Taliban is present in Afghanistan also in a manner it is a party to intra-Afghan talks. Certainly, it will be useful to deal with



Nikolay Kudashev

response to questions.

Mr. Kudashev said in a virtual press interaction that the recent visit of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to Moscow demonstrated the attention both sides were paying to satisfy the common desire to maintain strong dynamics of bilateral high-level contacts, which was especially important in view of the preparation for the next big events planned later this year.

“They include both trade and economic as well as defence intergovernmental commissions, the first 2+2 Ministerial meeting and, of course, the summit - un-

doubtedly, it will be a huge cornerstone of the special and privileged strategic partnership, which is really unique,” he stated.

### Putin visit

The details of a possible visit of Mr. Putin were being discussed, he said. He added that the “epidemiological situation” would be a very important factor. “At the same time, our leaders are planning to jointly participate in BRICS under the Indian presidency, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summits in September and the G20 summit in October,” he noted.

## India largest source of govt. info requests, says Twitter

It accounts for 25% of global volume: transparency report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India is the single largest source of government information requests during the second half of 2020, accounting for 25% of the global volume, as per the biannual Twitter Transparency Report released on Wednesday.

Globally, Twitter received 14,561 such requests for 51,584 accounts in the six-month period from June to December 2020, of which 3,615 requests for 7,762 accounts were from India. For India, this is an increase of about 38% from the first half of the year when the number of such requests stood at 2,613.

“Over the past year, we've experienced and continue to navigate severe global challenges, including the coronavirus pandemic. We've also



Of the 14,561 information requests Twitter received, 3,615 were from India.

seen concerted attempts by governments to limit access to the Internet generally and to Twitter specifically,” the company said in a blog.

It added that global governments and law enforcement agencies submitted approximately 15% more information requests compared to the previous reporting period.

For the June-December period, the compliance rate for government information

requests was 30% globally, and 0.6% in India. The second highest volume of information requests originated from the United States, comprising 22% of global information requests.

During the period, Twitter received a total of 38,524 legal demands to remove content specifying 1,31,933 accounts. The platform withheld or otherwise removed some or all of the reported content in response to 29% of these global legal demands.

For India, the number of legal requests stood at 6,971, up 151% from 2,772 such requests in the first six months of 2020.

As a result of legal requests, Twitter withheld 60 accounts and 598 tweets. In addition, 1,310 accounts were either suspended or some content was removed.

## ‘Preserve Nandigram poll documents’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Wednesday directed the Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal, to preserve all documents and devices related to Nandigram Assembly polls.

The Court was hearing an election petition filed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee challenging the Nandigram election results. The matter is being heard by Justice Shampa Sarkar, after Justice Kaushik Chanda recused himself from the case.

“Pending the decision of this case, all documents, election papers, devices and video recordings etc. connected with the election, which is under challenge before this Court, shall be preserved by the authority concerned,” the order said.

The matter will come up for hearing on August 12.

## Haryana police invoke sedition charges against farmers

Activists allegedly damaged vehicle of Deputy Speaker

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana police have invoked sedition charges against a group of protesting farmers who allegedly attacked and damaged the official vehicle of Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa in Sirsa on July 11, during a demonstration against the farm laws and the BJP leaders.

Sirsa's SSP Arpit Jain confirmed to *The Hindu* that sedition charges under Section 124A of the IPC had been invoked against the accused and an investigation was under way. “So far, no arrests have been made in the case,” he said on Wednesday.

The Sirsa police have registered the FIR under Section 124A (sedition), 307 (attempt to murder) and 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), in which two farmer



A file photo of farmers protesting against the farm laws on the Delhi-Haryana border. ■ AP

leaders - Harcharan Singh and Prahlad Singh - have been booked. Apart from them, over 100 unidentified people have been booked.

On July 11, the official car of the Deputy Speaker was attacked by a group of protesters raising slogans and waving black flags.

During the demonstration, protesters allegedly smashed the windscreen of

vehicles by pelting stones. Mr. Gangwa, however, escaped unhurt.

Reacting to the FIR, senior Samyukt Kisan Morcha leader Darshan Pal said the government was trying to provoke farmers by taking such steps. “How can sedition and murder charges be justified if a windscreen of a vehicle was broken,” he asked.

## Permanent Commission for 147 women officers

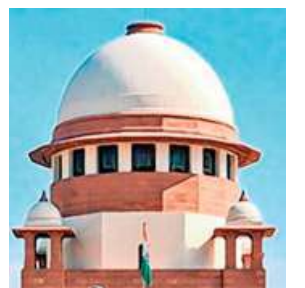
Army grants it to 424 women since 2020

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Army said on Wednesday that 147 additional women officers had been granted Permanent Commission (PC) taking the total number of women officers granted it to 424 out of the 615 officers considered since the landmark judgment by the Supreme Court last year.

Following the judgment on grant of PC to women officers in the Army, a special selection board was constituted and 277 women short service commission officers received it after medical scrutiny.

Further, in March 2021, the Supreme Court directed reconsideration of some cases of women officers who were not granted PC by laying down revised parameters, a statement from the Army said. “The women officers were reconsidered as per directions of the Su-



The SC had ordered that some cases of denial of Permanent Commission to women be reconsidered.

preme Court and fresh results have now been declassified. Consequently, 147 more women officers are being granted PC, taking the total PC granted to 424 out of the 615 officers considered,” the statement said. Results of a few have been withheld for administrative reasons and awaiting outcome of a clarification petition by the government in the Supreme Court, it said.

## IN BRIEF



### Trinamool to meet ECI on bypolls to seven seats

KOLKATA  
A six-member delegation of the Trinamool Congress is likely to meet Election Commission of India (ECI) officials in Delhi on Thursday, urging the commission to hold bypolls to seven Assembly seats in West Bengal. Senior party leader and MP Saugata Roy confirmed this.

### Cabinet approves 11th extension for OBC panel

NEW DELHI  
The Cabinet on Wednesday approved another six-month extension for the commission appointed in 2017 to examine sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in Central list, making it the 11th such extension. A government statement said the Cabinet approved extension of the tenure till January 31, 2022.

### No plan to contest for President's post: Pawar

MUMBAI  
Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar on Wednesday dismissed reports that he was a candidate for the President's post. “Reports about me planning to contest for President's post are absolutely false. No discussion on this was held in my two meetings with Prashant Kishore. The result of President's election is clear, knowing the strength of the Bharatiya Janata Party,” Mr. Pawar said in his interaction with reporters on Wednesday.

### Assam CM defends police shooting at criminals

GUWAHATI  
Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said the police will continue to take “extreme action” within the law against criminals as long as he is in-charge of Assam. He holds the Home portfolio too. “Those who defend drug dealers should train them not to escape from custody, snatch arms or attack the police,” he said after Opposition legislators attacked the government for alleged fake encounters.

### SC strikes down some provisions in Finance Act

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Wednesday struck down provisions, introduced in the Finance Act of 2017 through an Ordinance, which affected the tenure and service conditions of Chairpersons and Members of Tribunals. The Tribunal Reforms (Rationalisation and Conditions of Service) Ordinance of 2021 had amended Section 184 of the Finance Act of 2017 to fix their tenures at four years. A three-judge Bench reversed the law and confirmed that Tribunal Chairpersons and Members would have a full five-year tenure.











# Enter the konnakol rap

Catch the wave of Carnatic hip hop, fuelled by the rise of virtual spaces, and set to the beat of the mridangam, ghatam and kanjira

SWETA AKUNDI

In the musical world, Scarborough conjures up images of Simon and Garfunkel. Across the Atlantic Ocean, its lesser known namesake, a Toronto neighbourhood known for its confluence of Asian cultures, inspires a serenade in Tamil music producer Yanchan's newly released EP, *Scarborough Beat Tape*.

With 10 instrumental tapes, Yanchan immerses hyperlocal details of his Canadian hometown in a decidedly Tamil flavour – through the soundscape of freestyling mridangam and ghatam.

Seen as a traditionally Carnatic instrument, the mridangam is having a moment in hip hop and rap. What we see then is a chemistry between a genre that has historically sought to rebel against the establishment and one that is very much the establishment.

Carnatic hip hop has found an audience in the Indian diaspora in the US, Canada, Singapore and Malaysia. Yanchan's work in this genre is demonstrated best in the *Mrithangam Raps* series, in collaboration with Tamil Canadian rapper Shan Vincent De Paul.

"I grew up with a foundation in Car-

matic music. Until high school, that was all I listened to. When I was 13, I lived in Chennai for three months to learn the mridangam from my guru, Neyveli B Venkatesh," says Yanchan.

He grew up listening to Drake. "I would play hip hop in my car and analyse the rhythmic patterns and beats. I started noticing similarities between these beats and the ones I played on the mridangam. They sounded similar to grooves in Adi talam, Rupaka talam..." says the 21-year-old, who calls his sound a combination of Carnatic music, Tamil film music and hip hop.

### Mridangam gets the spotlight

"The instrument never tells you what genre it belongs to," says Viveick Rajagopalan, a mridangam exponent based in Mumbai. As the founder of the Ta Dhom project, Viveick collaborates with vernacular rappers from the city to create a sub genre of Indian hip hop – as seen in *Gully Boy's* 'India 91'.

Viveick wanted to pull the mridangam out of the layers of percussion it is hidden in, and make it the principal

sound, moving it from supporting role to lead. "I took those drum patterns heard in Western music and played them on the mridangam, which gave rise to the collective sound of the Ta Dhom project," he says.

Since 2015, he has been meeting young rappers and sharing the basics of *konnakol* and talam with them, to provide a foundation for the rhythmic poetry of urban rap. "I didn't want to come in with the traditional approach of Carnatic music (with its rituals)," says Viveick.

"What was interesting to me was that instead of aping the West, these guys were rapping in their mother tongue. I wanted to push (that Indian-ness) even more. For instance, a lot of rappers still have scatting and phrasing that's typically Western," he says.

As a rapper, your flow and intonation is what makes you stand out. And according to Viveick, an understanding of *konnakol* gives you a better understanding of rhythmic structures and helps you write phrases in more interesting ways. "It's like this: for a layperson, a chair is a chair. But when a carpenter sees it, he sees its parts: its height when you're sitting, when you're standing."

Freestyling, the classic way (Clockwise from left) Yanchan playing the kanjira; Ta Dhom project founded by Viveick Rajagopalan; Yanchan and Shan Vincent De Paul touring with *Mrithangam Raps* • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

experiments led them to writing 'Mylapore Rap' last year.

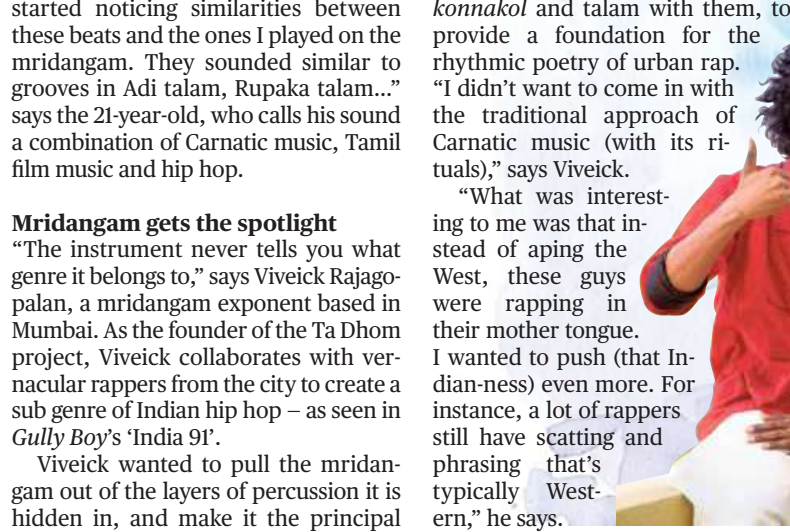
In the past year, however, the rise of virtual spaces brought on by the lockdowns has also increased the accessibility to Carnatic music, bringing it out of kutcheris and sabhas. "Learning Carnatic music for four to five years also gives you a good foundation for whatever genre you want to try next," says Maresh.

In Washington DC, singer-songwriter Hrishi Balaji had a similar realisation in high school. In June, the 25-year-old rose to Internet fame with his Carnatic remixes of pop songs. Hrishi's freestyle swaras over BTS' 'Butter' and The Weeknd's 'Blinding Lights', among others have gone viral on TikTok and Instagram. "I want to create a sense of familiarity and a sense of shock for the Western ear, while being true to both sensibilities," says Hrishi.

It is hip hop's subversive nature that allows space for experimentation, believes Viveick. "The whole rap culture is raw and non-conformist, so there is no template on how you have to play, or how it should sound," he says.

This subversion also has to reflect in its lyrics for a song to be true to hip hop's history of standing up to power. When Shan and Yanchan rap, they talk about their families who had to flee Jaffna during the Sri Lankan Civil War. MC Mawali and Swadesi, while rapping in the style of *konnakol*, are talking about overcoming systemic obstacles.

"Emotions are universal," says Yanchan. "With any song, your goal should be to speak your truth, speak from your experience, and hope that it connects to your audience."



## Peddalling past the Taj

A team from Tamil Nadu has created a VR game that lets users cycle around monuments, from their homes

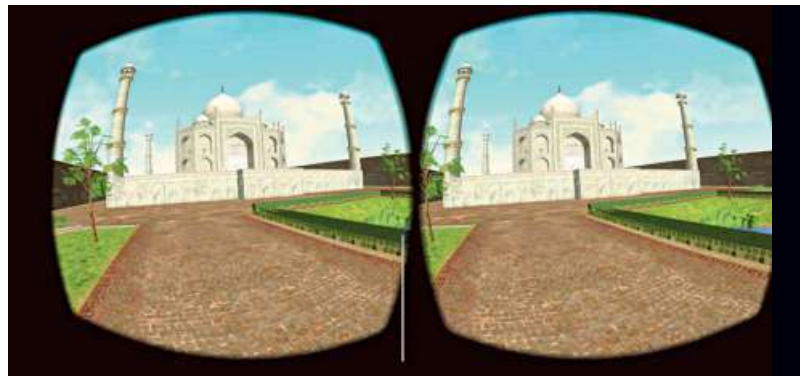
PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

Despite lockdown, Athik Mohamed M, Deepesh M and Anung Yangfo K from Tamil Nadu managed to cycle around the Taj Mahal in Agra. It only took 15 minutes.

This team of three final year students of Civil Engineering, from Thiagarajar Polytechnic College in Salem, has launched *Heritage Race*, a Virtual Reality mobile-only game that lets players explore Indian monuments and historic cities.

The game has been created as part of All India Council for Technical Education's (AICTE) Toycathon 2021, an initiative under the *AtmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyan*, to propel innovative minds "to conceptualise novel toys and games that are based on Bharatiya civilisation, history and culture".

The idea came to Athik in December



Sightseeing from the sofa A screenshot of the VR game created by three students from Salem • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

2020, before he even heard of Toycathon. Lockdown made it impossible to go anywhere. "With the lack of outdoor activities, my physical fitness was waning. I started indoor cycling but soon got bored of the four walls of my house. That's when the idea struck me," says Sathik, adding that VR cycling seemed an ideal way to beat boredom.

When his college announced the Toycathon competition a month later, Athik roped in two batchmates, and began to tweak the concept. They were mentored by Ponna M. The games needed an Indian connect and to highlight *sanskaar*, he explains. "India ranks low in creation of physical and digital toys. Most of the games played, don't personify Indian culture and are mostly made abroad," he adds.

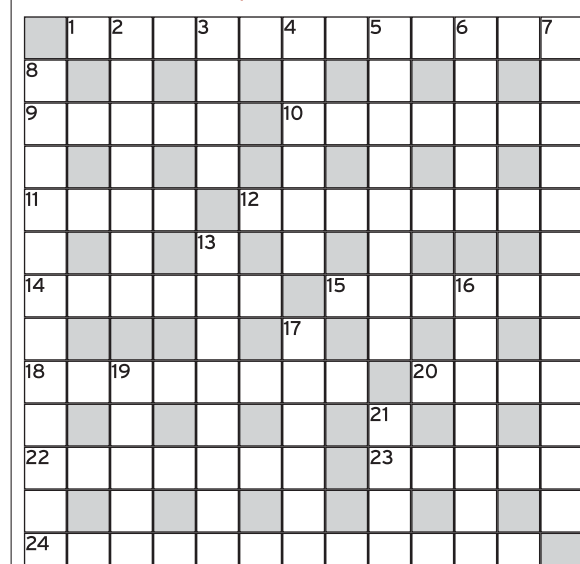
The first monument adapted by the

Salem trio, was the Taj Mahal. It gives a 360-degree experience of the environment, featuring gardens, bridges and Vedic music as background score. The speed of the cycle in the game is fixed at a relaxed pace of 13 kilometres per hour. As one gets close to the monuments, there are pop-ups, making the experience informative as well as entertaining.

The team is now modelling the Qutab Minar and India Gate for the upcoming games. As for ancient cities, they are focussing on Ayodhya and Varanasi. "We are searching for historical images to build 3D models and import them to the game engine," says Athik. Exploring the cities will take around 30 minutes.

Plans are on to release *Heritage Race* on the App Store and Play Store.

### THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13421



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Across  
1 Large island part of Canada's most easterly province (12)  
9 Large semi-aquatic  
10 Breed of cat (7)  
11 Injure seriously, leaving permanent damage (4)  
12 Gigantic statue that once

stood at the Rhodes harbour entrance (8)  
14 Not amenable to discipline (6)  
15 French female chorus line dance (6)  
18 Tea flavoured with bergamot (4,4)  
20 Provide with money (4)  
22 Warren residents (7)  
23 Relative by marriage (2-3)  
24 Chips to stand (anag) – game played with coins (5-3-4)  
Down  
2 Containing less (7)  
3 Flat mass of floating ice (4)  
4 Outcome (6)  
5 Straight line on a slant (8)  
6 Spaces covered by twodimensional surfaces (5)  
7 Severe scolding (8-4)  
8 Agatha Christie play (3,9)  
13 Slow-moving (8)  
16 People with their partners (7)  
17 Bible passage read during a church service (6)  
19 Mechanical worker (5)  
21 Decree – Italian car (4)



To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

Solution will appear in MetroPlus dated July 22, 2021.

Solution No. 13420

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

SWETA AKUNDI

It is not just the protagonist's surname that *Toofaan* (2021) and *Ali* (2001) have in common. Two decades after actor and fitness expert Darrell Foster moulded Will Smith's Muhammad Ali into shape, he has done the same for Farhan Akhtar's Aziz Ali, in *Toofaan*.

Directed by Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, this sports drama is set to release on Friday. Ahead of its premiere, Foster connects from his Los Angeles home to discuss the process of getting inside the mind and body of a boxer. He did that for Antonio Banderas and Woody Harrelson in *Play It to the Bone*, for Russell Harvard in *Heart, Baby!* and now, for Farhan Akhtar.

The *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* star is no stranger to movies that demand rigorous fitness routines, but playing a National-level boxer brought new challenges. "We went over the pugilism fundamentals first: balance, footwork, hand and eye-coordination. Then we taught him to work on the heavy bag, the speed bag, to skip rope – everything necessary for him to portray his character," says Foster.

In the year that he trained Farhan, Foster designed for him a personalised lifestyle management programme that looked after his cardiovascular fitness, muscle strength and endurance, and flexibility. Since Farhan's character goes through an arc of losing weight, gaining it and then losing it again, the transformation was extreme. "When you have location issues, where you can't necessarily shoot where and when you want, it is quite taxing on Farhan to keep changing his look – to starve himself at some point and force feed sometime else," he says, applauding Farhan's commitment.

Prepping an actor for a sports drama or action is not just about extreme transformations or maintaining a high level of fitness,

## Training DAY

Celebrity fitness expert Darrell Foster on how he helped Farhan Akhtar get in shape for his role as a National-level boxer in *Toofaan*



the ring. "It took time for me to understand whether it was simply a mood swing or whether it was his diet that was affecting his behaviour," he shares, about how he began to accurately assess if Farhan was "firing on all cylinders".

His fitness methodology includes what he calls Action Scene Analysis. "Say Farhan does an action scene outside the ring, where he has to run and jump over some tables and take off running down the beach. I will analyse sequence by sequence to understand what muscle groups will be involved and then set up an exercise programme to facilitate that," he says. The larger point being injury prevention.

To do this, he has to work closely with the director and cinematographer. "If I'm having him throw a lot of lateral punches or straight punches for a scene today, I won't have him doing weight training that involves shoulders. If he is sore from the upper body workout the day before, we will shoot from the waist below and get only the footwork. If we have a ring scene for which he needs to look great, and he has eliminated carbs and water for the day, I tell the director, let's keep it just physical and not shoot any dialogues."

Foster appreciates the amount of control the director let him have over the shooting.

"They were humble enough to step back and let you do what you do, and then ask, 'Can I get this shot done today?'. That's what made it such a wonderful project to be a part of."

but also making sure the actor is in the right frame of mind, he says. "You have to deliver dialogue with the right amount of emotion, it is a mental task. And your brain operates on glucose and oxygen, so I can't manipulate your carb-hydration intake to the point that it begins to affect your ability to say your lines well. It requires training your intellect and your anatomy together, in congruence."

Which of course meant spending a lot of time getting to know Farhan, inside

It took time for me to understand whether it was simply a mood swing or whether it was his diet that was affecting his behaviour

On body and mind A still from *Toofaan*; (top) Darrell Foster with Farhan Akhtar • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT









