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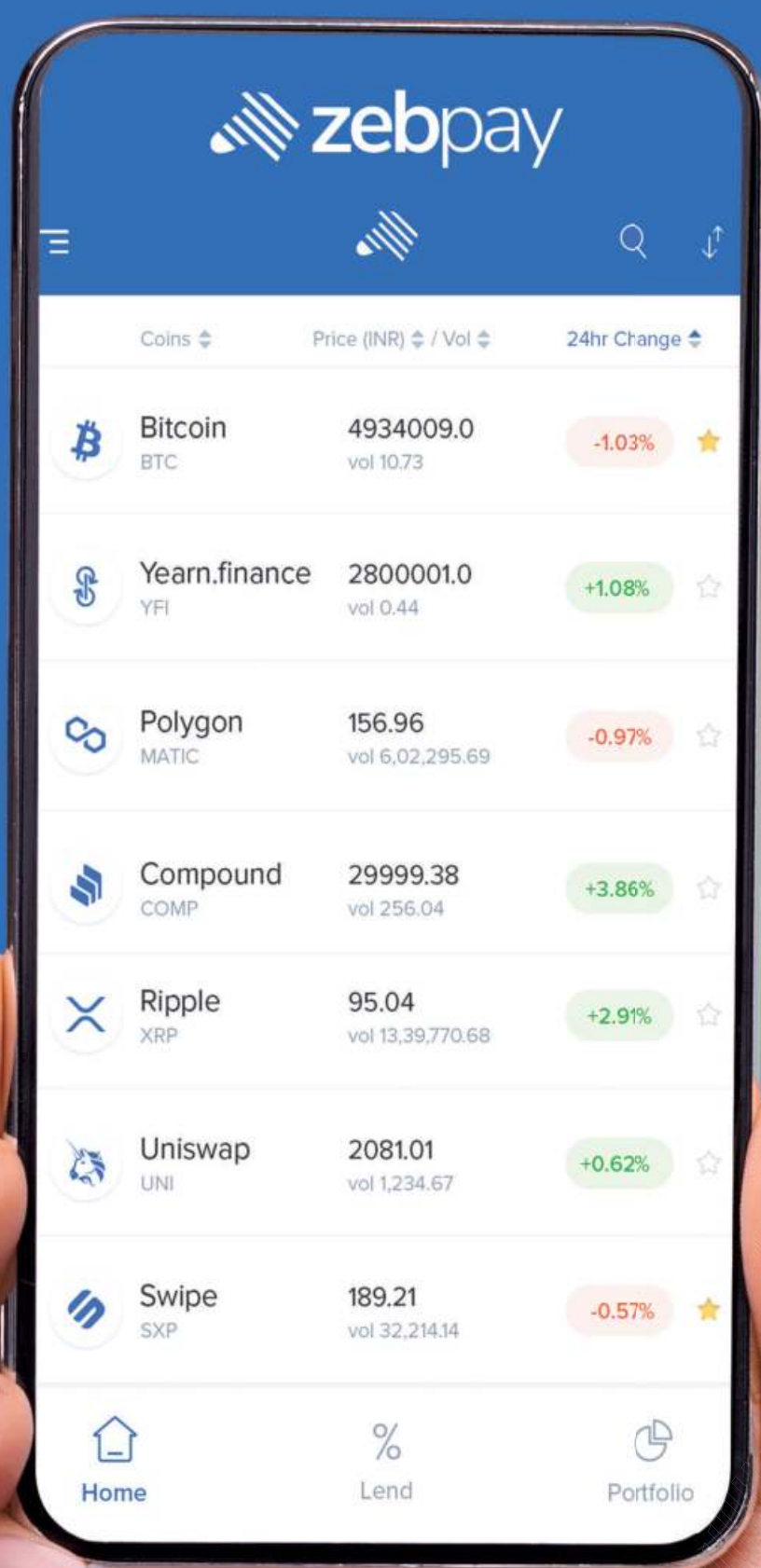
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Shutters of Cheruthoni dam in Idukki opened following heavy rain

page 5



Divide between haves and have-nots still a reality: CJI Ramana

page 9



U.S.-China diplomats spar over Taiwan ahead of Biden-Xi summit

page 11

Marsh, Warner star in Australia's maiden T20 WC triumph

page 13



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IN BRIEF

Two Delhi journalists detained in Assam

GUWAHATI
Two Delhi-based women journalists, booked in Tripura for criminal conspiracy and other charges, were detained by the police in Karimganj district of Assam on Sunday.

NEWS PAGE 8

Congress to go solo in U.P. polls, says Priyanka

BULANDSHAHAR
The Congress will contest all the 403 seats in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh polls on its own and emerge victorious, party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Sunday.

STATES PAGE 5

Workers, farmers' unions join forces

GURUGRAM
Several workers' unions in Gurugram's automotive sector and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha came together for the first time to hold a joint public meeting in support of their demands on Sunday.

NEWS PAGE 9

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EDUCATION PLUS PAGE 15

CBI, ED chiefs can now have five-year terms

Weeks before House session, Govt. promulgates ordinances

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday promulgated two ordinances that would allow the Union Government to extend the tenures of the directors of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) from two years to up to five years.

The chiefs of the Central agencies currently have a fixed two-year tenure, but can now be given three annual extensions.

While the change in tenure of the post of CBI Director was effected by amending the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946, the Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003 was amended with respect to the ED Director's post.

The move comes just days before the present ED chief, Sanjay Kumar Mishra, is to retire on November 17.

The move has riled the Opposition as the ordinances were brought in barely two weeks before the winter session of Parliament from November 29.

"Provided that the period for which the Director of Enforcement holds the office on his initial appointment may, in the public interest, on the recommendation of the Committee under clause

Modi Govt uses ED-CBI as henchmen to usurp power and destabilise elected govts... Now, these henchmen are being empowered & rewarded with 5-year tenure.

RANDEEP SURJEWALA, CONGRESS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON

Parliament session begins on 29th. To avoid its scrutiny, the Centre promulgates the ordinances on Sunday. This desperate hurry smacks of something fishy.

SITARAM YECHURY
CPI(M) GENERAL SECRETARY

(a) and for the reason to be recorded in writing, be extended up to one year at a time," the Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021 read.

"Provided further that no such extension shall be granted after the completion of a period of five years in total, including the period mentioned in the initial appointment," it added.

SC order

While the move will not immediately benefit CBI Director Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, appointed in May, it may benefit Mr. Mishra. Appointed in November 2018, the ED chief was to retire in November 2020. However, when the Government gave him a one-year extension retrospectively on November 13,

2020, the order was challenged in the Supreme Court. On September 8, a Bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao and B.R. Gavai directed the Government not to give Mr. Mishra any more extension, while observing that any extension of tenure during superannuation has to be for a short period and reasons must be recorded for granting such extensions. The court also noted that such extensions could be given "only in rare and exceptional circumstances" to facilitate an ongoing investigation. However, after the promulgation of the ordinance, the Centre can now give one-year extensions thrice after the completion of the initial two years.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Gadchiroli encounter a blow to Naxals

SHOUMAJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The Gadchiroli encounter in which 26 members of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist), including key fugitive Milind Telumbde, were 'neutralised' was a severe blow to the Naxals' urban and jungle networks in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, authorities have said.

FULL REPORT PAGE 8

EDITORIAL PAGE 6

Deliveries of S-400 systems have begun: Russian official

'First division will be delivered by the end of 2021'

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Ahead of Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India early next month, Moscow has started deliveries of the S-400 air defence systems to India, a senior Russian official confirmed.

This risks the possibility of sanctions from the U.S.



India is to get five S-400 systems as per its \$5.43 bn deal with Russia. ■ REUTERS

under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) which would come up for

discussion at the India-U.S. 2+2 ministerial dialogue, also scheduled for early December.

"Russia has started supplying S-400 air defence system to India, the first division will be delivered by the end of 2021," said Dmitry Shugaev, Director of Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation (FSMTC). The supplies are proceeding on schedule, he added.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

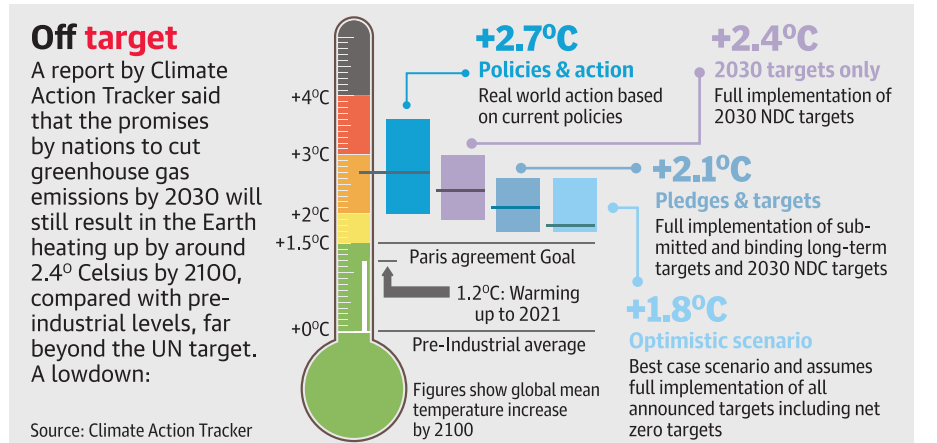
Coal 'phase-down' is a right: Minister

India entitled to responsible use, he says of COP-26 deal

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

A day after the 26th United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) in Glasgow ended on Saturday, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, in a personal blog, dwelt on India's last-minute intervention that played a key role in the final text of the agreement that called for coal to be "phased down" rather than "phased out".

"Fossil fuels and their use have enabled parts of the world to attain high levels of growth. Even now, developed countries have not



completely phased out coal. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) refers to mitigation of GHG emissions from all sources. UNFCCC is not directed at any particu-

lar source," he wrote, "Developing countries have a right to their fair share of the global carbon budget and are entitled to the responsible use of fossil fuels within this scope."

He said the lack of commitment (by the West) to climate finance is "troublesome".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8
U.K. HAILS DEAL PAGE 11

Slight improvement in Delhi's air quality after 3 days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The air quality in Delhi improved on Sunday to 'very poor' from 'severe' category after three days. The slight improvement came as the State Government notified steps to control pollution, including banning construc-

tion activities and closing educational institutions.

According to data from the Central Pollution Control Board, the average AQI over the past 24 hours ending at 4 p.m. on Sunday was 330.

The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas held a

meeting during the day and advised States to be ready to implement 'Emergency Measures' as listed under the Graded Response Action Plan. It advised the Governments of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to consider curbs in their respective

NCR districts as implemented by the Delhi Government.

For its part, the Haryana Government ordered closure of schools, both Government and private, in four districts neighbouring Delhi - Gurugram, Faridabad, Sonapat and Jhajjar - for three days.

REPORTS PAGE 2 & 4

Festive sales have lifted economy: Goyal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The economy is "bouncing back" strongly with festive sales hitting highs "not seen in a long time" and is set to record the highest-ever exports of \$550 billion in 2021-22, Commerce, Industry and Textiles Minister Piyush Goyal said on Sunday.

Merchandise exports stood at \$235 billion for the first seven months of the year and are "well on track" to hit \$400 billion, while services exports are expected to go up to about \$150 billion, Mr. Goyal said at the launch of the India International Trade Fair.

Job creation

"I am told several reports suggest that Deepavali sales, festival sales, earlier this month, were probably the highest seen in a long time. Every statistic, be it job creation or enrolments into the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, reflects a broad recovery," he said.

"The economy is bouncing back if you look at the figures in every aspect, the PMI [Purchasing Managers' Index] for services has hit a decade high, manufacturing PMI is above 55. GST collections... one normally sees a spike in collections in April, because it's the year-end, but this October, we recorded ₹1.3 lakh crore," he said.

In some way, exports also reflect the growing relevance of India, Mr. Goyal said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

SHUBHRA RANJAN

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City's air quality improves; Govt. resorts to emergency measures

Educational institutions to remain shut till Nov. 20; construction activities banned

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The air quality in the Capital improved to the "very poor" category on Sunday after remaining in the "severe" level for the last three days. This comes on a day when the Delhi Government, in a move to control local sources of air and dust pollution, decided to close educational institutions and ban construction activities, while encouraging work from home.

According to the data provided by the Central Pollution Control Board, the average air quality index (AQI) over the past 24 hours ending at 4 p.m. on Sunday, based on the reading from 36 monitoring stations, was 330. The AQI was 437 on Saturday, down from 471 on Friday. The improvement in the air quality has been attributed to the increase in wind speeds which dispersed pollutants.

Shallow fog

The forecast shared by the Central Government-run Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi shows that the air quality is likely to deteriorate but remain in the "very poor" category on



Desperate times: PWD workers sprinkling water from tankers to curb air pollution in Delhi. • FILE PHOTO

Monday and Tuesday. Shallow to moderate fog is likely on Tuesday morning.

Environment Minister Gopal Rai said that his department has issued orders under the Environment Protection Act, 1986, regarding closure of schools, colleges, skill development centres, and educational institutions till November 20. In cases where examinations are being conducted, will the institutions be allowed to open, he added.

Construction and demolition projects have been put on hold till November 17 to curb dust pollution while the Delhi Government offices and Government autonomous agencies will remain

closed till November 17.

The Minister said that on November 17, the ban on construction will be reviewed as it has been estimated that the pollution levels are going to escalate in the coming days.

"The objective of these emergency measures is to cut down on vehicular pollution, giving the people of Delhi some relief. An advisory has been issued to private offices to follow suit and help this initiative have an impact on the pollution levels," Mr. Rai said.

Sisodia appeals to people Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia appealed to the people to take small steps at

the personal level like turning off the engine at traffic signals and using public transport for at least one day every month to make the city healthy and pollution-free. He was speaking at a 'Yuddh Pradushan Ke Virudh' campaign conducted by the Delhi Government's Dialogue and Development Commission in association with Raahgiri Foundation at Patparganj.

Mr. Sisodia said there is a need to work at three levels to reduce pollution in Delhi. It is the Government responsibility to make rules and regulations, introduce systems to facilitate enforcement, conduct awareness campaigns, and take action against violators. Secondly, he said, industry and construction stakeholders should reduce their share of pollution, and in the third step, the citizens of Delhi need to come forward and bring down pollution at the individual and community levels.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

BJP blames AAP for pollution emergency

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday blamed the Delhi Government for the air pollution emergency that has arisen in the Capital and said the Kejriwal Government has failed in every crisis.

BJP MLAs said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should resign taking moral responsibility. They also demanded a complete lockdown in Delhi for a week to find out the contribution of stubble burning to the pollution and what is the role of factors inside the city.

Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said the Delhi Government kept on announcing measures but practically did not take any step apart from the installation of a smog tower in Connaught Place, which too had proven ineffective.

"If there is pollution in Delhi due to stubble burning, then States like Punjab and Haryana should have more pollution than Delhi because it is happening there. The pollution level on Sunday in various cities of Punjab is lesser than that of Delhi," Mr. Bidhuri said. He added that the collapse of the public transport system and the state of Delhi's roads are also to be blamed for the bad air quality.

Two Ugandan nationals with over 12 kg of heroin arrested

Narcotic was concealed in false bottom of check-in luggage

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Customs officers at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport have arrested two Ugandan nationals and seized 12.9 kg of heroin worth ₹90 crore from their possession.

Officials said on Sunday that the two women, who had arrived from Nairobi in Kenya, were arrested on the intervening night of November 12 and 13.

"The smugglers had passed through several jurisdictions, including Uganda, Kenya and India, before being intercepted. The he-

roin was concealed in the false bottom of their check-in luggage," the officials said.

Sniffed by dog squad

The officials said that the baggage of the two passengers was sniffed by the dog squad of the Customs, which indicated the presence of narcotic substance.

"On detailed search and questioning, the two admitted to have brought the heroine by concealing it in the specially made cavities beneath the fake layer of fibre-plastic base on both sides of their check-in suitcases,"

they said.

One of the women revealed that she was introduced to a Kenyan national who had promised her money in exchange of delivery of certain goods in Delhi following which she travelled to Nairobi from Kampala by road. There, the Kenyan handed over a bag to her which was to be delivered in Delhi and also provided tickets and certain documents to cover her visit as a medical tourist.

"She was supposed to deliver the goods to a person who would contact her on exit," the officials said.

HC directs civic body, police to clear illegal vendors from Bungalow Road

Authorities to submit status report before the next hearing

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has ordered the North Delhi Municipal Corporation and the Delhi Police to remove illegal vendors from the no-hawking and no-vending zone on Bungalow Road at Kamla Nagar.

A Bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh directed the authorities to submit a status report before the next date of hearing on February 10 next year.

Information boards

The High Court further asked the authorities to install boards informing the public that it is a no-hawking and no-vending zone.

The court's direction came while hearing a peti-



The petition, filed through advocate Ashish Dixit, said that the authorities, on the contrary, have impliedly permitted illegal activity by not taking action against the violators.

Glaring violation

The traders' association said it has approached the court against the glaring violation of legal and fundamental rights of shopkeepers and the residents of the area. The association said it has made several representations to the authorities but they have yielded no results, forcing it to knock the door of the High Court.

The plea claimed that even during the pandemic, the illegal squatting and vending was continuing unabated in the area.

Be ready to implement 'emergency measures', CAQM tells States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) on Sunday directed the States and the agencies concerned to be in a complete readiness for implementing the 'emergen-

cy measures' listed under the Graded Response Action Plan. It also advised the Governments of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to consider the restrictions in their respective NCR districts as implemented by the Delhi Government like closure of schools. The advisory fol-

lowed a meeting by the CAQM held in the wake of the deteriorating air quality in Delhi-NCR.

The CAQM in a statement said that the adverse air quality in the Delhi-NCR is a combined result of stubble burning, vehicular pollution, pollution after Deepavali, dip

in temperature, and other local factors. The air quality was also impacted by a dust storm moving in from the south-westerly direction of the Thar desert, which further amplified the PM2.5/PM10 levels significantly, it said.

The commission said it has identified five factors that

are contributing to the poor air quality in Delhi-NCR. The measures, it suggested, are to control stubble burning, reduce dust from construction and demolition activities, check dust from roads and open areas, and cut down on vehicular and industry pollution.

ARNABJIT SUR
NEW DELHI

Eight months into her marriage, 28-year-old Shivani had developed a habit of waiting for her husband Amit Baliyan's call early in the morning when he was on duty as a fire operator at the office of Delhi Fire Services (DFS).

The morning of January 2, 2020, was no different. Amit was in office and Shivani was waiting for his 7 a.m. call to start her day. As her wait stretched from minutes to hours, Shivani knew something was not right. Her cell phone rang finally but the call was from Amit's office. The 29-year-old fire operator had been crushed under the debris of a four-storey building housing a battery factory at Peeragarhi in Udyog Nagar.

A sudden blaze inside the premises caused an explosion and parts of the building collapsed, trapping a civilian and 18 fire brigade personnel. While the rest of his colleagues were rescued, Amit's body was recovered around 1 p.m. He was rushed to a hospital where the doctors declared him brought dead.

Sitting at her house in north-east Delhi's Meet Nagar, Shivani recalled, "We had seen on television that his colleagues had been rescued. It gave me hope that Amit too would survive but that was not meant to be. I knew the risks involved in his job but we never expected such an incident to happen."

Anuj Baliyan, Amit's younger brother, said their father, a Delhi Police officer, kept telling them that Amit would be fine. "Our eyes were glued to the TV for some news on his rescue. Instead, we learnt that his body had been recovered from the debris," said Anuj.

Shivani, who works as a constable with the Uttar Pradesh Police, and Amit's mother have received the stipulated ₹1 crore ex gratia, in addition to ₹50 lakh monetary help from the DFS.

'Unfulfilled' promise

Anuj said the Delhi Government's promise to provide the same post to Amit's kin has remained unfulfilled. "I have written to several Government officers and even to the Lieutenant-Governor (Anil Bajjal), but nothing has come through."

DFS chief Atul Garg, however, said the matter is under process.

As many as 156 DFS personnel have suffered non-fatal injuries in various rescue operations between January 2018 and October 11 this year, consisting of 98 fire operators, 14 leading firemen, 13 sub-officers, 25



The family of fire operator Amit Baliyan, who died during a rescue operation at Peeragarhi in Udyog Nagar, in Delhi. • SANDEEP SAXENA

Injuries and fatalities do little to shake the determination of the city's firemen, for whom the numbers that really count are the lives they have saved

Driven by a burning desire

In the line of fire Firemen injured during rescue operation in the last few years			
Fire operators	Leading firemen	Total fire calls received in 2021 till June	Fleet of firefighting vehicles and other supporting units maintained
2018: 29	2018: 4	13,709	245
2019: 20	2019: 8		
2020: 26	2020: 9		
2021: 23 (till Oct. 11)	2021: 4 (till Oct. 11)		
Total: 98	Total: 25	In comparison, total fire calls received in 2020 till June	
		11,837	
		Total fire calls received in 2019 till June	
		15,766	
		Total rescue personnel in DFS at the moment	
		64	
		Total fire stations in Delhi	
		64	
		Total rescue personnel in DFS at the moment	
		3,312	
		Fire calls can include calls regarding road accidents, house collapse, drowning incidents, animal rescue, among others	
		Firefighters killed: 7 (since 2016)	

station officers, two assistant divisional officers, and four divisional officers.

Amit is one of the seven deaths on duty in the DFS since 2018. Recently, fire operator Praveen Kumar, 30, who

had joined the service in 2019, succumbed to burn injuries he sustained while dousing a fire in a building in Bhorgarh, Narela.

These deaths, though alarming, do little to shake the determination of



the firefighters, who are guided by a burning desire to rescue as many lives as they can.

Serious injuries

Mahavir Singh, 57, posted at Jawala Heri fire station as a leading fireman, recalled an incident in Chandni Chowk in 2010 when a major fire broke out in a building. "My colleague and I were inside the building when the blast happened. An LPG cylinder exploded and the structure collapsed on us. Both of us sustained serious injuries," said Mr. Singh, who suffered 70% burns in the incident.

He had to undergo plastic surgery on parts of his face. "I returned to duty after nine months. I can't sit idle for long. Firefighting makes me happy, nothing else matters," he said.

Sharing one of his most cherished memories, Mr. Singh said, "In a building fire incident at Kalkaji, a girl and her dog were trapped inside their house. I entered the premises as my colleagues extinguished the flames around me. I managed to save both the lives that day."

"Whenever a big incident happens, I feel hurt if I am not part of the rescue operation," said Mr. Singh.

Even on his off days, if he hears a siren, Mr. Singh comes running from the staff quarters to check what happened. "My children ask me to stay away from major fires but I cannot



stop myself if there is a big incident," he said, adding, "It has often happened that a lot of my colleagues have cut down on their leaves only to be part of a major rescue operation."

'Tough as the Army'

For fire operator Manjeet Rana, 34, posted at Kirti Nagar fire station, it was a choice between the Army or the fire service. "Due to some documentation issues, I couldn't make it to the Army but thankfully I got through as a fireman," he said.

Mr. Rana, who was also part of the Peeragarhi rescue operation last year, said that it became his most important mission ever since he joined the service two years ago. "After the building collapsed, I remained under the debris for several hours and was rescued around noon. All my veins were blocked. My left eye and right shoulder had to be operated upon. I still struggle with body pain," he said.

Mr. Rana said once a fire call is made, a team reaches the location and it has to quickly analyse the situation. "Usually, two teams are formed - one that does the firefighting and the other that rescues the trapped persons. We also have to ensure that there is limited monetary loss due to the blaze," he said.

Often, problems arise when the fire engine is not able to enter the narrow lanes of a locality, in which case

the firemen extend the hose up to several metres in order to reach the spot, Mr. Rana said.

"A fireman dies either after being burnt or being crushed. All we have in our defence is an extinguisher. Does that make our job any less tough than the Army?" he asked.

Narrow escape

Station officer Satyawan Singh, who joined the service as a fire operator in 1990, said he doesn't bother much about getting burn injuries.

The 56-year-old, who was also part of the firefighting mission inside the Peeragarhi factory along with Amit, Mr. Singh, and Mr. Rana, said that the explosion pushed him aside and he crashed into a wall, narrowly escaping death. "All the heat and dust from the blast affected my eyes and I was not able to see anything but I somehow I managed to escape safely along with my equipment," said Mr. Satyawan, a father of four children.

Hailing from Panipat in Haryana, Mr. Satyawan works a 72-hour shift before getting a 24-hour rest period.

Recalling another incident, he said once a slum cluster near the Yamuna caught fire and he, along with three other firemen, carried out the rescue operation. "By the time we had rescued all persons, the blaze had spread so much that all four of us had to jump into the river to save ourselves," he said.

However, Mr. Satyawan claimed that it was his passion to save lives of people. "Jaise fauji border pe reh kar hamare desh ki raksha karta hain, vaise hi hum logon ki aag se suraksha karte hain [Like the Army protects the country from enemies, we protect people from fire]."

Amit, Mr. Singh, Mr. Rana, and Mr. Satyawan are among the recipients of this year's President's Fire Service Medal for Gallantry for their commendable work during the Peeragarhi fire incident.

The DFS chief agreed that the job of a fireman comes with its fair share of risks. "In Delhi, most buildings function without an NOC [no objection certificate] and while the building may have been sanctioned for a particular purpose, it is later revealed that some other work has been going on all the while," Mr. Garg said.

Often, multiple activities take place inside a single building - "like a factory godown is set up on the first floor, the workers cook their food on the second floor and the third floor is meant for them to take rest", said Mr. Garg, adding, "You never know when or how a blast will occur in the property in such cases."



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RISE 06:44 SET 17:28
RISE 15:25 SET 02:56

TUESDAY, NOV. 16
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RISE 15:54 SET 03:50

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 17
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RISE 16:23 SET 04:44

Delhi Weather max min

Delhi City 28 10
Safdarjang 28 10
Palam 27 13

Delhi Palam Today
27°C The pollution level will be severe with dry weather. Morning will be cool with shallow fog and mist. Day will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
26°C The weather will be comfortable with severe pollution level. A cool morning with shallow fog and mist turns comfortable day.

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IN BRIEF

Five injured in LPG blast at JJ cluster in Azadpur

NEW DELHI
Five people sustained burn injuries after an LPG cylinder blast at a JJ cluster in north-east Delhi's Azadpur, the Delhi Fire Services said. DFS chief Atul Garg said that after receiving the fire call, three fire tenders were rushed to the spot. "An LPG cylinder blast occurred in a 25-year jhuggi injuring five people. All of them have been moved to a nearby hospital while the cooling operation continues," Mr. Garg said.

Virtual book fair launched for students

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

To inculcate reading habit in students, the Delhi Government has launched a virtual book fair for Government school students where they can get their desired books delivered to their libraries.

Speaking at the launch of the initiative on Sunday, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that the students will be able to choose the best books for their libraries, place online orders on the publishers' websites, and the books will be delivered to the schools.

"Books play an important role in the all-round development of children and our aim is to provide quality books to the children studying in Government schools. The online platform of Virtual Mega Book Fair will play an important role in this direction and children will be able to access quality books," Mr. Sisodia said.

This year, Mr. Sisodia said, the Delhi Government has allocated ₹9 crore for 1,031 Government schools to buy books that not only serve as a source of knowledge but also have significant social and emotional impact. He added that the book fair allows the teachers and students to take a virtual tour by visiting the website of the Directorate of Education and choose from 8,000 books by 220 publishers selected for the fair.

Pandemic curve plummets, corruption graph shoots up

Complaints filed till September-end surpass total plaints filed throughout 2020

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

After witnessing a brief slow-down following the advent of the pandemic last year, alleged corruption in the city's Government departments appears to be back with a vengeance.

The number of complaints alleging graft against officials posted in various Government departments received by the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) till the end of September surpassed the total number of complaints filed with the ACB throughout 2020 by over 12%, it stated in response to a Right to Information query from *The Hindu*.

From 180 in 2018, the total number of complaints alleging corruption received by the ACB fell to 85 in 2019 and 56 in 2020. However, till the end of September 2021, as many as 63 complaints have been recorded, registering an increase of 12.5%.

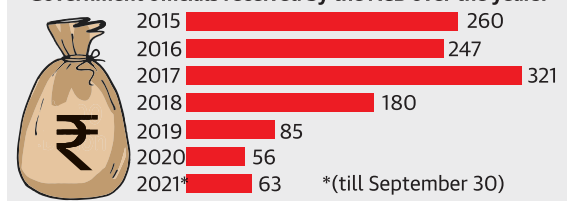
On the other hand, the number of cases registered on the basis of these complaints as well as the number of Government officials arrested for alleged graft was found trailing by mere single digits compared to 2020. But, no Government official was convicted either in 2020 or till September this year.

The ACB had registered 12 cases of alleged graft and arrested 11 Government officials in 2020. Till the end of September 2021, a total of 11 cases have been registered and 10 Government employees have been arrested.

From 2015 to September 30 this year, prominent departments such as revenue saw 15, Delhi Jal Board (DJB)

Virus of corruption

Total number of complaints alleging corruption by Government officials received by the ACB over the years:



Total cases registered, arrests made, court challans filed against and convictions of officials from prominent Government departments:

Dept.	Cases registered	Challans filed	Arrests	Convictions
Revenue	15	18	18	2
Excise	1	1	5	1
PWD	6	8	9	1
DJB	11	3	21	Nil
Health	9	10	Nil	2
Civic body	8	28	11	11
Education	10	4	10	1
Transport	7	Nil	2	Nil
DTC	2	2	1	1

Data from 2015 to September 30, 2021

Total number of complaints of graft received by the ACB against Government officials:
1,212

Total number of challans filed in court by the ACB against Government officials:
106

Total number of cases registered by the ACB against Government officials:
100

Total number of Government employees arrested by the ACB for alleged corruption:
90

Total number of Government officials convicted for corruption:
23

Data from 2015 to September 30, 2021

SOURCE: ANTI-CORRUPTION BRANCH (ACB)

11, education 10, health 9 and the municipal corporations of Delhi 8 cases registered against their employees by the anti-graft body.

Few convictions

The most number of arrests, 21, were of DJB officials followed by 18 of Revenue Department, 11 civic body, and 10 Education Department officials. However, as many as 11 civic body employees were convicted during the period compared to only two officials, each, from the Revenue and Health Departments and one each from departments, including Excise, PWD and Education. Not even a single DJB official was convicted during the period.

Of the total number of 1,212 complaints alleging graft received by it from 2015 till September this year, 100 or 8.25% were converted into cases. Court challans – a pre-requisite for a trial – were filed in 106 or 8.75% cases. Arrests were made in 90 or 7.43% of the cases and convictions secured in 23 or 1.9%.

The ACB, created in 1975, was envisioned as a police station with jurisdiction 'all over the National Capital Territory of Delhi' and mandated with the investigation of offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act (1988).

In addition to the power to conduct inquiries against public servants of the Delhi Government and depart-

ments under the L-G, the ACB, till mid-2015, had the power to probe graft complaints against officials posted in departments such as the Delhi Police and the DDA, if the instances of alleged graft unfolded within the borders of the Capital.

Powers curtailed

Between 2014 and 2015, back-to-back directives were issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) effectively curtailing its ambit and power to investigate graft complaints against officials employed by the Central Government.

Sources said the seemingly 'low' complaint-to-case conversion ratio was due to this 'change in the remit' of the anti-graft body.

Capital reports 36 fresh COVID-19 cases, 1 death

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Capital reported one death and 36 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi Government on Sunday.

The Government conducted 54,161 tests in the same period with a positivity rate of 0.7%. There are 349 active CO-

VID cases in Delhi, of whom 158 are in home isolation.

Under the vaccination drive, 1,13,420 beneficiaries were administered the vaccine in the last 24 hours, of whom 38,043 received their first dose.

A total of 2,12,39,154 beneficiaries have been vaccinated so far, of whom 79,24,806 have received both doses.

HC seeks details of pending cases before consumer forum

Direction came on plea by a man who had filed a case in 2007

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

After coming across an insurance claim case that remained undecided before a consumer forum here for over 14 years, the Delhi High Court, taking a strong view, has called for records of other similar cases pending before the forum and their status.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh also directed the District Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum (West), Janakpuri, Delhi, where the insurance claim case was pending, to decide it before December 20.

The court's direction came while hearing a plea of a man who came aggrieved that the District Consumer Dispute Redressal Forum (West), Janakpuri, has, till date, not decided his consumer complaint, which was filed in 2007.

The man had lost his son, who was just 13 years of age, and had filed a consumer complaint seeking compensation against the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and the Employees State Insurance Hospital. The father's case was that there was medical



negligence, which led to the demise of his young son.

Fast-track cases

"Such cases ought to be adjudicated expeditiously and with alacrity. This delay of 14 years has taken place despite the parties having concluded evidence within one year of the filing of the complaint, because the forum has not finally heard the matter and passed the final judgment. There can be no justification for such a long delay in finally hearing the matter," Justice Singh said.

During the hearing, the lawyers representing both sides raised various grievances about the manner in which the forum is functioning, besides the issue of delay in this specific case.

They submitted that the consumer forum does not assemble on time and on several occasions, presiding officers do not hold court. They also submitted that on most occasions, proceedings are not held for the entire duration of the working hours.

Moreover, counsel of both sides informed the High Court that the vacancies in the consumer forum have now been filled and the requisite quorum is available for hearing the matters.

Cause for concern

Taking note of the submission made by the counsel, Justice Singh said the manner of functioning of the consumer forum was a "cause for concern".

The court called for a list of cases or complaints pending for final hearing from the forum, Janakpuri.

The High Court also asked about the status of vacancies of presiding officers, including chairperson and members of the consumer forum, and if there was any infrastructural requirements.

It will hear the case again on January 6 next year.

Haryana petrol pump owners to go on day-long strike today

Their demands include reduction in VAT, hike in commission

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

The petrol pump owners in Haryana have announced a 24-hour-long strike from Monday morning seeking reduction in the value added tax (VAT) on diesel and petrol to bring the rates on par with Punjab and an increase in the dealers' commission, among other things.

Around 6,000 petrol pumps are expected to remain shut from 6 a.m. on the call given by the All-Haryana Petroleum Dealers Association and the Petroleum Dealers Welfare Association of Haryana.

Rakesh Kumar, vice-president, All-Haryana Petroleum Dealer Association, told *The Hindu* that one of their four demands is a curb on the illegal use of base oil as motor fuel. "The illegal use not-



A banner put up at a petrol pump in Gurugram on Sunday. ■ ASHOK KUMAR

their existing stock and demanded compensation for it.

A dealer, on the condition of anonymity, said fuel retailers operating at wafer thin margins were subjected to sudden price shocks of around ₹12 per litre on petrol and diesel.

On the other demands, Mr. Kumar said, "In 2017, the Government promised to increase the dealers' commission every six months but has not kept its word narrowing our margins. The costs have escalated but the commission has not been increased. Also, the diesel and petrol in Punjab are cheaper compared to Haryana, causing loss to the owners in the border areas. The Haryana Government must reduce VAT to bring it on par with Punjab."

ly causes financial loss to the dealers due to fall in demand but also damages parts of vehicles and is highly polluting."

Huge loss

He also said the Government had reduced the excise duty and the VAT on petrol and diesel without prior notice causing huge loss to them on

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Haryana schools near Delhi border closed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

The Haryana Government on Sunday ordered closure of schools, both government and private, in four districts neighbouring Delhi for three days in view of high level of air pollution. The Government and private offices have also been advised to allow work from home during this period, besides announcing a host of other measures with immediate effect.

In a two-page order, Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan ordered that all schools would remain shut in Gurugram, Faridabad, Sonapat and Jhajjar districts of the State till November 17 with the aim to curb air pollution.

With the objective of reducing vehicular traffic by one-third, government and private offices have also been advised to allow employees to work from home. The order said that there would be a ban on all kinds of construction and development activities during the period. The burning of trash by municipal bodies, stubble burning and manual sweeping of roads is not allowed.

Congress's bid to woo upper caste comes a cropper in Bihar

Party has to revamp Bihar unit, make connect with traditional voters, feel many

AMARNATH TEWARY PATNA

After the Congress lost the two Assembly bypolls in Bihar on November 2, with both the seats being retained by the ruling JD(U), political circles are abuzz with questions on whether the former was losing ground in its bid to woo the upper caste voters and what would be its future strategy in the State. Coming out of the *Mahagathbandhan* (grand alliance), the Congress had fielded candidates on both the seats – one of them was from an upper caste – and both lost their security deposits. The party had even sent former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union president Kanhaiya Kumar, who belongs to the upper caste Bhumihar community, for campaigning. Both the candidates came at fourth place.

A good number of the Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee members, including its president Madan Mohan Jha, come from upper caste. At Tarapur bypoll, the party had fielded an upper caste candidate, Rajesh Kumar



Bihar Pradesh Congress chief Madan Mohan Jha.

Mishra, but he polled a mere 3,590 votes with a vote share of just 2.2%. At the traditional seat of Kusheshwarthan (reserved seat) from where senior Congress leader Ashok Kumar had polled 34,265 votes and had lost to the JD (U) candidate by a little over 7,000 voters in the 2020 Assembly polls, his son Atirek Kumar polled only 4.28% votes.

When asked why the upper caste voters didn't vote for the Congress candidate in Tarapur, Bimal Chandra Singh, a Rajput transport businessman, told *The Hindu*, "We didn't want to lose our vote."

"The Congress leaders are seen only during the election time. And for the rest of period, they indulge only in making statements or in intra-party infighting," he added.

In Kusheshwarthan, where the upper caste voters have negligible presence, Satya Prakash Jha said, "The Congress has to revamp its Bihar unit and start working at the ground level while making a connection with its traditional voters."

"Shifted to BJP" "Since the party has been with the RJD and the Yadav caste in the grand alliance for so long, the upper caste vote bank of the Congress has shifted to the BJP. Now the party has to do a rigorous overhauling to make its presence felt in the State," added his friend Ritesh Anand.

"The Congress's show at both the seats was a poor reflection of how the party has failed miserably in wooing the upper caste voters in the State. Kanhaiya Kumar may deliver an impressive speech

but he is not a guarantee to get our votes for the Congress. The party has to connect with the grassroots leaders and voters," Rajesh Singh from Tarapur Bazaar said.

Political observers too agree that the BPCC has lost connection with its traditional upper caste voters after its association with parties like the RJD. "Congress may have some long term plan for Bihar like U.P. to go alone in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and expand its base but first the party has to regain its vote share of the upper castes and connect with the voters at ground level," political observer Ajay Kumar said.

"After its poor performance in the 2020 Assembly elections (the party won only 19 out of the 70 contested seats under the grand alliance) and in the bypolls, the Congress has to take an urgent call to revive its base. The party has taken a tough stand by coming out of the alliance," retired professor of Patna University and political commentator Nawal Kishore Choudhury said.

Panel will probe AIADMK regime's irregularities: Stalin

The guilty will be brought to book, says Chief Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin said on Sunday that a commission would be constituted to probe the irregularities said to have been committed by the previous AIADMK government.

Making this statement in response to a question on the Opposition's criticism of his government's handling of the floods, he told reporters that he was "not concerned" about the Opposition's take on the functioning of his government. "For all their atrocities and wrongful acts, a commission will be constituted, as soon as the rain is over, to find out where mistakes were committed. The guilty will be brought to book."

"Working for people" "My job is to work for people. This is why they gave us a huge victory. Our policy is to serve not only those who voted for us but also those who did not vote for us," he added.

On the damage in the Cauvery delta districts, Mr. Stalin said a group of Minis-



Chief Minister M.K. Stalin distributing relief materials at Chetpet. • R. RAGU

ters, headed by Cooperation Minister I. Periyasamy, had been formed to assess the situation. Its report was expected in a day or two. "Once the assessment has been completed, we will send a report to the Prime Minister. If required, Ministers and MPs will meet the Prime Minister to make the request for aid."

To another question, he said he would visit Kanniyakumari on Monday to assess the damage. For the eighth day in succession, the Chief Minister visited the affected areas, covering parts of the Villivakkam, Thiru Vi Ka Nagar, Kolathur and Egmore

Assembly constituencies, according to an official release.

Mr. Stalin distributed relief materials to residents at many places.

Among those who accompanied him were Public Works Minister E.V. Velu, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Minister P.K. Sekar Babu, Central Chennai MP Dayanidhi Maran, Commissioner of the Greater Chennai Corporation Gagandeep Singh Bedi and coordinating officer for north Chennai and Principal Secretary for Higher Education D. Karthikeyan, the release said.

Odisha steps up drive against hemp cultivation

Malkangiri destroyed cannabis grown over 250 acres in the past one week

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR

Stepping up the crackdown against cannabis cultivation in Odisha, the Malkangiri district administration has destroyed cannabis hemp plants grown over 250 acres within the past one week.

"In continuation of the special drive against ganja cultivation, a team of Mudulpada police station has destroyed hemp plants cultivated in about 65 acres of land in the Badadural area. We will continue our drive by spreading out to cultivation areas in other parts of the district," said Prahlad Sahai Meena, Malkangiri Superintendent of Police.

The police destroyed



District administration officials destroying cannabis plants in Malkangiri. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

about 65,000 plants.

"Worst-hit area" Malkangiri continues to be the worst-affected district as far as the presence of Left-Wing Extremism is con-

cerned. The cannabis cultivation is taken up clandestinely deep in the forest. Illicit cultivation is flourishing in remote areas with the support of Left ultras.

In separate drives taken

up in Kalimela, Chitrakonda and Mathili police station limits of the district, a total of 1,89,000 hemp plants were felled and set on fire in 135 acres of land at three places Rajulukonda (Chitrakonda), Tekguda (Kalimela) and Gummajaram (Mathili).

Similarly, Chitrakonda police also destroyed hemp plants at Rajulukonda-Bangur-Rekhapalli area, cultivated on about over 70 acres. During this process, almost 98,000 cannabis plants were destroyed. Odisha is one of the leading ganja (cannabis) producing States in India. In 2019-20, hemp plants were destroyed in 18,295 acres, it went up to 23,538 acres in 10 districts in 2020-21.

Two women athletes go missing in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Two kickboxers are among five women who have been missing in central and eastern Assam for a week.

A statement issued by the United Liberation Front of Assam-Independent, which has extended its cessation of operations, has indicated they may have left home to join the outfit in its hideout in Myanmar.

The families of the women have lodged missing

complaints after a video showing them trekking inside a forest was posted on social media. The video showed Nayanmani Chetia of Tinsukia district and Sabita Chetia of Dhemaji district – both had taken part in national-level kickboxing events – and three others from as many districts.

Nayanmani's brother told local TV channels that she had gone out saying she would be participating in a tournament with the other

girls. Her husband works in the State police and they have a six-year-old son, he said.

"We are working on the complaint and trying to trace her," Tinsukia's SP Debajit Deuri told *The Hindu* on Sunday. His counterparts in the other districts said the mobile phones of the women have been switched off.

There was speculation that the women were joining the ULFA-I, which issued a statement on Saturday say-

ing "it is normal for people to join us because of our goal and ideals".

A senior police officer said there have been several cases of young people leaving their families to join extremist groups.

While some get caught on the way to the hideouts of such groups, some are arrested later.

"A few have surrendered after running away or quit the groups they joined," he said.

Isolated heavy rain may persist in several districts of Tamil Nadu

Wet weather likely for another week, says Met department

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

The rain pounding Kanniyakumari district and its neighbouring areas may abate slightly from Monday.

The Meteorological Department has issued an orange alert for the district and a few others along the Western Ghats, as they may receive heavy to very heavy rain in one or two places.

In the past 24 hours, ending 8.30 a.m. on Sunday, many places in Kanniyakumari district received intense rainfall. The Perunchani and Puthan dams in Kanniyakumari district received 22 cm of rainfall each.

Wet weather may continue over the State for another week. On Monday, many places in the State are likely to receive light to moderate rainfall.

Besides Kanniyakumari, the Nilgiris, Theni, Dindigul and Tiruppur districts are likely to get rainfall of very heavy intensity. Sixteen other districts, including Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram,



Some areas in Chennai may receive light or moderate rain till Tuesday. •PTI

Ranipet, Cuddalore and Erode, have prospects of heavy rain in one or two places.

There may be a slight dip in the coverage of rainfall in the State on Tuesday and Wednesday. Chennai, which witnessed extreme rainfall episodes, may experience a break, as the department has forecast light or moderate rain in some areas till Tuesday.

Meanwhile, the low-pressure area over the central parts of the Andaman Sea is likely to become well marked over north Andaman Sea and

southeast Bay of Bengal by Monday. It may continue to move over the Bay of Bengal, and further intensify into a depression over west-central Bay of Bengal by November 17 and reach south Andhra Pradesh coast around November 18.

S. Balachandran, deputy director general of meteorology, Chennai, said strong westerly winds and a shear zone had led to such severe rainfall in the Kanniyakumari region. On the next weather system, he said the department was monitoring its movement and how it gains strength.

Water release from reservoirs has been reduced considerably. While water discharge from the reservoirs in Red Hills, Cholavaram and Chembarambakkam has been brought down to 500 cubic feet per second and 400 cusecs respectively, about 6,000 cusecs are being let out from the Poondi reservoir, as inflow has decreased.

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General public is informed that my client Smt. Meera Dhir aged about 71 years, resident of Flat No.- 09152, Floor 15, Tower 09, A1S One Hamlet, Plot No. GH1, Sector 104, Noida, Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P.- 201304, has severed all her relations with her younger daughter Smt. Aparna Katyaj W/o Gagan Katyaj resident of J-3/26, First Floor, Near Nehru Market, Rajouri Garden, West Delhi-110027 (Aadhaar No. 316654788681) due to her younger daughter's inconsiderate and careless behaviour. Smt. Aparna Katyaj has never shown any love, affection and care towards her mother. My client also has disowned and debarred her younger daughter from all their movable and immovable properties. Anybody dealing with Aparna Katyaj will do so at his/her own risk and responsibilities and my client will not be responsible for any act, deed or dealing done by Smt. Aparna Katyaj.
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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH
R.RANGA RAO (89), Retired Chief Artist, The Hindu, Chennai passed away on 14-11-2021. Address: 5/164, Ground Floor, M G R St, Kaveri Rangan Nagar, Saligramam, Chennai-600093. Contact:9884260649

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IN BRIEF



Police biased towards YSRCP, says Naidu

VIJAYAWADA
TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu has said the police are biased towards YSRCP and sought to know why they did not take into custody the YSRCP leaders who were "caught red handed while distributing cash to the voters in Kuppam."

Mild tremors felt in many areas of Vizag

VISAKHAPATNAM
Mild tremors were felt by the people of many areas of the city for a few seconds on Sunday. The quake, measuring 1.8 magnitude on the Richter scale, was recorded at 7.14 a.m., at a depth of about 5 km in the sea, off the Visakhapatnam coast, said a spokesman of the Cyclone Warning Centre.

Shutter of Cheruthoni dam opened

Mullaperiyar dam water level at 140.15 ft, shutters may be opened

A CORRESPONDENT
IDUKKI

The number 3 shutter of the Cheruthoni dam of Idukki reservoir was opened by 40 cm to release 40 to 50 cusecs of water in the wake of increased inflow following rain on Sunday. The shutter was raised at 2 p.m. However, the water level continued to rise and it reached the red alert level at 6 p.m.

The red alert level is 2,399.03 ft, with the upper rule level at 2,400.03 ft (the full reservoir level is 2,403 ft). The water level was 2,399.04 ft at 6 p.m.

Water Resources Minister Roshy Augustine said that the early opening of the dam shutter before the water reached the upper rule level



In spate: Water gushing out of the Idukki reservoir when a shutter of the Cheruthoni dam was opened on Sunday.

was to regulate the water level in view of the increased inflow. The shutter was opened when the water level reached 2398.90 ft.

"If needed, 100 cusecs of water will be released," he said, adding that it depended on the rainfall in the catchment area and the inflow into the reservoir.

According to the Minister, one generator, which was under repair, will be functioning again from Sunday evening. It would help in increased power generation at the Moolamattom power house and regulate the water level in the reservoir.

Meanwhile, the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam

on the upstream is also rising despite Tamil Nadu increasing the tunnel discharge from 556 cusecs to 1,867 cusecs on Sunday morning. There was an average inflow of 3,262 cusecs.

The water level at 4 p.m. was 140.15 ft. The upper rule level till November 20 is 141 ft. The maximum water level is 142 ft.

Tamil Nadu issued the first flood warning when the water level reached 140 ft at 9 a.m.

Idukki Collector Sheeba George said that there is a possibility of opening the spillway shutters of the Mullaperiyar dam and the release of water to the Periyar. She said that those living close to the river bank should take precautionary measures.

The official said 46.8 mm of rainfall was recorded in the catchment area of Idukki dam on Sunday morning.

2 killed as rain continues to lash Kerala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Heavy rain continued to drench Kerala districts on Sunday, even as the India Meteorological Department warned districts to expect more rain till Tuesday.

On Sunday, a 75-year-old woman drowned in the Neyyar river in Thiruvananthapuram district. A three-year-old boy drowned in a canal at Velukkara in Thrissur district. Both the bodies have been recovered.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who held a meeting to discuss the weather situation, appealed to the people to remain vigilant.

Role of southern States key in country's development: Shah

STAFF REPORTER
TIRUPATI

Union Minister of Home and Cooperation Amit Shah on Sunday said the ancient culture, traditions and languages of southern States enriched the country's culture and legacy. "India's development can't be imagined without the very important contribution of the States of southern India," he said.

Mr. Shah, who chaired the 29th meeting of the Southern Zonal Council here, said the Narendra Modi Government would respect all regional languages. He said he would be happy to see delegates feeling free to speak in the languages of their States in the future.

He said the States should



Union Home Minister Amit Shah participating in the Southern Zonal Council meeting held at Tirupati on Sunday.

use the zonal councils for amicably settling inter-State disputes and promoting cooperative federalism.

Second dose vaccination

He asked the States to speed up the second dose COVID-19 vaccination at the sub-division level. The Chief Ministers and the official ma-

chinery should monitor the progress, he said.

Mr. Shah said the Government of India had initiated the work for amendment of the IPC, the CrPC, and the Evidence Act.

States should submit their inputs for the amendments by involving officials and experts, he said.

Karnataka objects to violation of water tribunal awards

Centre urged not to give clearances to such projects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Reiterating the demand for Karnataka's rightful share in Cauvery, Krishna and Pennar basins in the Godavari-Cauvery link project, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday urged the Centre not to give statutory clearances to large-scale permanent projects planned for utilising surplus waters in violation of water tribunal awards.

"Though the shares of co-basin States have not been decided in the Godavari-Cauvery link, Tamil Nadu has been going ahead with the Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar

link which is inadmissible in law. The Karnataka Government has urged the Centre not to approve the proposal of Tamil Nadu for taking up the Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar link as an advance action in anticipation of the realisation of the Godavari-Krishna-Pennar-Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar link project," Mr. Bommai said in his address at the 29th Southern Zonal Council meeting at Tirupati on Sunday.

The Chief Minister sought the rightful share for Karnataka as was done in the case of Godavari diversion to Krishna river under the Polavaram project.

With respect to construction of Rajiv Gandhi Sangama Banda barrage by Telangana, he said that Karnataka opposed the project as it will utilise the remaining water in the guise of savings which will come for review in 2050. Karnataka also urged the removal of inter-State differences in renewable energy tariffs for creating a level playing field. The CM said though Karnataka is the only State to achieve the renewable purchase obligation targets of the Centre, it's not able to exploit great potential because of low tariffs that make it unviable for investors.

Congress to go solo in U.P. polls, says Priyanka

Party to contest all 403 Assembly seats

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BULANDSHAHR

The Congress will contest all 403 seats in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh polls on its own and emerge victorious in the electoral battle, party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said on Sunday.

Ruling out an alliance with any political party, she said the leaders of the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (SP) were nowhere to be seen even when the 2017 Unnao rape case and the Hathras gangrape-and-murder case in 2020 rocked the country, adding that only the Congress was fighting for the people.

Addressing the party cadre at the Pratigya Sammelan - Lakshya 2022 in Anoopshahr here, the Congress general secretary stressed on the importance of the Uttar Pradesh polls for

the party, calling it a "do-or-die" situation.

Emphasising that the electoral contest can only be won by strengthening the party at the booth level, she called upon the Congress workers to bolster the booth committees.

'Post all party activities'

Priyanka Gandhi asked the Congress workers to be active on social media and post all party activities on various social networking platforms.

Taking a jibe at the ruling BJP, she said the party has no respect for the freedom movement as its leaders did not shed blood and sweat for the country's independence, and added that only leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and B.R. Ambedkar envisioned freedom for the country.

School principal arrested

STAFF REPORTER
COIMBATORE

The Coimbatore city police on Sunday arrested the principal of a private school after a 17-year-old girl ended her life on Thursday alleging sexual assault by one of her teachers.

Principal Meera Jackson, alias Mini Jackson, was arrested for failure to report the assault on the Class XII student to the police, said T. Jayachandran, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Law and Order).

Police sources said she was arrested under Section 21 (2) (punishment for failure to report or record a case) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The teacher, Mithun Chakravarthy, 31, was held

on Friday under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the Indian Penal Code, Section 9 (I) (whoever commits sexual assault on the child more than once or repeatedly), read with 10 (punishment for aggravated sexual assault), of the POCSO Act.

Mr. Jayachandran, who questioned Meera Jackson, along with DCP (Crime) E.S. Uma, for several hours since the morning, said the investigation would cover whether the girl was sexually assaulted by anyone else and whether there were other reasons for her death by suicide.

(Those in distress or having suicidal tendencies could seek help and counselling by dialling 'Sneha' 24X7 helpline at 044-24640050.)

'Tiger tourism' on Nallamala Hills

Package includes cottage stay, educational tour, jungle safari and forest trek

SWATHI VADLAMUDI
MANNANUR

The lush green hills of Nallamala are now open for tourists to explore and learn from, thanks to the eco-tourism package announced by the Telangana Forest Department.

Safari ride into the Amrabad Tiger Reserve, which had been a minor sojourn for the pilgrims bound for the Srisailem temple, will be part of the "Tiger Stay Package" which is set to begin from November 17. The package includes cottage stay, educational tour, jungle safari, and forest trek up to the Umamaheshwaram Temple, exclusive of food. Pricing starts from ₹4,600 for two, and goes up to ₹17,000 for 12 members. More the number, better the bargain.

On the first day, the tourists arriving at the CBET



Cottages for tourists at Mannanur, inside the Amrabad Tiger Reserve in Nagarkurnool district. *G. RAMAKRISHNA

(Community Based Eco Tourism) resort of Mannanur, about 143 km from Hyderabad, around noon will be apprised of the Forest Department's initiatives, which include a tour to the health clinic, interpretation centre, plastic recycling centre, biological lab and others.

Jungle safari will follow,

taking tourists through the verdant forest paths up to the Farhabad view point, with ample opportunity for wildlife photography without any additional charge.

Youth from the local Chenchu tribe will accompany the tourists on the ride and explain about the culture of the particularly vul-

nerable tribal group (PVTG), besides providing assistance in spotting the wild animals.

The trek is not for the weak-limbed though. Part of it is in the rough, rock strewn terrain which presents a formidable challenge to the knee joints.

Chenchu guides

The effort is amply rewarding, majorly due to the presence of the Chenchu guides who slide into their new roles effortlessly, stopping at every occasional tree to explain its significance and the symbiotic relationships it promotes.

Breaking the ice with these unassuming guides will open the portals to great learning, as they could come up with most interesting facts and more about the wild which even the forest officials may not be aware of.

'Sole'ful gift



Setting a record: On Children's Day, RealPage India created a Guinness World Record for the longest line of shoes at Gachibowli stadium in Hyderabad. The 30,000 pairs of shoes will be donated to Telangana Government school students. *G. RAMAKRISHNA

Religious fervour marks Kalpathy chariot festival

Designated men who are vaccinated pulled the ropes

STAFF REPORTER
PALAKKAD

Chariots rolled along the narrow lanes of Kalpathy heritage village in Palakkad on Sunday, bringing back the centuries-old religious fervour that the Tamil Brahmin village used to enjoy.

The concerns of large sections of Kalpathy residents over uncertainties about taking out the chariots died down when three small chariots of major deities came out bedecked.

They were pulled with the help of large ropes by a group of designated men who had taken two doses of COVID vaccines and had tested negative for the virus. Rain too stayed away bringing cheer to the devotees.



Decked up: Decorated temple chariots at the annual Kalpathy chariot festival in Palakkad on Sunday. *K.K. MUSTAFAH

It was in 2019 that the chariot festival had taken place last in Kalpathy. Last year, COVID-19 had taken the sheen off the festival by reducing it to a symbolic one.

This year, only the people of Kalpathy were allowed to take part in the fest. The police blocked several access points and restricted the people's entry to Kalpathy.

March to Syro-Malabar church headquarters

Protesting the recent circular on Mass

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

Members of the archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly, who are demanding a continuation of the practice of the celebration of the Mass with the celebrant (priest) facing the congregation throughout the ceremonies, marched to the headquarters of the Syro-Malabar Church at St. Thomas Mount, Kakkanad, on Sunday.

The protest was against a recent circular issued by the synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar church that the celebration of the Mass should be uniform across the Syrian Catholic church with the celebrant facing the congress for one-half and facing away from the congregation for the rest of

the ceremonies. Riju Kanjookkaran, speaking for Almaya Munnettam, a group of lay people, religious and priests calling for more transparency in church administration, said that the synod of bishops should not impose a uniform way of celebrating the Mass on the people.

A statement issued by Almaya Munnettam said that the current practice of the celebrant facing the congregation throughout the Mass has been a practice in the archdiocese of Ernakulam-Angamaly over the last 54 years.

The organisation also said that around 1,000 people participated in the march to the headquarters of the Syro-Malabar church on Sunday.

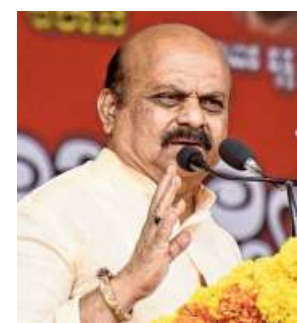
Karnataka CM hits back at Congress over Bitcoin scam

'Need not take lessons from those who let off the accused'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Under fire from the Congress over the alleged Bitcoin scam, the Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday hit back at the Congress by stating that he need not take lessons from those who had let off the accused in the Bitcoin scam charged with hacking earlier.

"We have already responded to all their [Congress] charges. If the Congress is stating that the Bitcoin scam was since 2016, then why was it not investigated by the Congress Government that was in power then," the Chief Minister asked when his response was sought over AICC Gen-



Basavaraj Bommai

BJP Government that investigated the scam, he said, "We opened the investigation, we caught him in a drug case in 2020, we unearthed the scam and we are investigating. When you [Congress] were in power, you allowed it to grow bigger and when we are investigating, you are questioning us."

He said, "It was the BJP Government that referred the matter to ED and CBI. Today, the ED is investigating."

Accusing the Congress of attempting to mislead, he said, "Just to cover up, you are talking about two influential persons without naming them. Name them and we will investigate. We will not spare anyone."



A lost cause

Despite severe losses, the Maoists refuse to acknowledge the futility of their cause

With the deaths of 26 rebels in a police operation in Gadchiroli on Saturday, the proscribed Communist Party of India (Maoist) has faced yet another setback in its “protracted armed struggle” against the Indian state. Gadchiroli, a largely forested and tribal-dominated district, is among Maharashtra’s poorest and the Maoists have sought to expand their presence extending from neighbouring Chhattisgarh. There have been major encounters in the district, with recent ones involving the deaths of 40 Maoists in two separate operations in April 2018 and a landmine blast claiming 15 police personnel and a driver in May 2019. Gadchiroli remains one of the few districts “severely affected” by left-wing extremism. Despite suffering significant losses to its leadership either in military operations or due to physical infirmities and a shrinking of the areas of influence, the Maoists have refused to withdraw from their pursuit of armed struggle. In cycles of violence, they have managed their own strikes against security forces, but such attacks have not provided them any heft in expanding their presence or increasing their support base. The conflict has fallen into a pattern – violence begets violence as insurgents and the security forces continually lose combatants, but equally disturbing, this also affects the poor tribal people whose lives are caught in a prolonged crossfire.

The Maoists’ inability, not just to expand but also to entrench themselves, is to some extent to the credit of the Indian state apparatus, both its security establishment and its work, through development schemes, in weaning away support for the Maoists among the poorest and marginalised sections, especially in remote areas. At the same time, this is also a reflection of the incongruence of the Indian Maoists’ programme which bases itself on replicating the Chinese Revolution of the previous century, and its quixotic pursuit of armed struggle as the means to achieve its aims. Neither are the conditions in India remotely closer to that of China in the 1920s, nor are the peasantry – whose support the Maoists deem as crucial to their project – enamoured of the Maoist programme or its reliance on guerilla struggle. The Maoists’ refusal to acknowledge the diverse industrial base in the country, their rejection of liberal democratic instruments in the Indian state and the faith of the poor in the robust electoral system have blinded them to pursue a futile cause. Yet, despite the futility, the Maoists retain the capability to strike in isolated skirmishes. Maharashtra must not rest on its success in militarily diminishing the Maoist threat in Gadchiroli. It must act continually in winning over the support of tribals in the region and retaining their faith in the liberal democratic institutions of the state.

History lessons

China is preparing for a major long-term shift in its politics under Xi

Following a meeting of its Central Committee last week, China’s Communist Party passed what it called a “Resolution on the Major Achievements and Historical Experience of the Party over the Past Century”. Ostensibly about the past, it still holds enormous significance for China’s future. This is only the third such resolution on history passed by the party in its 100-year history. The previous two resolutions, passed by Mao Zedong in 1945 and Deng Xiaoping in 1981, marked important inflection points in China’s politics, and established them as the dominant leaders of their respective generations. The full text of the latest resolution has not been made public, but a 5,000 word communiqué issued after the closure of the four-day plenum gives a flavour. It heaps praise on the contributions of Mao, Deng and current leader Xi Jinping. It differs in one key aspect from the previous resolution of 1981, which acknowledged Mao’s mistakes that led to the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), by describing the history of the party as one without flaws. “Looking back on the party’s endeavours over the past century,” it surmises, “we can see why we were successful in the past and how we can continue to succeed in the future.”

Explaining why the party saw the need for a new historical resolution, the communiqué said the party wanted to “strengthen our consciousness of the need to maintain political integrity, think in big-picture terms, follow the leadership core, and keep in alignment with the central party leadership”. The latest communiqué implicitly criticised the collective leadership model that Deng bequeathed his successors and enabled three peaceful transfers of power, praising Mr. Xi’s “core” leadership for having “solved many tough problems... never resolved and accomplished many things that were wanted but never got done”. It also called for “resolutely upholding Xi Jinping’s core position on the Central Committee and in the Party... and upholding the Central Committee’s authority... to ensure that all Party members act in unison”. The significance of the 1945 and 1981 resolutions lay not in their reflections on the past but in how they would change the exercise of power, bringing dramatic consequences for China’s future. The first established Mao’s ideology as the party’s guiding ideology. By doing so, it made it heresy to question Mao and paved the way for the creation of his disastrous personality cult. In 1981, Deng too established his dominance, but used his power to bring an end to rule by ideology, instead turning the party’s attention to development and bringing China to its era of reform and opening up. Now, 40 years after Deng, as China’s current leader looks to write his place in the party’s history, the past might be held in reverence, but it will not be allowed to dictate the contours of the future when the country prepares to take yet another political turn.

Striding back into the Afghan theatre

Though challenging, it would be a mistake to consider that there is no space for India to operate in Afghanistan



VIVEK KATJU

Amidst the multiple messages that New Delhi wished to send out by convening ‘The Third Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan’ on November 10 – a National Security Adviser (NSA)-level meet – one stands out: that despite the current absence of an on-ground presence in the country, India continues to matter in Afghan affairs. To ensure that this thought was acknowledged by the Indian political and strategic classes as well as the region, Indian officials, in their background briefings, emphasised that India’s invitation was accepted by countries that have significant stakes in Afghanistan – Russia, Iran and all the five Central Asian Republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan). They correctly downplayed Pakistan’s outright refusal to join the meeting and China’s lame excuse for its absence. Indeed, in the context of the present state of Sino-Indian ties and Pakistan’s obsession of keeping India away from Afghanistan, neither country’s decision was surprising.

Similar concerns

There is little doubt that the initiative succeeded in demonstrating that many regional countries accept that India has legitimate concerns relating to Afghanistan. The Delhi Declaration that emerged from the deliberations of the National Security Advisers/Secretaries of the National Security Councils of the participating states shows that all these countries share similar concerns which are also widely held in the international

community. The Delhi Declaration demanded that Afghan soil is not used to spread terrorism or extremist ideologies. It called for a control on the production of Afghan opium. It reflected the widely held view that the Taliban have to conform to acceptable standards of behaviour on gender issues and minority rights. The Declaration also called for the formation of “an open and truly inclusive government” that was “representative of the will of the Afghan people” and had the participation of “all sections of society” in its “administrative and political structure”. This is a laudable objective, but is it realistic? The hard fact is that the Taliban achieved a military victory and unlike in the 1990s now control all of Afghanistan. Is any neighbour of Afghanistan willing to nurture a long-lasting insurgency to effectively pressure the Taliban?

Hurdles, an outreach

All the participants of the Delhi Dialogue except India have open contacts with the Taliban even if some of them consider the Taliban to be a negative political force. It is, therefore, likely that despite this clarion collective call for an inclusive government, these states will ultimately individually settle for a Taliban government that will show a degree of responsiveness on gender issues and minority rights, including of ethnic minorities. Even more they will look for how the Taliban are addressing their individual concerns on specific terrorist groups that target them. The Russian press statement after the Delhi Declaration itself reveals that each country will act not on the basis of common positions in this document but in keeping with its interests.

It is here that Indian policymakers are still struggling to accept the consequences and realities of the great change that took place in Af-



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

ghanistan on August 15, when Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani fled from Kabul and the Taliban rolled in. This far-reaching development eroded the very basis of India’s Afghan policy. It required an immediate re-assessment of the regional situation and nimble, quick and comprehensive action with salience given to strategic considerations. It needed a ruthlessly cold ‘all of political and strategic classes’ approach unaffected by political considerations of any nature. Almost three months later this is still not discernible. And, the Delhi meeting, while serving a small diplomatic purpose, will not contribute to addressing the vast challenges that India now faces in its entire western neighbourhood, especially Afghanistan.

Pakistan link

Pakistan has avoided its mistake of the 1990s, of giving formal diplomatic recognition to the Taliban. It is however acting in a manner with the group’s government, which it helped put together, as it would have with a ‘recognised’ administration. It is no coincidence that the day the Delhi Dialogue was convened, the acting Afghan Foreign Minister, Mullah Amir Khan Muttaqi, reached Islamabad leading a high-level delegation. In India’s absence in Kabul, Pakistan has a free hand. As it is with its deep and abiding relations with the Taliban it has a unique and enduring advantage. But should that mean that India ignores Afghanis-

tan altogether and confines itself to only covert contacts with the Taliban? There has been no repeat of a Doha-like meeting between the Indian Ambassador and senior Taliban officials.

A place for India

India will have to play a multi-faceted diplomatic game to safeguard and promote its interests in Afghanistan and the region. It cannot join the game unless it re-establishes a presence in Kabul. All-important regional players and Russia have kept their missions open in Kabul. New Delhi must note that the Taliban spokesperson, taking note of the Dialogue said that India was an important regional country with which it desired good diplomatic relations.

India has to proceed with caution but without inhibitions. That can only be through an understanding of Afghan traditions and culture which has been under strain but which has not disappeared altogether. At no stage in Afghan history has any ruler or group not chafed at foreign dependence howsoever necessary it may have been. They have always looked to alternatives. Taliban signals on India to Pakistan should be taken in this context.

Besides, the Taliban are not immune from regional and tribal cleavages. This is not to underrate the difficulties in India’s path in Afghanistan but it would be a profound mistake to consider that there is no space for India to operate in Afghanistan; the Taliban public statements are themselves indicating that it does; Muttaqi has publicly said that India-Afghan trade via Wagah should be allowed by Pakistan.

Expressing concern for the “deteriorating socio-economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan” the Delhi Declaration called for “urgent humanitarian assistance” to the Afghan people. It al-

so did well to emphasise that humanitarian assistance should be provided in an “unimpeded, direct and assured manner to Afghanistan”. This is directly relevant for India wishes to send 50,000 tonnes of wheat for the Afghan people overland via Pakistan. Obviously, the Taliban have welcomed the Indian offer and asked Pakistan to agree. Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan told Muttaqi that he will “favourably” consider the Taliban’s request. At this stage, India should be bold and enhance its offer to one million metric tonnes of wheat; that is what it pledged in 2002 at the Tokyo Afghanistan conference. It should also publicly declare, if needed, that it would hand the wheat over to the World Food Programme at the Wagah border. If Pakistan obstructs the additional offer, let it explain its negativity to the Afghan people.

On China

It is not only Pakistan that India will need to confront in Afghanistan but also China. The Chinese have always maintained contacts with the Taliban and their strategic and economic interests have and will continue to make them adopt pragmatic policies. Indian economic interests also demand its presence in Afghanistan. There is no time to lose for this purpose. A heavy and long-term price will have to be paid otherwise. In all this process India must remain grounded in reality but that seems absent in some Indian analysts who believe that it is a Eurasian power too. That should be the objective. But is it so today when it does not have connectivity to the region and is reluctant to play the Afghan game where it matters – the mountains and valleys of the Hindukush?

Vivek Katju is a retired member of the Indian Foreign Service

Learning from the best in India’s COVID-19 fight

Innovative interventions have helped communities across the country change the course of the pandemic response



PURNIMA MENON & MADHUKAR PAI

A few months ago, as the country reeled under the impact of the second wave of COVID-19, officials deep inside Madhya Pradesh’s tribal districts had to contend with an additional crisis: vaccinating a people firmly resistant to any coronavirus vaccines.

A transformation

It was April 15, 2021, and less than 10% of the eligible population had been vaccinated in Jhabua, the district in Madhya Pradesh, per government figures, with one of the highest percentages of Scheduled Tribes population in India (<https://bit.ly/3Cez2Lk>). It was then that district officials decided to leverage tradition in their efforts to convey the message of timely vaccination. They started by organising *khatla baihaks* (*khat* means “woven bed,” and *baihak* means “meeting”), or community meetings, to dispel vaccine myths.

By July, Jhabua saw a five-fold increase in vaccination uptake, with approximately 40% of eligible people in the district having received at least one dose. In fact, as members from the department of Women and Child Development handed out turmeric-smeared rice to rural houses as a traditional means of welcoming people to vaccination programmes across the district, vaccination drives across the district saw a discernible uptick.

An easy interpretation of this in-

tervention might make it seem that Jhabua district is an outlier in the larger narrative of COVID-19 containment strategies. However, the data has made us see that, quite simply, it is not. Like Jhabua, there are multiple districts and regions where individuals and groups, from both government and civil society, have stepped in to ensure that impact of COVID-19 was mitigated in any and every way possible – even if that meant the use of rice or *khatla baihaks*. But just as it is easy for such stories to dissolve in the predominant din of the news cycle, it is also easy to see why our journey over the last several months began.

Space for initiatives

In April and May 2021, when the nation was going through the peak of a crippling second wave, a small group of us – that soon grew to over 500 people – came together to form India COVID SOS. We realised that there existed a wide spectrum of people who had made it their mission to help society steer to safer shores in this pandemic: medical professionals who, despite the volume of patients, were managing COVID-19 in an evidence-informed, pragmatic way; teams vaccinating entire villages once overwhelmed by hesitancy; workers ensuring even the remotest areas had adequate oxygen supply, etc. These efforts needed to be foregrounded, and a space was essential to document learnings from such successful initiatives.

Subsequently, together with Exemplars in Global Health, our research led to the development of case studies from India; now publicly available, these case studies highlight interventions and innovations that drove meaningful outcomes in the pandemic response



GETTY IMAGES

across India.

We confirmed that the story of Jhabua was not one of exception. As our case studies show, there are other commendable endeavours as well. For instance, in February 2021, when India’s vaccination drive was initiated, health-care workers in Janefal, a rural hamlet with just over 500 residents in Maharashtra’s Aurangabad district had a difficult time convincing people to get vaccinated. Some had heard stories from neighbouring villages about people dying after vaccination. Others believed that people who were vaccinated had to amputate their arms.

To build trust and confidence, village heads and other front line workers set an example by getting vaccinated first. They had their photos taken while getting the vaccine, and later, to address apprehensions, spent time painting gram panchayat buildings. A task force was also set up. It comprised health workers, police officers and village council leaders who discovered villagers had an unprecedented fear of hospitals and were terrified doctors would kill them and rob them of their kidneys if they went in for treatment. With the nearest vaccination centre being eight kilometres away, the task force overcame both challenges by conducting a vaccination camp in the village, taking the vaccines to the people. They also did this on

April 27, Hanuman Jayanti – an auspicious day for the locals. It was an insightful and clever way to leverage the occasion for the right cause.

In Tamil Nadu and Bihar

In Nilgiris, Tamil Nadu, the district administration in collaboration with local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) addressed vaccine hesitancy effectively, too. The NGOs enlisted the help of community members to write songs in tribal languages to share the benefits of getting vaccinated. The district administration also recorded statements from village leaders in their own languages, regarding the vaccine’s effectiveness, and broadcast those messages throughout the district’s different villages. This helped villagers engender trust, and soon, vaccination rates there went up, too.

In East Champaran, Bihar, district officials remarkably achieved 95% COVID-19 vaccination of adults in the Bankatwa block in just two days using what has been dubbed the “Bankatwa Way”. Bankatwa block historically had low routine immunisation coverage of just 64.3% due to challenges of difficult terrain, poor health infrastructure and vaccine hesitancy in the community, among others. To tackle this, the district adopted a mission mode approach. This was a concentrated effort of all government departments in collaboration with World Health Organization, civil society organisations, local elected leaders, and religious leaders to mobilise all eligible people in the district for COVID-19 vaccination. In just 48 hours, over 55,000 of the block’s 62,000 registered inhabitants were vaccinated by setting up vaccination sites in each of the area’s 102 villages and hamlets. The effort had a knock-on

Work in progress

Like these stories, there are many such novel, inspirational efforts that can be found in the case studies we have helped to collate (<https://bit.ly/2VJ6VpG> and <https://bit.ly/3c8VECj>). Our idea has always been to capture a broad canvas of learnings that could inform policy at the highest level, through critical vignettes showing what is working best (or not). But we are just getting started. It is essential that we keep working toward expanding the scope of our case studies, making them a reservoir of accurate information and inspiration. If we can effectively share and disseminate learnings and highlight the best interventions from across different domestic geographies, we can take a step towards being better equipped to tackle health crises in the future.

(India COVID SOS is an international non-profit volunteer group of scientists, clinicians, engineers, policy-makers, community organisers, and industrial partners. Exemplars in Global Health brings together researchers, funders, and collaborators around the globe with the mission of identifying countries that are positive outliers in global health. Their analyses of best practices strive to be a template that can be potentially replicated by others at a country/regional level.)

Purnima Menon is a senior research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute, New Delhi. Madhukar Pai is a professor of epidemiology and global health at McGill University, Canada. They are volunteers with India COVID SOS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Internal security

The ambush of an Assam Rifles officer, his family and his staff is shocking. The incident leads to questions being asked and one only hopes that intelligence gathering is improved. That the naxals are on the backfoot is evident and there could be a possibility of surrenders. However, this should be a moment for sober thought. Violence in any form is not a solution and there must be other ways to make the naxals see

reason. Internal security is in need of out-of-the-box thinking (Page 1, November 14).

BALASUBRAMANIAM PAVANI, Secunderabad

Afghan ties

It is sad to see India being relegated to near marginal player status in the unfolding situation in Afghanistan, despite its long historical ties with that country. The Ministry of External Affairs would appear to have failed in

anticipating the quick developments that followed the Joe Biden administration’s decision to recall forces from Afghanistan. One does not know whether India was kept in the loop by the Americans, but the end result is that the Pakistanis are in the driver’s seat all over again. This despite the considerable resources we have poured into that country to rebuild its economy and infrastructure. One is

tempted to conclude that there is a need for a rethink in our policy-making.

M.P. MURALIDHARAN, Bengaluru

Air pollution control

The judicial suggestion of a two-day lockdown in Delhi (November 14) as a result of rising air pollution may not be a durable panacea. This move is bound to hit the livelihood of daily wagers. In the past, progressive steps have been taken such as CNG fuelled public

transport and peripheral highways for heavy traffic, thus restricting their entry into national capital, but a burgeoning population has offset these gains. The root cause is lop-sided development. If Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are given earnest priority, it could mitigate pollution levels.

DEEPAK SINGHAL, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

This year’s ‘Lit For Life’

The two-day prestigious event, ‘Lit for Life 2021’,

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



was a treasure trove as far as avid readers of *The Hindu* like me are concerned. It was a treat to listen to some of the best minds with insights into language, history, politics and even the science of viruses. The annual programme is definitely a welcome outreach readership engagement event. G. RAMASUBRAMANYAM, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

A routine matter or a punishment post?

It is time for the Central government to clear the doubts being raised about the collegium's recommendations



K. CHANDRU

The Supreme Court collegium's recommendation to transfer the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, Sanjib Banerjee, to the Meghalaya High Court, as well as the senior-most judge of the Allahabad High Court, Munishwar Nath Bhandari, to the Madras High Court, has raised eyebrows.

Many questions

Justice Banerjee was appointed as a judge of the Calcutta High Court on June 22, 2006. He was appointed as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court on December 31, 2020, and he assumed office on January 4, 2021. Without a promotion, he would have to retire from office on November 1, 2023. He has two more years to serve at the Madras High Court.

The Calcutta High Court has a sanctioned strength of 72 judges and the Madras High Court has a sanctioned strength of 75 judges. The proposal is to transfer him to the Meghalaya High Court, established in 2013 and with a sanctioned strength of only four judges. It is therefore only fair that some would term the transfer of a judge, who was managing a large High Court for nearly 10 months, to a northeastern State as a punishment unless the collegium provides reasons for its decision.

Article 222 of the Constitution provides for the transfer of a judge (including Chief Justice) from one High Court to any other High Court. In the case of Justice Banerjee, since the proposal came from the Supreme Court collegium, the Central government, which has to advise the President of India, is entitled to ask for relevant material before tendering any advice. If it is not satisfied, the Central government can ask the Supreme Court to reconsider its decision. Recently, the Union Law Minister, Kiren Rijiju, said that the Chief Justice of India (CJI) will "create a new dawn in judiciary". The CJI in turn said that Mr. Rijiju was "the only Law Minister or politician in recent times, who recognised our judicial



The Madras High Court, Chennai • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

hard work and appreciated us". Therefore, it may be possible that both the decision-makers have a common intention for the transfer.

Justice Banerjee was appointed as the Chief Justice of a High Court with three years of service left. He was found suitable for that post. How is that within 10 months of his tenure he is being found unsuitable for the same High Court and is being transferred to a far-away State which has just two judges at present?

Another puzzling decision

Justice Bhandari's transfer is equally puzzling. In its September 16th decision, the collegium recommended the transfer of Justice Bhandari to the Madras High Court. The details of his appointment show that he was initially appointed as a judge of the Rajasthan High Court on July 5, 2007. If he joins the Madras High Court, he will become the senior-most judge since Justice T.S. Sivagnanam was transferred to the Calcutta High Court and the next two judges - M. Duraiswamy and T. Raja - are admittedly junior to him. With his transfer, Justice Bhandari will be-

come the Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.

Even if the consultation process in making Justice Bhandari the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court is delayed because of, say, the State government raising any issues, Justice Bhandari will continue as Acting Chief Justice and will retire on September 12, 2022. Justice Bhandari's tenure at the Rajasthan High Court was not free from controversy. After being appointed as a judge in that High Court, he was transferred to the Allahabad High Court. The collegium proposed his transfer in 2019 and the reason it provided was that the transfer was in the "interest of better administration of justice".

Justice Bhandari requested through representations on January 18 and 23, 2019, that his proposed transfer be deferred for the time being for further consideration. The collegium rejected his representation and the note published, it stated: "the Collegium has carefully gone through the aforesaid representations and taken into consideration all relevant factors including his request to defer his proposed transfer

for the time being for further consideration in future. On reconsideration, the Collegium is of the considered view that it is not possible to accede to his request". Justice Bhandari joined the Allahabad High Court on March 15, 2019, and in due course, he became the senior-most judge in that Court.

If the Supreme Court collegium of 2019 thought that Justice Bhandari should leave the Rajasthan High Court in the "administration of justice", what changed that prompted the collegium of 2021 to transfer him to the Madras High Court with the full knowledge that he will be heading that court? What was once a punishment transfer has now become a rewarding transfer. If a judge is not considered suitable for one High Court, then how he does he become suitable for another High Court? This is the question that is being asked in legal circles.

And does this mean that the decision to transfer Justice Banerjee to the Meghalaya High Court was made to facilitate Justice Bhandari's elevation as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court? Also, if the decision was taken as early as on September 16, why was it made public only about one and a half months later? This is a question that many are asking.

Normally when such proposals are made, a judge in the Supreme Court who comes from the State in which the transferee judge is holding office is also consulted. With regard to Justice Banerjee's transfer, there are four judges who are qualified to be called consultee judges. Why was consultation in the case of Justice Banerjee made only with the junior-most judge of the Supreme Court and not the senior judges?

Not a routine matter

Evaluations are not made on the discharge of duties of a judge as there is no reliable basis for making such an analysis. In terms of disposal of matters and writing skills, no one can find fault with the present Chief Justice. If there are other reasons for his transfer, then such a transfer proposal can only be termed as a punishment and not a routine matter. It is time for the Central government to step in and clear these doubts.

Justice K. Chandru is a retired judge of the Madras High Court

Creating safe digital spaces

It is imperative that digital platforms are free of cyberbullying, if learners have to access quality education



SANTOSH SARANGI & ERIC FALT

Recognising that school-related violence is an infringement of children's right to education and to health and well-being, UNESCO Member States have declared the first Thursday of November as the International Day against Violence and Bullying at School, including cyberbullying. The aim is to raise awareness among students, parents, members of the school community, education authorities and others about the problem of online violence and cyberbullying.

In India, an estimated 71 million children aged 5-11 years access the Internet on the devices of their family members, constituting about 14% of the country's active Internet user base of over 500 million. It should also be noted that two-thirds of Internet users in India are in the age group of 12-29 years.

Tackling all kinds of bullying

School closures as a response to the COVID-19 lockdowns have led to an unprecedented rise in unsupervised screen time for children and young people, which in turn exposed them to a greater risk of online violence. Various reports have indicated increased incidence of cyberbullying and online child sexual exploitation by adults.

In the same vein, there is growing scientific evidence which suggests that cyberbullying has negative consequences on the education, health and well-being of children and young people. Published in 2019 and drawing on data from 144 countries, UNESCO's report 'Behind the numbers: Ending school violence and bullying' highlighted the extent of the problem, with almost one in three students worldwide reporting being bullied at least once in the preceding month. Therefore, cyberbullying prevention interventions should aim at tackling all types of bullying and victimisation experiences at the same time, as opposed to each in silo.

Effective interventions also require gender-sensitive and targeted approaches that respond to needs of learners who are most likely to be the victims of online violence. A 2020 study by Plan International, involving 14,000 women aged 15-25 from across 22 countries, revealed that 58% of girls in the Asia-Pacific region reported online harassment. Globally, of the girls who were harassed, 14% who self-identified as having a disability and 37% who identified themselves

as from an ethnic minority said they get harassed because of it.

The impact of online sexual harassment could have long-term negative impacts on mental health and well-being. Data on school bullying demonstrates its harmful impacts on students' educational outcomes, mental health, and quality of life. Children who are frequently bullied are nearly three times more likely to feel left out at school than those who are not. They are also twice more likely to miss out on school and have a higher tendency to leave formal education after finishing secondary school.

Tackling the menace

Although online violence is not limited to school premises, the education system plays a crucial role in addressing online safety. Concerted efforts must be made to provide children and young people with the knowledge and skills to identify online violence so that they can protect themselves from its different forms, whether perpetrated by peers or adults. Teachers also play a critical role by teaching students about online safety, and thus supporting parental involvement.

For those looking to prevent and counter cyberbullying, the information booklet brought out by UNESCO in partnership with NCERT on Safe Online Learning in Times of COVID-19 can be a useful reference. It supports the creation of safe digital spaces and addresses the nuances of security. Similarly, to prevent the adverse effect of online gaming and the psycho-emotional stress that children could be undergoing, the Department of School Education and Literacy has circulated exhaustive guidelines to raise children and parental awareness.

At a time when COVID-19 lockdowns have resulted in online bullying, we must redouble our efforts to tackle this menace. Cyberbullying may take place in a virtual world, but it has a very real impact on children's health. The Union Ministry of Education and UNESCO are committed to ensuring access to safe, inclusive and health-promoting learning environments for all children.

It is imperative that digital and social media platforms are free of cyberbullying, if learners have to access quality education. More importantly, confidential reporting and redress services must be established. We encourage students, parents, schools, education authorities, members of the education community and its partners to take part in preventing online violence and promoting the safety and well-being of young people.

Santosh Sarangi is Additional Secretary, Ministry of Education, Government of India, and Eric Falt is Director, UNESCO New Delhi

STATE OF PLAY

Badvel, still a YSRCP bastion

The YSRCP largely attributes its success in the recent bypoll to its welfare measures

APPAJI REDDEM

Before the recent Assembly bypoll to the Badvel constituency, the ruling Yuva Jana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) seemed to be in control. Therefore, it is no surprise that the party, which had introduced a range of welfare measures and which was pitted against a weak Opposition, won by a majority.

Triangular contest

Badvel is a Scheduled Caste-reserved segment in Kadapa, which is the home district of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. The bypoll was necessitated by the death of the sitting YSRCP MLA, Gunthoti Venkata Subbaiah. The YSRCP fielded Dasari Sudha, a practising doctor and Subbaiah's wife, thus adding a sympathy factor to the poll. She won by a majority of over 90,000 votes. The candidates of both the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress lost deposits in the triangular contest.

Interestingly, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) preferred to stay away from the contest on what it termed humanitarian grounds. Initially, the party had named a candidate to contest the seat but later withdrew from the election stating that it was following a tradition of the party of not contesting an election where a family member of a deceased candidate was in the fray. The actor-turned-politician Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena Party also did not contest the bypoll.

During its campaign, the BJP said there was underdevelopment in Badvel and accused the YSRCP of giving VIP treatment to Pulivendla, the native constituency of the Chief Minister. This strategy did not do the party any good.

The YSRCP saw this as a matter of prestige and deployed a team to campaign for the polls. The team included Deputy Chief Ministers Amjad Bhasha and Narayana Swamy, Kadapa district in-charge and education

minister Adimulapu Suresh and senior minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy. Besides BJP president for Andhra Pradesh, Somu Veerajulu, the party also had MP G.V.L. Narasimha Rao, BJP National Secretary Sunil Deodhar and others campaigning for the bypoll. Not to be left behind, Pradesh Congress president S. Sailaja Nath campaigned with his 24-member team. The Congress has lost ground in the State after the bifurcation of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh.

This was a bypoll, but given the campaign, it was evidently treated as a high-stakes election.

An emotional victory

For Ms. Sudha, Badvel was an emotional victory. She thanked the voters and the Chief Minister for giving her the opportunity to contest the seat that her husband had won by a majority. Commenting on the victory, YSRCP Chief Whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy said the poll result is the victory of the Dalits and the common man. He said it indicates that people are happy with the welfare schemes and other people-friendly initiatives of the party. He said, "Though the TDP and Jana Sena Party were not in the fray, they were indirectly involved [in the election] and worked with the BJP. The TDP said it would not contest and then did all the background work for the BJP. The TDP's misleading tactics did not work. And people have rejected the BJP, which failed in fulfilling the promises made to Andhra Pradesh during bifurcation, chief among them being [granting] of Special Category Status."

As part of the poll promise, the YSRCP is implementing 'Navaratnalu' - nine welfare schemes aimed at providing health and financial support to farmers, women, students, among others. Broadly, the benefits planned for each family are to the tune of ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh per annum. The party largely attributes its grand success in Badvel, its bastion, to its welfare measures.

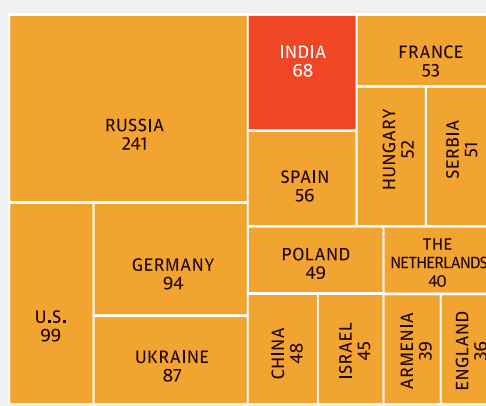
appaji.r@thehindu.co.in

DATA POINT

Ruling the board

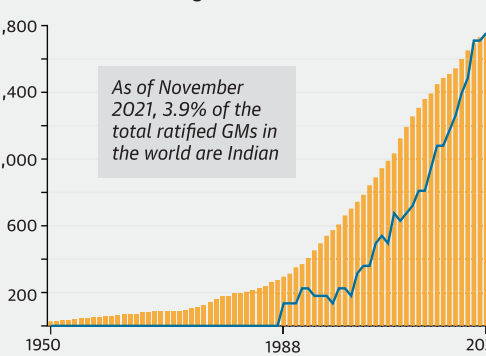
Sankalp Gupta, 18, and Mitrabha Guha, 20, became India's 71st and 72nd Grandmasters (GMs), respectively, after achieving their third norms last week. In August and September, Harshit Raja, 20, and Raja Rithvik, 17, had achieved their final GM norms. While their titles are pending ratification by the International Chess Federation (FIDE), India now has the fourth-highest number of GMs in the world. The share of Indian GMs in the world has consistently increased since 1988 (when Viswanathan Anand became India's first GM) with a sharp uptick in the last decade. Interestingly, no country other than India has more GMs who were born after 2000. The recent four will only stretch India's lead in this metric. By Sumant Sen and Srinivasan Ramani

1. TOP NATIONS | The tree map shows the 15 countries with the most GMs as ratified by FIDE. With 241 GMs, Russia is on top of the list. India stands fifth with 68 GMs



The 15 countries depicted in the chart account for 61% of all the GMs in the world. As many as 88 countries have at least one GM ratified by FIDE

3. SHARE OF INDIAN GMs | The chart depicts the cumulative number of GMs in a year in the world (left axis) and the percentage share of the total Indian GMs (right axis)



5. TOP-RATED GMs

The table lists the latest ELO rating of the 10 top-rated GMs among those who were born after 2000. Nihal Sarin is currently ranked fourth and 18-year-old Arjun Erigaisi ranks 10th. Alireza Firouzja, the Iranian GM who now represents France, leads the pack

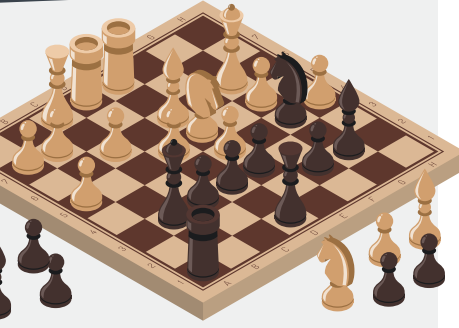
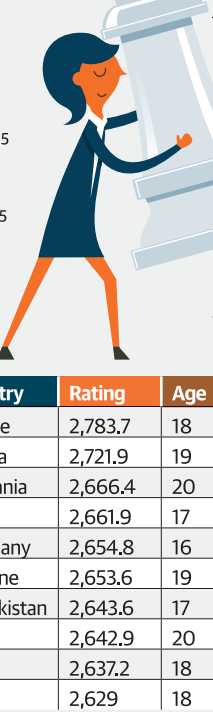
Name	Country	Rating	Age
Alireza Firouzja	France	2,783.7	18
Andrey Esipenko	Russia	2,721.9	19
Bogdan-Daniel Deac	Romania	2,666.4	20
Nihal Sarin	India	2,661.9	17
Vincent Keymer	Germany	2,654.8	16
Kirill Shevchenko	Ukraine	2,653.6	19
Nodirbek Abdusattorov	Uzbekistan	2,643.6	17
M. Amin Tabatabaei	Iran	2,642.9	20
Hans Moke Niemann	U.S.	2,637.2	18
Arjun Erigaisi	India	2,629	18

1 Gukesh D. became India's youngest GM when he achieved the norms aged 12 years and seven months in 2019

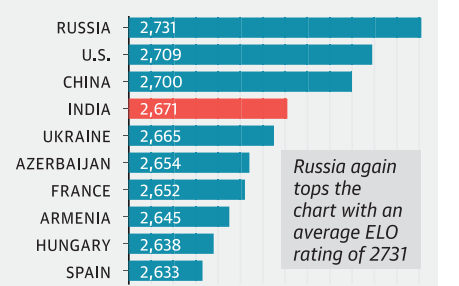
2 Nine out of the 42 GMs that FIDE ratified in 2019 were from India

3 Nihal Sarin, is currently the fourth-highest rated junior player (aged <21)

4. YOUNG KINGS | As many as 10 out of the 52 active GMs who were born after 2000 are from India, the highest among all countries. The U.S. stands second with eight such GMs while Uzbekistan is third



2. HIGHEST-RATED PLAYERS | The chart shows the average ELO rating of the top 10 ranked players in a country



India is fourth with an average rating of 2671

Russia again tops the chart with an average ELO rating of 2731

Four out of the 10 youngest GMs in the world ever are from India. They are Gukesh D., R. Praggnanandhaa, Parimarjan Negi and Raunak Sadhwani

SOURCE: FIDE, 2700CHESS, CHESS.COM

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 15, 1971

The Mariner-9 spacecraft's orbit

The United States rocketed its Mariner-9 spacecraft into orbit around Mars yesterday [Pasadena, Nov. 14]. Mariner-9, looking like a plump pear with four sticks protruding from the side, became the first spacecraft to orbit another planet in the solar system. It apparently arrived at Mars ahead of two Soviet space probes, Mars-2 and 3, which Western scientists speculate will attempt unmanned landings. The spacecraft ended its five-and-a-half-month, 400 million-kilometre-journey at 7:17 p.m. (5:34 a.m. IST to-day) when a 15-minute burn of the Mariner-9 retrorocket slowed an 17,700 kilometre-per hour plunge so that Martian gravity could swing it into orbit. Thirteen minutes after its retrorocket firing with the power of 10 automobile engines - shut down the spacecraft passed behind Mars and out of communication with earth. While behind the planet, Mariner-9 completed a critical manoeuvre in which solar panels supplying electricity moved back into the view of the sun and battery operation of the spacecraft ended. Mariner-9 reappeared at 8:16 p.m. (6:46 a.m. IST) and ground controllers received first signals six minutes later.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 15, 1921

The condition of the masses

(From an Editorial)

On a recent occasion, Sir George Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay, deplored the absence of statistics relating to Labour. With infinitely greater force, one might deplore that we have no statistics relating directly to the economic condition of the rural population. Attempts have been made, however, in recent years by individuals interested in the subject, to provide an economic survey of isolated tracts; and the conditions which these surveys have revealed to the public are not in the least cheering. The latest survey of the kind is the one made by Dr. Harold Mann, Director of Agriculture, Bombay whose sympathy for the rural population is so well known. His survey, for which by the way, the country ought to feel grateful, relates to Jategaon Budruk, a village which "certainly is typical of a very large area in the Deccan." The conditions which Dr. Mann and his collaborator depict in the village are exceedingly depressing. Agriculture is the main, if not indeed the only, industry in the village, but sixty per cent of the cultivators cultivate an area less than what is required to support themselves at their own standard of life.

FROM PAGE ONE

CBI, ED chiefs can now have five-year terms

“It is expectedly brazen. Why did they have to resort to an ordinance when Parliament session has been announced from November 29?” Congress Chief Whip in the Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh told *The Hindu*.

“Modi Govt uses ED-CBI as henchmen to usurp power & destabilise elected Govts. Raids by ED, CBI on the Opposition leaders has become a norm. Now, these henchmen are being empowered & rewarded with 5 yrs tenure, so that malicious prosecution is used to silence dissenting voices,” Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tweeted.

Stating that the Modi Government has brought in 3.7

ordinances for every 10 Bills in the 17th Lok Sabha, Trinamool Congress leader Derek O’Brien tweeted: “How Modi-Shah’s BJP mock #Parliament and shamelessly use Ordinances. Same stunt repeated today to keep their pet parrots in ED and CBI.”

“Parliament session begins on 29th. To avoid its scrutiny, Centre on Sunday promulgates ordinances to extend the tenure of Directors of CBI and ED. This desperate hurry smacks of something fishy.” CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury tweeted.

“It is a clear case of making Parliament redundant and subverting democracy,” CPI general secretary D. Raja said.

Deliveries of S-400 systems have begun

First elements of the S-400 system have reached Indian soil, a Russian official said on condition of anonymity, adding that delivery of the first division would be completed by the end of December. In October, stating that the delivery was on track, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal V. R. Chaudhari had said the “first regiment should be inducted within this year.”

Mr. Putin is scheduled to visit India in the first week of December for the annual summit and the inaugural India-Russia 2+2 ministerial dialogue is likely to be held a day before or on the day of the summit itself, an official source said. Deals are expected in defence, trade and energy, apart from the focus on regional issues especially the developments in Afghanistan.

The U.S. has so far remained non-committal on a waiver to India under CAATSA, with some officials cautioning New Delhi to move away from the deal while others called for a waiver to India. In this backdrop, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday met a high-power U.S. Congressional delegation, led by Senator John Cornyn, and discussed “issues related to the developments in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region.”

Coal ‘phase-down’ is a right, says Minister

The 26th United Nations Conference of Parties concluded late on Saturday, local time, with a resolution by countries to “revisit and strengthen” their existing emission targets by 2022. A key thrust of COP26, led by the U.S. and the U.K., which held the presidency this time, was to have countries such as India and China agree to a year, preferably mid-century, by which their emissions would be near zero. This would also mean phasing out coal as a fuel.

India had earlier in the week said that principles of equity meant all fossil sources, coal, oil and gas, be reduced, but the U.S. and other countries refused to target oil and gas, ostensibly because they were also critical to their own economies.

India was among the countries that had insisted on clarity on Article 6 because a bulk of the carbon credits accumulated by its several companies – private and public sector enterprises – over a decade were inoperative and India had pushed for them to be made valid again. Carbon credits allow companies in developed countries to indirectly pay for clean energy transitions in developing countries by accumulating credits. However, the 1997 Kyoto Protocol that validated carbon credit trading via a Clean Development Mechanism had expired in 2020.

In the latest agreement, there is greater clarity on how bilateral carbon trades can proceed and the creation of a ‘centralised hub’ that replaces the Kyoto Protocol’s Clean Development Mechanism. There was confusion on whether countries would have to correspondingly adjust their carbon accounts when transferring emission reduction abroad and the degree to which Certified Emission Reductions generated under the CDM could be applied towards a country’s Nationally Determined Contributions.

An elusive swallowtail butterfly carrying ‘India’ in its name and found in next-door China will become the State butterfly of Arunachal Pradesh. The State Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday approved the large, brightly coloured Kaiser-i-Hind as the State butterfly. The Cabinet meeting was for the first time held outside State capital Itanagar at an unusual location – Pakke Tiger Reserve.

Festival sales have lifted the economy: Goyal

“Collectively, we are on track for a historical high for exports of goods and services in the current year, showing how quickly the world has engaged with India, wants to deepen engagement, so that they can be sure of India as a trusted partner in their supply chains and services chains,” he said.

Alluding to the need for States to take greater interest in promoting exports, the Minister cited the example of Uttar Pradesh and said no other State had taken steps like creating a full department for export promotion.

“When you talk to other States, they say ‘export promotion is the Centre’s role. Why should we do it?’ But Yogi Adityanath has understood that when exports are promoted, it will create jobs for people, economy will be strengthened and when domestic and export markets are combined, you get economies of scale,” he said.

Gadchiroli encounter a ‘severe blow’ to Maoists’ networks

‘Milind Teltumbde’s death likely to put brakes on expansion in MMC zone’

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The Gadchiroli encounter in which 26 members of the outlawed Communist Party of India (Maoist) – including key fugitive Milind Teltumbde – were “neutralised” was a severe blow to the Naxals’ urban and jungle networks in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, said authorities.

They said the death of Teltumbde, central committee member and in-charge of the newly formed Maharashtra-Madhya Pradesh-Chhattisgarh confluence (MMC) zone, was likely to affect the recruitment and expansion of the Maoists in this zone.

Gadchiroli SP Ankit Goyal said Teltumbde was the “mastermind” behind violent and obstructionist activities and the organisation’s linchpin in establishing and expanding Maoist activity in the zone.

Pivotal figure

“Milind Teltumbde was an important figure not merely in the CPI(Maoist)’s organisation in Maharashtra but a pivotal figure in the country’s



Arms cache: Weapons recovered from 26 Naxals who were killed in an encounter on Saturday in Gadchiroli district. •PTI

network. Likewise, two other slain Maoists, Lokesh and Mahesh Gota, were both divisional committee members (DVMs) who terrorised the local populace and thwarted development work in the district and the region,” said Mr. Goyal.

He said Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh too would reap the dividends of the “historic” operation as the zone was a veritable bastion for the Maoists on account of its hilly terrain and dense forests. Officials said Teltumbde had an elaborate

personal security system and moved with heavily armed bodyguards and a platoon of Maoists wherever he camped. Authorities said given the high number of Maoists who had been laying down their arms or were killed in encounters in the past few years, the outfit’s leadership in north Gadchiroli was severely weakened and as good as finished for the past one year.

He said the police had obtained intelligence inputs two-three days ago that a large number of Maoists had

set up camp somewhere around the Gyarapatti village in Gadchiroli’s Korchi tehsil. The authorities apparently did not precisely know that Teltumbde would be among them.

Sophisticated weapons

“After analysing these inputs, we planned an operation headed by Additional SP Soumya Munde, who led teams of around 300 C-60 jawans and commenced combing operations. At around 6 a.m. on November 13, the Maoists opened fire on our teams using sophisticated weapons. Going by the intensity of the fire they kept up from their positions in the hilly areas, we estimate that 100 Maoists were present there,” Mr. Goyal said, adding that there was a likelihood of more outlaws being injured in the operation. He said the Maoists had kept up a heavy fire for the most part of the 10-hour operation.

He said the injured men were immediately taken out of the combat zone in a chopper and admitted to a Nagpur hospital where they are out of danger.

SC to examine relief for road accident amputees

Plea seeks higher payment for victims

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has agreed to hear expeditiously a Chennai-based man’s unique plea that people like him who lost a limb in a traumatic road accident have reduced life expectancy and should be eligible for separate, higher accident compensation.

A Bench led by Justice K.M. Joseph admitted the petition filed by V.S. Venkataraman, represented by advocate Vipin Nair, who reminded the court of its own words that judiciary should not be “a neutral umpire but an active explorer and a seeker of truth” when accident victims come for relief.

The 42-year-old lost his left leg above his knee in a road accident in Chennai in 2015. He was categorised with 85% permanent physical disability. But the Madras High Court reduced the total compensation due to him from ₹84.36 lakh to ₹66.84 lakh.

Mr. Venkataraman said his medical bills, including for the amputation of his leg, had alone cost him ₹28.5 lakh. The High Court had reduced his compensa-

tion on the ground that he had lost his “future earning power”.

Mr. Nair, arguing for his client, submitted that there has hardly been any research about chances of reduced life expectancy following a traumatic amputation.

Calls for new category

He argued that the motor accident law should introduce a new category called “compensation arising out of reduced life expectancy due to amputation in motor accident afflicted claimants”. He said there were no direct judicial pronouncements by the Supreme Court or High Courts on this aspect.

Mr. Venkataraman referred to the court’s past judgments which had accepted home truths like “long expectation of life is connected with earning capacity”. Urging the court to invoke its extraordinary powers to do complete justice under Article 142, he said the court should come to his rescue and many like him “whose future is bleak and sheer existence, a huge struggle”.

Two Delhi journalists booked in Tripura, detained in Assam

News organisation says police trying to suppress reporting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Two Delhi-based women journalists, booked in Tripura for criminal conspiracy and other charges, were detained by the police in Karimganj district in Assam on Sunday.

They had checked out of a hotel in Dharmanagar in Tripura after covering incidents related to the communal violence in the State in retaliation for the attacks on Hindus in adjoining Bangladesh in October.

“We have been detained at the Nilambazar police station, Karimganj, Assam. We were informed by the officer-in-charge of Nilambazar PS that SP of Gomati district (in Tripura) gave the orders for our detention,” Samridhi K. Sakunia, one of the two scribes, tweeted.

The other journalist is Swarna Jha. Both work for HW News Network.

The two were booked after Kanchan Das, a member of a right-wing organisation, lodged an FIR at the Fatikroy police station in North Tripura district.

The Indian Penal Code



There have been a spate of protests against communal violence in Tripura. •PTI

Sections slapped against them pertain to criminal conspiracy, promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace.

The complaint, accessed by *The Hindu*, claimed that the duo visited some Muslim houses in a village under Fatikroy Assembly constituency and made provocative comments against Hindus.

“Assam Police says that our journalists will be taken back to Tripura for further questioning despite police allowing them to leave the hotel and giving seven days’ notice to record a statement.

Manipur ambush: Naga outfit under scanner

MNPF claims responsibility for attack

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

A less-known Naga extremist group involved in killing seven, including an Assam Rifles officer and his wife and minor son, in an ambush in Churachandpur district of Manipur on Saturday has puzzled the security forces and counter-insurgency specialists.

The Manipur Naga People’s Front (MNPF) had along with the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) claimed responsibility for the attack that killed Colonel Viplap Tripathi and his family.

The PLA had been lying low for about six years until Saturday’s strike but has been around since September 1978 as one of the fiercest of the VBIGs, an abbreviation used by the armed forces to mean groups comprising mostly of fighters from the Meitei community who dominate Manipur’s Imphal Valley. VBIG expands to Valley-based insurgent group.

“There isn’t much information from the MNPF except that it is ideologically opposed to the NSCN(IM), the strongest of Manipur’s Naga group but not in conflict with the armed forces in the

State since the ceasefire in 1997,” an armed forces officer keeping tabs on activities along the India-Myanmar border said. The NSCN(IM) is short for the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland.

According to local intelligence officials, the MNPF was formed in June 2013 after the merger of two more obscure outfits called the United Naga People’s Council and Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front.

A statement issued by the MNPF said the group’s objective was “restoration of sovereignty and right to self-determination” besides “bridging the gap” among all revolutionary groups across the seven northeastern States.

Justifying the merger, the outfit had said: “We encompass all parties for a united struggle which is our loud and clear message. We shall not demoralise our political vision by remaining aloof like the organisations under ceasefire pacts whose interest is either higher autonomy or economic package.”

Last known, the MNPF’s chairman was John Francis Kashung and Wilson Tao its general secretary.

‘Amravati situation under control’

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The situation in Amravati district and other parts of Maharashtra is under control, State Home Minister Dilip Walse-Patil said on Sunday. Mr. Walse-Patil said the motive behind the rallies called by certain organisations which led to the violence and a heightening of communal tensions in some cities would be investigated.

He added that no casualties had been reported from Amravati where a curfew has been imposed and Internet services suspended. A total of 50 persons have been taken into custody in Amravati and the Nanded police arrested 35 persons.

On Friday, violence had erupted out in at least three cities in the State – Amravati, Malegaon and Nanded – after the Mumbai-based Raza Academy had reportedly called for a day-long shutdown to protest against incidents of mosques being vandalised in Tripura. On the possible role of the Mumbai-based Raza Academy, the Minister said an investigation would be conducted.

Kaiser-i-Hind is Arunachal’s State butterfly

The insect with a 90-120 mm wingspan is found in the eastern Himalayas

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

An elusive swallowtail butterfly carrying ‘India’ in its name and found in next-door China will become the State butterfly of Arunachal Pradesh.

The State Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday approved the large, brightly coloured Kaiser-i-Hind as the State butterfly. The Cabinet meeting was for the first time held outside State capital Itanagar at an unusual location – Pakke Tiger Reserve.

The Cabinet also adopted the 2047 declaration on climate change-resilient and responsive Arunachal Pradesh aimed at lowering emissions and sustainable development.

Kaiser-i-Hind (*Teinopalpus imperialis*) literally means Emperor of India. This butterfly with a 90-120 mm wingspan is found in six States along the eastern Himalayas at



Winged beauty: *Teinopalpus imperialis*. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

elevations from 6,000-10,000 feet in well-wooded terrain.

The butterfly also flutters in Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and southern China.

The State Wildlife Board had in January 2020 accepted the proposal from

Koj Rinya, the divisional forest officer of Hapoli Forest Division in the Lower Subansiri district to accept the Kaiser-i-Hind as the State butterfly. The proposal was made with a view to boosting butterfly tourism and saving the species from extinction in the State.

Withdraw Kangana’s Padma Shri: DCW chief

‘She disgraced great freedom fighters’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Delhi Commission For Women (DCW) chief Swati Maliwal wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday urging him to withdraw the Padma Shri, India’s fourth highest civilian award, bestowed on actor Kangana Ranaut for her remarks allegedly belittling the country’s Independence.

Ms. Ranaut on November 11 kicked off a row by saying India attained “real freedom” in 2014, apparently referring to the Narendra

Modi-led Government assuming power, and describing the country’s Independence in 1947 as “bheek” (alms).

Ms. Maliwal, in her letter, said the actor had “made certain outrageous statements disgracing the great freedom fighters of the country”. The DCW chief also demanded sedition charges against the actor.

She also pointed out that it was not a stray incident by the actor and that “Ranaut appears to not be of sound mind”.



APPEAL

Name of Patient: Ms. Muskan Choudhary, 10 years.

Hospital Name: Christian Medical College.

Diagnosis: Thalassemia Major. This is a type of life threatening blood disorder. The best option for her would be to undergo Allogeneic Peripheral Blood Stem Cell Transplantation (PBSCT). The estimated cost of PBSCT at this hospital is approximately Rs. 14,00,000/-.

We request kind Heated Phthalothroplasts to favour her. Kindly send donation by Cheque/D.D/M.O. in favouring Save Poor Lives and on the back of Cheque write

A/c Muskan Choudhary. Our Account Details: S/B Account No.20000913487, State Bank of India, Raja Annamalaiaram Branch and IFSC CODE: SBIN0018855. You can donate through Google pay No.9884607377, UPI Id: savepoorlives@okbi. All donations are exempted under 80G of I.T. ACT. Donated 2,53,120/- last month to patients.

Contact: SAVE POOR LIVES REGISTERED PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST, (ADMIN DIVISION) Flat No.A1, Ceetores Garden, Ground Floor, Old No.76, Kamarajar Salai, Raja Annamalaiaram, Chennai - 600 028. Ph: 044-2041165. Mobile: 9884607377, E-mail: savepoorlives@gmail.com. Our website: www.savepoorlives.com

Divide between haves, have-nots remains: CJI

'There is no real freedom without economic freedom'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The stark divide between haves and have-nots is still a reality, Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana said here on Sunday.

"Despite our being a part of a welfare state, benefits are not trickling down to the intended beneficiaries at the desired levels. People's aspiration about leading a dignified life are often met with challenges. One of them, primarily, being poverty," the CJI said.

Chief Justice Ramana quoted Jawaharlal Nehru on the impact of poverty and a fragmented society in a country's growth: "There could be no real freedom without economic freedom" and that "to call a starving man free, is but to mock him".

He was speaking at a pan-India legal awareness and outreach campaign programme which coincided with the birth anniversary of Nehru, India's first Prime Minister.

'Dignity for all'

Chief Justice Ramana reminded that the "fundamental mission of our Independence struggle was to find life and dignity for all".

The top judge reminisced how the Independence movement fought and won against the colonial attitude that "poverty is a misfortune for which the law cannot



Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana at the valedictory of a pan-India legal awareness camp in New Delhi on Sunday. ■PTI

take any responsibility at all".

"The struggles and aspirations of our people shaped our Constitution, the document which promised us an egalitarian future," the CJI said.

Judicial independence

The CJI said an independent and robust district judiciary was the foremost sign of a healthy judiciary.

A woman in distress, a child in care of need, an illegal detainee approach the trial court first.

"The mind of the Indian judiciary can be known to millions largely through the actions of the trial court and the district judiciary. For an

overwhelming majority of litigants, what is real and existing is only the district judiciary. Without robust justice delivery system at the grass-roots level, we cannot imagine a healthy judiciary," Chief Justice Ramana said.

The CJI reinforced the need to practise a justice delivery system which reached out to those in need and rendered them help without delay.

The CJI said such people care little for "well-dressed, erudite lawyers or colossal court buildings".

"All they want is to be relieved of their pain quickly, without exhausting all their resources," Chief Justice Ramana said.

INTERVIEW | JAIRAM RAMESH

'Will move dissent note in JPC on data Bill'

There is a view in Govt. that this law will add to the cost of compliance, says senior Cong. leader

SOBHANA K. NAIR

Senior Congress leader **Jairam Ramesh** says he will be submitting a dissent note in the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Personal Data Protection Bill against the clause that gives powers to the Union Government to suspend all or any of the provisions of this Act for Government agencies. Excerpts:

What is happening with the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Personal Data Protection Bill? The committee has been working on the Bill for the past two years.

■ We are going to adopt the report on November 22. There will be dissent notes, but these will be decent notes. I must compliment Chairman P.P. Chaudhary. He has made every effort to bring together different points of views. He has been very democratic, collegial and consultative. I know there are senior people in this Government who do not want this Bill to come. There is a view in the Government, amongst some Ministers, that this law will add to the cost of compliance.

Will you be moving a dissent note?

■ Yes. My dissent is fundamentally against Clause 35 and I will also be moving a qualified dissent against Clause 12. Clause 35, I would say, is the basic architectural flaw with the law. It gives sweeping powers to the Government to exempt any agency from the entire Act. The Government should

pass a law in Parliament for the exemption for any of its agencies. I moved an amendment in December 2020 seeking this change. But that was not accepted.

The clause as it stands says that the Government has to record the reasons in writing for seeking the exemption. If the reasons have to be recorded in writing, I believe that it should be laid on the table of Parliament. That too was not agreed to, thus the dissent.

Section 12 is the other problematic area. Under this Section, all Government departments which are governed by law such as the Income Tax Department and the Unique Identification Authority of India, will be exempt from purposes of consent. It is extraordinary that the UIDAI is seeking exemption, considering the Justice K.S. Puttaswamy judgment came because of it.

We have come a long way from the Bill when it was introduced in 2019. But I have no doubt in my mind that this will be challenged in the Supreme Court and it will return to Parliament for several revisions.

Secretary-General of Rajya Sabha P.P.K. Ramacharyulu was removed

unceremoniously. Your comments.

■ That is an extraordinary decision, particularly after credit was claimed saying that it is the first time in 70 years an officer of the Rajya Sabha was elevated to the post of Secretary-General. Mr. Ramacharyulu is a very qualified man, he is a Ph.D. from JNU and a thorough professional. This is also, I might say, a rebuff to the Vice-President and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

What are the issues that will dominate the upcoming winter session of Parliament?

■ Farm laws are an ongoing issue, with no breakthrough in sight. The deterioration of the border situation and the complete confusion that exists vis-a-vis China and the continued unwillingness of the Government to discuss this in any form are also of great concern. Both Houses of Parliament were in session when the Chinese invasion was on in November 1962. If it could be debated back then why not now? The economy will also be in focus, particularly the runaway inflation.

Haven't the Opposition parties failed to bring the issue of "price rise" to the centre stage?

■ No. Last session was unusual. I can't recall any time when the Leader of the Op-



Clause 35 gives sweeping powers to the Government to exempt any agency from the entire Act. It is a flaw with the law.

position of the Rajya Sabha called a meeting of 14-15 Opposition parties. We met each day to decide the strategy. Of course that was dictated by Pegasus. While it remains an issue, but after the Supreme Court committee, the salience of that issue is different from what it was in the monsoon session. In a couple of days, the Opposition parties will get together to decide the strategy for the upcoming session.

You are the AICC observer for Manipur. What are the Congress's hopes and expectations for the Assembly elections next year?

■ In Manipur, we stand a very good chance. In 2017, we were the single largest party; we had 28 MLAs, we could have formed the government if we had three more MLAs. But market forces intervened. In a similar situation,

in 2002, we were the single largest party and we formed the government. In 2017 we were the single largest, but Mr. (Amit) Shah and Mr. (Narendra) Modi did not let us form the government.

The Congress is perpetually fire-fighting in the States where it is in power. When will it stop?

■ We are an open and democratic party where people are free to express their views. We represent India in all its colours. But if you ask me whether the Congress could have more unity, more discipline and more self-control, I can't disagree. And Congress president Sonia Gandhi has said this repeatedly, I am not really saying anything new here. The Congress is really the only national force that can take on the BJP.

The Trinamool Congress and the AAP may disagree with you about the Congress being the only "national force".

■ The Trinamool's victory in West Bengal was magnificent, no doubt about it. They didn't defeat the BJP, they destroyed the BJP. Similarly, the DMK is the pre-eminent political force in Tamil Nadu. The Congress also recognises this and it will work to bring these forces together. 'Anti-BJPism' is certainly a glue but a stronger glue will be a common programme and that will emerge.

Article 370 not diluted in haste, says V-P

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said the dilution of Article 370 of the Constitution, which granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir, was not done in haste.

The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill was adopted after a detailed debate, giving opportunity to all parties. "It was a historic moment in my life," the Rajya Sabha Chairman said while taking part in the 20th anniversary celebrations of the Swarna Bharat Trust, a social service organisation, along with Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who had piloted the Bill in the Upper House.

Speaking further on the repeal of the constitutional provision, he said: "It was my life's ambition and mission since my student days as Kashmir is an integral part of India." Countrymen were now rejoicing over the repeal, he said. This was achieved thanks to the determination of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mr. Shah, who ensured that the Bill was passed smoothly, he said.

A day before the passage, the Prime Minister had wanted the Bill to be taken up first in the Rajya Sabha though he [Mr. Naidu] had suggested that it could be taken up in the Lok Sabha where the BJP had a two-thirds majority, Mr. Naidu recalled. While he was worried about the passage of the Bill, his family members were worried about his health, Mr. Naidu said. But his cardiologist, Balram Bhargava (Indian Council of Medical Research Director-General), allayed their fears saying that he would be in the gallery and would take care.

Though people wanted Article 370 to go, their wish had not been fulfilled for various reasons, he added.

Describing the Rajya Sabha Chairman as a "model custodian of the Constitution", Mr. Shah recalled how Mr. Naidu used to argue for taking up the provision from the statute book. God had given Mr. Naidu the opportunity to chair the historic session.

Workers, farmers' unions join forces

Meeting calls for united fight to revoke controversial farm laws and labour codes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Several workers' unions in Gurugram's automotive sector and the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), a conglomerate of 500-odd farmers' unions protesting against the farm laws, came together for the first time to hold a joint public meeting, "Mazdoor-Kisan panchayat", in support of their demands on Sunday.

Organised by the Bellsonica Auto Components Employees Union, a workers' union of a tier-one supplier company to auto major Maruti Suzuki, the seven-hour public meeting near the mini-Secretariat saw participation of the SKM's national and local leadership, including farmer leaders Darshan Pal and Yudhvir Singh, and Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ektta Ugrahan) president Joginder Singh Ugrahan, besides leaders and workers from around a dozen workers' un-



Protest mode: Several unions in Gurugram holding a Mazdoor-Kisan panchayat on Sunday. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ions in the region. The major demands raised at the meeting were withdrawal of the "anti-worker" labour codes, implementation of the policy of regular job for regular work, an end to retrenchments, and revoking the three farm laws.

Stressing the similarities between the farmers and the workers, Mr. Ugrahan, in his speech, said though the de-

ment which has brought the three farm laws and the four labour codes. They want to take it away from the working class and put it in the pockets of the corporates," Mr. Ugrahan said.

He cautioned that the three farm laws would lead to more hunger, debt, suicides and unemployment. "If the farmers are rendered landless due to the policies of the Government, they too would become labourers. It will lead to more unemployment among labourers and increase their exploitation," Mr. Ugrahan said.

Mr. Pal, in his 10-minute speech, said the farmers' agitation spanning almost a year would not have been possible without all farmers' unions of Punjab and the country joining hands.

"Our enemy is one, our fight is same. Soon we will have one demand charter and get our democratic demands met," he said.

mands of the two groups were different, their needs and economic status were similar.

"It is the same Govern-

Why House leaders absent at Nehru anniversary, asks Cong.

Jairam Ramesh says even Ministers absent at Central Hall

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The official function to commemorate the birth anniversary of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, at the Central Hall of Parliament on Sunday, resulted in a controversy with former Union Minister Jairam Ramesh questioning the absence of the presiding officers of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha at the event.

In a tweet, Mr. Ramesh called it "atrocious" that no Government Minister had been present.

"Extraordinary scene today in Parliament at the traditional function to mark the birth anniversary of those whose portraits adorn the Central Hall. Speaker Lok Sabha absent. Chairman Rajya Sabha absent. Not a single Minister present. Can it get more atrocious than this?" Mr. Ramesh tweeted.

"Nothing surprises me anymore. This dispensation



Paying tributes: Sonia Gandhi paying tributes to Jawaharlal Nehru at Shanti Van in New Delhi on Sunday. ■PTI

is destroying India's great institutions, including Parliament one day at a time," added Trinamool Congress's leader in Parliament Derek O'Brien, in a response to Mr. Ramesh's tweet.

A senior official said the Rajya Sabha Chairman usually does not attend such functions at the Central Hall, and Mr. Birla attended the function in 2019 and 2020.

A press release from the Lok Sabha Secretariat said,

"Minister of State in the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma, Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge; President, Indian National Congress, Sonia Gandhi and Members of Parliament and former Members of Parliament paid floral tributes at the portrait of Jawaharlal Nehru in the Central Hall of Parliament House on his birth anniversary."

Cong. starts protest against price rise

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday launched a two-week agitation by kicking off the Jan Jagran Padayatra against price rise and policies of the Narendra Modi Government.

"Flagged off #JanJagran-Padayatra organised by Mumbai Regional Congress Committee in Mumbai today to raise the voice of the millions of Indians suffering due to Modi Govt's inability to control soaring inflation. We will continue this movement across the country," tweeted party general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal. Such padayatra are being organised by all the State units of the party.

In October, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) decided to take to the streets over the "runaway inflation" and consistent increase fuel prices.

Priyanka meets Mayawati

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday called on Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati to offer her condolences as her mother passed away in a Delhi hospital on Saturday.

According to a BSP press statement, Ms. Mayawati's mother, Ramrati, 92, died

while undergoing treatment at a hospital.

The last rites will be performed in Delhi on Sunday, the BSP statement said. It also mentioned Ms. Mayawati's father had died last year at the age of 95.

Accompanied by Rajya Sabha member Deepender Hooda, Ms. Vadra went to the BSP chief's official residence in Delhi.

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MAHAGENCO
Maharashtra State Power Generation Co. Ltd.
NOTIFICATION OF INVITATION OF BIDS
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING FOR SUPPLY OF NON-COKING (STEAM) COAL OF FOREIGN ORIGIN WITH REVERSE AUCTION ON FORD BASIS
Date of issuance of invitation: 15.11.2021
(TO BE SUBMITTED ONLINE DULY FILLED IN & DIGITALLY SIGNED)
The Maharashtra State Power Generation Co. Ltd., Mumbai, India (MAHAGENCO) invites online Bids (Two Bid System i.e. separate bid for technical/commercial and price bid) from eligible Bidders for supply of "2.0 MILLION MT NON-COKING (STEAM) COAL OF FOREIGN ORIGIN" on FOR Destination basis for Khaperkheda (U # 1 to 5) (4 x 210 MW + 1 x 500 MW), Chandrapur Unit 3 to 9 (2 x 210 MW & 5 x 500 MW) and Bhusawal (U # 4 & 5) (2 x 500 MW) and Nashik (U # 3 to 5) (3 x 210 MW) with reverse auction. Procurement process will be done on e-tendering. Each bidder shall register itself on online payment of the vendor registration fee (Rs.5000/- + Goods & Service Tax (GST) @18 % GST Extra i.e.Rs.5900/-) and tender fee (Rs.25000/- + Goods & Service Tax (GST) @18% extra i.e. Rs.29500/-).
Bid Specification shall be available for download on or before 15.11.2021 on website <https://sets.mahagenco.in> after payment of vendor registration and tender fee. Vendor registration is started on the aforementioned website. Overseas bidders can submit the vendor registration and tender fee through international debit/credit card.
Last date for receipt of queries : 22.11.2021 15:00 Hrs. IST
Pre-bid meeting : 23.11.2021 15:00 Hrs. IST
Last date for payment of tender fees : 28.11.2021 15:00 Hrs. IST
and download of tender document
Due date for submission of bids : 29.11.2021 15:00 Hrs. IST
Due date for opening of techno- : 29.11.2021 16:00 Hrs. IST
commercial bids
MAHAGENCO reserves the right to cancel/withdraw this invitation for Bids without assigning any reason for such decision.
CHIEF ENGINEER (FM)
Contact details: Phone (P) 022- 26475927(O) 022- 26474211 / 26472131 Extn: 2451 Fax No. 022-2658 1466
Email: cefm@mahagenco.in
NOTE: This is an e-tender. Offers shall be submitted & processed in electronic mode only. Physical copies of required document will additionally need to be supplied for verification. The instructions to bidder/terms & conditions appearing in this specification only shall be applicable.

Adv. No. 79/2021
Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of **Director (Marketing)** in **Coal India Limited**
Last date of receipt of applications in PESB is by **15.00 hours on 17th January, 2022.**
For details login to website <http://www.pesb.gov.in>

OFFICE OF ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
PHED, JAIPUR REGION-I, JAIPUR
Jyoti Nagar, Sahakar Marg, Jaipur-302005
Phone: 0141-2740170(e) e-mail: ace1.jr.phed@rajasthan.gov.in
No.: F./ACE/PHED/Ar. Dausa/NIT-/2021-22/ Date:
(e-NIT NO. 128-134/2021-22)
On behalf of the Governor of Rajasthan NIT No. 128-134/2021-22 online tender is hereby invited from eligible bidders for "of Conversion of HP to piped Water supply scheme FHTC including one year Defect Liability period under JJM of District Dausa" as per criteria mentioned in the detailed NIT/tender document available on websites: <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> & <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>. Tenders are to be submitted online in electronic format on website <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> as per prescribed schedule.

NIT No.	Particular	Estt. Cost (Rs. in Crore)	UBN No.
128/2021-22	PHED Sub Division Lalсот	2.15	PHE2122WSO808973
129/2021-22	PHED Sub Division Lalсот	1.28	PHE2122WSO808974
130/2021-22	PHED Sub Division Lalсот	1.55	PHE2122WSO808975
131/2021-22	PHED Sub Division Lalсот	1.95	PHE2122WSO808976
132/2021-22	PHED Sub Division Lalсот	1.54	PHE2122WSO808977
133/2021-22	PHED Sub Division Lalсот	2.04	PHE2122WSO808978
134/2021-22	Sub Division Mahwa Under PHED Division Mahwa	4.48	PHE2122WSO808979

SAVE WATER - SAVE LIFE
(Arun Srivastava)
Addl. Chief Engineer
PHED, Jaipur Region-I, Jaipur
DIPR/C/1330

Reconsider transfer of Madras HC CJ, senior counsel urge SC Collegium

'Constant transfers of judges have left High Court in a state of flux'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Thirty-one designated senior counsel have sent a joint representation to the Supreme Court Collegium, urging it to reconsider its recommendation to the Centre and the President to transfer Madras High Court Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee to the High Court of Meghalaya.

The representation stated that the Chief Justice had assumed office in the Madras High Court only on January 4, and had completed only 10 months here, though he had two more years of service, with his date of retirement being November 1, 2023.

"During his term, he has discharged his functions, both in the administrative and judicial side, to the best of his capabilities, bringing honour to the office he held. He has been a good administrator, and in the judicial side, has disposed a few thousand cases, even during the devastating COVID-19 pandemic," the senior counsel said.

Their representation went on to read: "The orders were



Chief Justice of Madras High Court Sanjib Banerjee • FILE PHOTO

predominantly dictated in the open court and delivered. When this is a fact that most advocates and litigants will readily agree to, we are unable to fathom the reasons for his sudden transfer to another court."

The senior counsel also said that constant transfers of judges had left the Madras High Court in a state of constant flux. Such short-lived tenures at the apex of the court's hierarchy in a State bodes ill for the health of the institution and the justice delivery system, they said.

Stating that it takes a new Chief Justice at least a year to understand the administration, composition and challenges of an institution, apart from understanding the culture, language and local practices of a State, the senior counsel said any Chief Justice of the Madras High Court should at least have a two-year term.

However, in the last three years, the Madras High Court has had three Chief Justices apart from Acting Chief Justices who were at the helm of affairs for brief

periods, the senior counsel said, requesting the collegium not to view the representation as a missive aimed at supporting the cause of any individual, but a plea to strengthen the health of the institution.

The signatories to the representation included senior counsel P.S. Raman, V. Prakash, Nalini Chidambaram, E. Omprakash, Ravi Kumar Paul, N.R. Elango, P.H. Arvindh Pandian, Satish Parasaran, Veera Kathiravan, A. Thiagarajan, M.K. Kabir and A.R.L. Sundaresan.

Those who signed electronically, by consent, included senior counsel Arvind P. Datar, Hema Sampath, S. Subbiah, M. Ravindran, Vijay Narayan, M. Ajmal Khan, S. Ramasamy, A. Sirajudeen, J. Raja Kalifulla, N. Krishnaveni, P.R. Raman, Pushya Sitaraman, T.P. Manoharan, N.C. Ramesh, Chitra Sampath, Isaac Mohanlal, R. Venkataraman and R. Murari. The Madras Bar Association also passed a resolution, at an emergency general body meeting on Sunday, for the transfer to be reconsidered.

Sonu Sood's sister joins politics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood on Sunday said his sister Malvika is joining politics, but added he has no such plans for himself. Ms. Malvika said she will contest the 2022 Punjab Assembly polls from Moga. Mr. Sood, who is from Moga district, said his sister has done a lot of amazing work in the past. "We today officially want to say that Malvika will certainly come to serve Punjab," Mr. Sood said.

Asked about joining any political party, Mr. Sood said no decision has yet been taken. "We have not yet taken a call about the party. Whenever the time comes, we will make sure that we let you know," he said.

"It is a very big decision in life. Malvika is strongly rooted in Moga...For me (joining politics), I have not thought of it," he said.

On his recent meetings with Punjab CM Charanjit Singh Channi and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, Mr. Sood said both are good people. On Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal, he said he would meet him too.

IMA wants to inoculate all diabetics, give booster dose

'Millions with the condition do not have access to care'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Sunday demanded COVID-19 vaccination for all diabetes patients, including a booster dose, if needed. The association launched a campaign for early detection and mitigation of diabetes complications.

The campaign, launched on the occasion of World Diabetes Day, will run for 10 days and aims to reach one billion people, the IMA said in a release.

As part of the campaign, the IMA has joined hands with the Association of Physicians of India and other organisations.

The IMA says that millions of people with diabetes do not have access to the kind of care they need and that patients often require continuous care and support to avoid complications.

To make insulin accessible, the IMA's State and local branches will set up special centres, the statement said.

The World Diabetes Day logo – a blue circle – will be depicted by blue light and blue balloons during the



Impending gloom: The IMA launched a campaign for early detection, mitigation of diabetes complications. • FILE PHOTO

campaign at all IMA branches. Also, special sessions will be organised during the week at 'blue corners' to make people aware of diabetes and complications caused by it, the statement said.

"In India, more than 77 million adults are living with diabetes and researchers predict that this will increase to 134 million by 2045," said the association.

City lifestyle

According to a 2021 review, people who live in cities and metropolitan areas in India are more likely to develop diabetes than ever before. "This is due in part to a city lifestyle that is marked by sedentary, stress, junk food,

smoking, and liquor consumption. All these factors lead to an increase in a person's body mass index (BMI) – a major risk factor in causing diabetes," the statement said.

Undiagnosed cases

Overall, women have a higher risk of developing diabetes than men, but as both groups get older, the risk decreases, the IMA said.

Although diabetes figures are high, researchers estimate that 57% of cases remain undiagnosed.

It also spoke about the diabetic foot, terming it a dreaded complication, and saying that 80% of amputations of leg in India are due to this condition.

IN BRIEF



Historian Babasaheb Purandare critical

Noted historian and Padma Vibhushan awardee Balwant Moreshwar Purandare, popularly known as 'Babasaheb' Purandare, is said to be in a critical condition and is undergoing treatment at a private hospital here.

Policeman injured in gunfight in Srinagar

One policeman was injured in a gunfight between militants and the security forces in Srinagar on Sunday. "Based on input about presence of terrorists in Jamalata, a raid was carried out. As the team approached, the hiding terrorists started indiscriminate firing on them," Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar said.

Dudhwa National Park to reopen from today

The Dudhwa National Park in Uttar Pradesh is set to open for tourists from November 15, a senior official said on Sunday. The park was earlier scheduled to open from November 1. However, untimely very heavy rain in the area disturbed the schedule. PTI

Punjab BJP meets Modi on Kartarpur corridor

Reopen before Gurburab, they say

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

BJP leaders from Punjab, along with national general secretaries Dushyant Gautam and Tarun Chugh, met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday and requested him to reopen the Kartarpur corridor before Gurburab, which falls on November 19.

Pilgrimage to the Kartarpur Sahib gurdwara was suspended in March 2020 because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

11-member team

The delegation, composed of 11 leaders from Punjab, met Mr. Modi here and conveyed the sentiments of Guru Nanak Dev ji's devotees, BJP Punjab unit president Ashwani Sharma said.

Mr. Sharma said the Prime Minister assured them that he would look into their demand.

The BJP leaders from Punjab are also expected to meet party president J.P. Nadda later in the day and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday.

The Kartarpur corridor links Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, to Dera Baba Nanak shrine in



Narendra Modi meeting BJP leaders from Punjab, Delhi and J&K. • PTI

Gurdaspur district

Mr. Chugh, who was part of the delegation, said the party leaders from Punjab also thanked Mr. Modi for taking landmark initiatives for the well-being of both Punjab and the Sikh community.

Farm protests

The delegation is known to have raised the issue of the continuing protests against the three farm laws passed by Parliament last year.

According to some who were part of the delegation, the Prime Minister reiterated his old stance that the Union Government was ready for talks with farmers groups.

Potters' touch for clay griddle makers' kilns

Kilns in Rajasthan villages to be modified to make them efficient, less polluting

MOHAMMED IQBAL
UNCH (BHARATPUR)

Potters from Unch village in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan will travel to Deeg tehsil's Panchari village next week to assist clay griddle makers in fabricating their kilns with a modified design. The furnaces set up with technical upgrade in Unch have helped potters scale up their production of earthenware with better strength and less breakage.

The potters, forming the Kumhar community, in Unch have benefited from design interventions and new baking techniques for their furnaces, making the kilns more efficient and less polluting, as part of an experiment undertaken by Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi's (IIT-D) Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG).

A total of 14 such kilns have been set up in the village since January this year.

The initiative is being extended to Panchari village, which is famous for the production of clay griddles that maintain the earthy scent of the black soil, procured mostly from local ponds, even after they are baked.

The clay griddles are



Heat loss: About 25% of the clay griddles break during baking in the kilns. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

supplied to different parts of Rajasthan, and as far as Agra and Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, and Faridabad and Gurugram in Haryana, generating an estimated annual turnover of ₹1.5 crore.

25% loss

About 25% of the clay griddles break during baking in the kilns. RuTAG is working in collaboration with Bharatpur-based Lupin Foundation to find a solution to the issue and help the potters increase their production. The 14 furnaces installed in Unch have turned out to be

successful in improving the quality of earthenware with a lesser quantity of mustard stubble used as fuel.

Ramsukh Prajapat, 70, in whose household the first model kiln was set up, told *The Hindu* that the baking time for items like cups, cutlery, pans, clay griddles, dishes, bowls and pitchers had been reduced by half in the new furnace because of high and uniform temperature distribution in its chamber. Contrary to the open fire baking used earlier, the new technique has produced encouraging results, he said. Clay pottery is taken up

in the region both as a traditional occupation and the only livelihood option for the Kumhar community. With the first-ever technical intervention, in which the potters themselves have fabricated kilns under RuTAG's guidance, production has increased manifold and the community's younger generation has evinced interest in the occupation.

Fuel use halved

RuTAG research scholar Yashwant Prasad said trials in the kilns had found that fuel consumption could be reduced by 50% in addition to better results in baking, which would have a cultural impact in terms of lesser quantity of cow dung cakes and crop husk required for combustion.

"Over 35 families of Kumhars in Panchari can benefit immensely from the modified kilns. We are extending our experiment to specifically include clay griddles in order to check the efficacy of our technical inputs," Mr. Prasad said. While a team of potters from Unch would carry out "participatory designing" for their counterparts, the RuTAG would act as a facilitator, he added.

Burnt body of abducted scribe found

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

The charred body of a journalist and Right to Information activist who was kidnapped four days ago was found on November 12 by the roadside in Madhubani district of Bihar.

Local police have taken some people into custody and are investigating the case.

The journalist, Buddhinath Jha, alias Avinash Jha, was working with a local news portal and was exposing fake medical clinics and nursing homes of Benipatti.

He was also working as an RTI activist and getting details of such illegal private medical clinics and pathological laboratories running without following Government rules and norms to write on his portal.

His recent reports had led to the closure of at least four illegal private clinics and nursing homes and imposition of fine of ₹50,000 on other clinics. By a Government order, 19 such illegal centres were ordered to shut in Benipatti and neighbouring area Dhakjari in February 2021 too. In 2019, action was taken against nine such illegal centres.

TH **CROSSWORD** + 13402 Display keystrokes of genius. Type your answers in our online grids: @ <https://qr.go.page.link/jjpTn> SCAN TO PLAY

13 Setter is smiling in support (1-4)
14 Hold on with difficulty (8)
16 Moves forward with issues ahead of time (8)
18 Fibre Marie developed (5)
20 Instant photo (4)
21 Convict hunted down outside town, caught (10)
23 Reluctant girl on medicine (7)
24 Model, praised, had great ambitions (7)
25 Hostile Southeastern state basically (6)
26 Notice split coming (6)

■ **DOWN**
1 Vehicle to leave with shipment (5)
2 Location unknown at this time and at this place (7)
3 Roam about in fear – it's all around (9)
5 Details – these are before your eyes (5)
6 Charm of posh English manor – fantastic surroundings (7)
7 State leader's conservative approach and narrative (9)
10 Indicate regarding offer (9)
13 Ones in country's islands (9)
15 Users, ripped-off after gym shutting down, at a loss (9)
17 Calm primate eating vegetables (7)
19 State-Church separated as a system (7)
21 Game contributed by the Dutch essentially (5)
22 Fair and equal trial to begin with (5)

SUDOKU

3	7		9	8	4	6		
6				4	1			
		4	1					7
		6	4					
	3						2	
				3	8			
2				1	5			
	8	3						1
9	3	5		2		8	4	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 13401

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

1	5	6	4	8	7	9	3	2
8	4	9	3	6	2	1	5	7
3	2	7	9	5	1	8	4	6
5	7	1	8	9	6	3	2	4
9	6	2	1	4	3	5	7	8
4	3	8	7	2	5	6	9	1
7	9	4	5	1	8	2	6	3
6	8	3	2	7	9	4	1	5
2	1	5	6	3	4	7	8	9

U.S., China trade barbs ahead of summit

As Biden, Xi prepare for Tuesday's virtual meet, top diplomats from both countries spar over Taiwan

ANANTH KRISHNAN
HONG KONG

The lead-up to Tuesday morning's virtual summit between United States President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping has seen the two countries exchange sharp remarks on Taiwan, one of many thorny issues on which both sides are unlikely to make much headway.

In a telephone call between top U.S. and Chinese diplomats, both sides expressed concerns over the other's position on Taiwan, with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi attacking "the U.S.'s wrong words and deeds" and saying that "any connivance of and support for the 'Taiwan independence' forces...would only boomerang in the end."

China last week hit out at a visit by a U.S. congressional delegation to Taiwan, while the People's Liberation Army carried out more drills that have followed recent record aerial intrusions into Taiwan's Air Defence Identification Zone.

In the phone call, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken "expressed concern regarding the PRC's [People's Republic of China's] continued military, diplomatic, and economic pressure against Taiwan" and "urged Beijing to engage in meaningful dialogue to resolve cross-strait issues peacefully and in a manner consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people on Taiwan."



Setting the agenda: A combination of file pictures of Chinese President Xi Jinping, left, and U.S. President Joe Biden. •AFP

Secretary of State Antony Blinken "expressed concern regarding the PRC's [People's Republic of China's] continued military, diplomatic, and economic pressure against Taiwan" and "urged Beijing to engage in meaningful dialogue to resolve cross-strait issues peacefully and in a manner consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people on Taiwan."

'Red lines'

Mr. Xi however is expected to reinforce China's "red lines" on the Taiwan issue in

Tuesday's virtual summit, one of many points of difference on which the two sides are unlikely to reach a meeting of minds.

The measured expectation ahead of the summit is a lowering of temperatures and an improvement in tone after years of a rancorous relationship marked by a trade war during the term of the Trump administration and tensions that have continued this year under the Biden administration, a reflection of an increasingly bipartisan consensus in Washington on the approach to China.

One point of difference with the new administration appears to be its keenness to find common ground with China on some issues such as climate change, on which the two countries recently announced a new cooperation agreement, even though officials have made clear they still viewed China as the primary strategic challenge. On the other hand, the Biden administration has said it would seek to work more effectively with U.S. allies and partners, including with the Quad grouping, in coming up with a more coherent approach to China, while also speaking out more on human rights issues.

Common ground

Underlining the state of relations, Mr. Biden and Mr. Xi have only had two phone calls this year, the first shortly after the inauguration. In the second call in September, the U.S. President told his counterpart that both sides needed "to ensure competition does not veer into conflict" as they deal with a growing list of

differences.

Two months before that call, the Chinese side had presented the U.S. in talks in Tianjin with two "lists" of demands, named a "List of U.S. Wrongs" and a "List of Key Individual Cases that China Has Concerns With." Among those demands were unconditional removal of visa restrictions on Communist Party members and withdrawal of an extradition request for Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of tech firm Huawei who was arrested in Canada for violating U.S. sanctions on Iran. The latter demand was met, with Ms. Meng allowed to return to China in October.

Tuesday's summit may pave the way for other limited agreements, including on reopening consulates that were closed down during the time of the Trump administration and on visas. Fundamental differences, however, remain, with Mr. Biden likely to repeat U.S. concerns on Taiwan, Xinjiang and Hong Kong and Mr. Xi expected to rebuff them.

At least 68 dead in Ecuador prison violence, dozens injured

Rival gangs clash in the same jail where 119 died in Sept. riots

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GUAYAQUIL

Prison inmates from rival gangs in Ecuador fought each other with guns, explosives and blades in a bloodbath that left at least 68 dead in the same prison where a riot in September claimed 119 lives, officials said on Saturday.

Authorities said late on Saturday they had regained control of the prison in Guayaquil for a second time in as many days after President Guillermo Lasso's spokesman said fighting had again broken out earlier in the day between inmates from rival gangs tied to drug trafficking rings.

In the initial riot that began Friday night prisoners fought with "savagery," said Pablo Arosemena, governor of the province of Guayas where the prison is located.

The riot began around 7:00 pm Friday when prisoners tried to enter Block 2 of the jail where their rivals were held, firing gunshots,



A woman relative of a prisoner weeping in Guayaquil. •REUTERS

detonating explosives and swinging machetes, and prompting police to move in.

At least 68 prisoners were killed and another 25 were wounded, according to a statement which the Ecuador Prosecutor's Office posted on Twitter.

In the second outbreak of fighting on Saturday, inmates from two other blocks attacked each other, said presidential spokesman Carlos Jijon.

He confirmed a little

while later that police had pushed through to the prison's interior and that the situation was "under control."

Officials said the violence started when one of the gangs inside the prison, the Tiguerones, was left without its leader because he was released after serving part of his sentence for stealing auto parts.

Other groups, sensing weakness in the Tiguerones with that man gone, went on the attack to try to crush the gang, Arosemena said.

He said their goal was "to go in and carry out a total massacre."

"Help them" Earlier Saturday, police officers in riot gear were seen climbing up the blood-stained prison walls, while the body of an inmate in an orange prison jumpsuit lay on the roof of the jail encircled by barbed wire.

Dozens of people gathered outside the prison gates Saturday morning.

Qadhafi's son to run for President

Military commander Khalifa Haftar is also likely to join the race for Libya's top post

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TRIPOLI

The son and one-time heir apparent of late Libyan dictator Muammar Qadhafi announced on Sunday his candidacy for the country's presidential election next month, Libya's election agency said.

Saif al-Islam, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of crimes against humanity related to the 2011 uprising, submitted his candidacy

papers in the southern town of Sabha, the High National Elections Commission said in a statement.

Qadhafi's son was captured by fighters in the town of Zintan late in 2011, the year when a popular uprising, backed by the NATO, toppled his father after more than 40 years in power. Qadhafi was later killed amid the ensuing fighting that would turn into a civil war.

Saif al-Islam, who was seen as the reformist face of



Saif al-Islam

Qadhafi's regime before the 2011 uprising, was released in June 2017 after more than five years of detention.

Saif al-Islam has deeply rooted links to tribes across Libya, and is the first major presidential hopeful to submit his candidacy to the highest post.

Also widely expected to announce their bids are powerful military commander Khalifa Haftar, Parliament Speaker Agila Saleh and former Interior Minister Fathi Bashaga.

Libya is set to hold presidential elections on December 24.

Johnson hails 'big step' with COP26 deal

On the coal issue, Alok Sharma says 'phase down' will ultimately lead to 'phase out'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has hailed the deal struck at the end of the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow as a "big step forward" and the first-ever international agreement to "phase down" the use of coal.

Praising the hard work of COP26 President Alok Sharma - the British Indian Cabinet Minister in charge of navigating the negotiations -

Mr. Johnson expressed the hope that the two-week-long summit which went into extra time over the weekend will mark the "beginning of the end of climate change".

His statement followed an agreement between nearly 200 countries on a final communiqué late on Saturday, which recognises India's intervention for the world to "phase down" rather than "phase out" fossil fuels.

"There is still a huge amount more to do in the

coming years. But today's agreement is a big step forward and, critically, we have the first ever international agreement to phase down coal and a roadmap to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees [Celsius]," he said.

"On the issue of coal, for the very first time in any of these conferences, the word coal is actually reflected in the text; that is a first. Yes, of course, I would have liked to ensure that we maintained the 'phase out' rather than

changing the wording to phase down, but on the way to phasing out you have got to phase down," Mr. Sharma told "Sky News" on Sunday.

"Ultimately, we need to ensure that we continue to work on this deal and commitments. And, on the issue of coal, China and India are going to have to justify to some of the most climate-vulnerable countries what happened. You heard the disappointment on the floor," Mr. Sharma added.



Novelist Wilbur Smith passes away

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG

Zambian-born bestselling adventure author Wilbur Smith has died at his home in South Africa. He was 88.

With 49 titles under his belt, Smith's swashbuckling adventure stories took readers from tropical islands to the jungles of Africa and even Ancient Egypt. His 1964 debut novel *When the Lion Feeds* became an instant bestseller and led to 15 sequels, tracing an ambitious family's fortunes for more than 200 years.

Kuwait's Emir issues amnesty to dissidents of 2011 uprising

Also pardoned were members of the alleged Abdali cell

REUTERS
DUBAI

Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmed al-Sabah has pardoned a group of prisoners in an amnesty intended to defuse a political row. Among those released were Shia Kuwaitis convicted in 2016 for spying for Iran and Lebanon's Iran-allied Hezbollah.

The amnesty was a key demand of Opposition lawmakers locked in a dispute with the government over the Prime Minister's refusal to be questioned in Parliament. Earlier on Sunday, the Emir accepted the government's resignation in another step to end the feud.

The Emir on Saturday issued two decrees granting



A political prisoner hugging his mother after his release in Kuwait. •REUTERS

pardons and reduced sentences of 35 people, including former lawmakers in self-exile in Turkey sentenced for storming the Parliament building in 2011 protests against corruption.

The decrees pardoned two members of the alleged

'Abdali cell', named after the place where a weapons cache was discovered in a 2015 raid, along with four convicted of covering for the group, and halved the sentences of 18 others, some of whom had already served the commuted term.

Women threw flower petals as more than 10 prisoners were seen exiting a bus in a parking lot outside the central prison, where more than 200 relatives and friends gathered to meet them, embracing amid chants of "There is no god but God".

Authorities have so far not disclosed how many convicts were released on Sunday, but one lawyer said 20 had been freed.

Hackers compromise FBI servers, send messages

Emails warned of possible cyberattack

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Fake emails purportedly from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security warning of cyberattacks were sent out on Saturday from a secure FBI computer server, computer security experts said.

The FBI confirmed independent security group Spamhaus's report that a large number of fake emails were sent in two waves early Saturday from an address on the government's Law Enforcement Enterprise Portal, which is used by multiple government agencies.

Some of the emails, sent in the name of the Homeland Security cyber threat detection group, were headlined: "Urgent: threat actor in systems."

They warned recipients that they were the target of a "sophisticated" hacking attack from a known extortion gang, according to Spamhaus.

Independent cyber security expert Brian Krebs said he, too, had received a fake email from the FBI address, though with a different message.

In a statement, the FBI and the DHS Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency confirmed the incident, without offering details.

"The FBI and CISA are aware of the incident this morning involving fake emails from an @ic.fbi.gov email account," they said in a statement. "This is an ongoing situation and we are not able to provide any additional information at this time," it added.

Al Jazeera says bureau chief in Sudan arrested

This comes a day after mass protests

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KHARTOUM

The Qatar-based satellite news network Al-Jazeera said Sunday its bureau chief in Sudan was detained by security forces, a day after mass protests across the country against last month's military coup.

The network said on Twitter that Sudanese forces raided the home of El Musalmi El Kabbashi and detained him.

The development comes after security forces fired live ammunition and tear gas Saturday to disperse protesters denouncing the military's tightening grip on the country.

The Sudan Doctors Committee said a 15-year-old protester died Sunday of gunshot wounds to his stomach and thigh, raising the

death toll to six people.

In a later statement, Al-Jazeera said El Kabbashi had been arrested at his home in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital. The broadcaster said it held the Sudanese military responsible for his safety.

"Al-Jazeera condemns in the strongest terms the reprehensible actions of the military and calls on the authorities to release El Kabbashi immediately and to allow its journalists to operate unhindered, free to practice their profession without fear or intimidation," the channel said.

Thousands of pro-democracy protesters took to the streets across Sudan on Saturday to rally against the military coup last month. The takeover has drawn international criticism.

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ASK US



N. SREE KANTH

Q. I want to invest about 5 lakhs in government bonds such as NSC or NHAI. If I invest in the name of my wife, would she need to pay any taxes initially. This 5 lakhs is from my savings and I am an income tax payee, however, my wife is a housewife and does not have any income.

S. SUNDAR KUMAR

A. Gift from husband to wife is not chargeable to tax. However, under the clubbing provisions of the Income Tax Act, 1961, income arising from direct or indirect transfer of assets to an assessee's spouse without adequate consideration will be assessed in the hands of the transferring spouse. The interest arising from the government bonds invested by you in your spouse's name will be taxable in your hands and not in your wife's.

Q. Kindly enlighten me whether it is mandatory to file income tax return even if my total income in a financial year is less than exemption limit but there is TDS of ₹46 from dividend from mutual fund and a capital gain of ₹7,000 in 2020-2021. Kindly offer your guidance.

R DEENATHAYALAN

A. Under Section 139(1) of the Income Tax Act, an individual has to file ITR if the total income exceeds the maximum amount not chargeable to tax and the assessee satisfies any of the following conditions, holds or is a beneficial owner/beneficiary of an asset located outside India or has signing authority in any account held outside India, deposits more than one crore rupees in one or more current accounts, has incurred more than two lakh rupees for foreign travel for himself or others and has incurred more than one lakh rupees towards electricity. Kindly check if any of these conditions apply to you. If not, as stated by you your total income is less than the exemption limit, you are not required to file the ITR for the relevant assessment year. Further, ITR can be filed if you want to claim refund of the TDS deducted from the dividend earned from mutual fund.

Q. I would like to understand how tax savings can be achieved and also the ITR forms to be used for personnel hired as consultants/contract employee. Currently, I am working as a consultant and I do not have the tax benefits of a salaried employee like HRA, conveyance, PF, etc., instead a fixed amount is paid. Could you please guide me on this. I understand that if the yearly income is greater than 20 lakhs, only then GST needs to be furnished and I am below the limit. Request your guidance on this.

VEENA H

A. Income received by consultants/contract employees are taxable under the head "Profits and Gains from Business or Profession". Under this head, the income received for rendering services to your clients minus the expenses incurred by you for rendering such services will be the taxable income. You are to also maintain the books of accounts for such profession run by you. You may opt for presumptive basis of computing the profits/gains as per Section 44ADA and your income is deemed to be 50% or the net income (income less expenses) whichever is higher. Further, you can avail the benefit of this section only up to ₹50 lakh gross income per assessment year. Your income must fall under the specified professions as provided under Section 44AA such as legal, medical, engineering, architectural profession or the profession of accountancy or technical consultancy or interior decoration or professions as notified. The relevant ITR which is to be filed by you is ITR-4.

Q. Myself and my wife bought a house together. She is a housewife and just a co-borrower. For tax purposes to claim HRA, can I pay rent to her and claim the rental amount under HRA. I don't want to claim anything under my house loan. Please suggest.

SRIKANTH

A. As you are a joint owner of the house property, you cannot enter into a rental agreement with your wife and pay rent to your wife in order to claim HRA benefits under Income Tax Act, 1961. You may however claim housing loan benefits in the form of interest payment and principal repayment under Sections 24 and Sections 80C of the Income Tax Act, 1961 read with the conditions laid out in the respective provisions.

Q. I am a 55-year-old working in a private company and getting a gross salary of 20 lakh per annum. I've taken home loan and paying ₹16,000 EMI, holding policies in LIC etc., and completing 80C limits of ₹1,50,000 pension scheme of ₹10,000 per annum. Still, I am paying ₹3,28,650 as tax per annum. Kindly suggest any scheme to reduce my tax amount and improve my after retirement benefits.

VASUDEVAN

A. The only other investment scheme that gives both tax deduction and post retirement benefits is voluntary contribution to National Pension Scheme (NPS). You may contribute up to ₹50,000 per annum to claim deduction under Section 80CCB(1B) of the Income Tax Act, 1961, over and above the limit of ₹1,50,000 under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act, 1961 limits read with Section 80CCE of the Income Tax Act, 1961.

(N. Sree Kanth is partner, GSS Associates, Chartered Accountants, Chennai)

Readers can e-mail queries on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. The experts on personal finance will answer select queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.



The other digital divide

K. NITYA KALYANI

"Your phone is your wallet," said Bill Gates in 1996. It sounded right out of the soon-to-be launched Harry Potter fantasy-fiction series!

In just a couple of decades, it's an everyday reality, and how! Not an elitist, exclusive or luxe technology. I just paid the milkman with my UPI app and so, I am sure, do you. Mr. Anand Mahindra just tweeted a photo of a ceremonial coin, like our own boom-boom maadu down South, on whose forehead is pasted a QR code to scan and make a donation.

UPI, the payment method at the basis of this, has cut across the Indian socio-economic digital divide quite well and amazingly fast. However, it is a different type of digital divide that we should watch out for, namely, the chances of being defrauded when we use our phones to pay.

What is UPI

First came Internet banking,

more than 15 years ago, relieving us of physical cheques, exchanging them in person or through post, presenting them at a bank, and waiting for funds to be realised. All of this could take up to 15 days depending on the location of the two banks, banking holidays and postal delays.

It was magical to sit at your computer and make these NEFT (National Electronic Funds Transfer) payments, which would be realised in just two or three days. Soon, the service segmented itself into near instant payment for large amounts (RTGS or Real-Time Gross Settlement) and instant payments without waiting to enable a payer account (IMPS or Immediate Payment Service), handy for one-time payments.

When smartphones and apps took over, Internet banking moved to apps and IMPS transformed into mobile wallets, which was one step removed from your bank account. You had to put money

from your bank account into the wallet and know information about my wallet to pay me, more complicated if you and I dealt with different banks.

This struggling step that saw lukewarm response evolved in 2018 into United Payments Interface or UPI-based payments. UPI is the clearing house for payments across almost every bank. Pick an app, download and install it on your smartphone, authenticate your SIM through an OTP process, enable your (same) mobile number-linked bank account, and you are good to go. You can make or receive payments and also check your balance.

You can feed a bank account number and IFSC (Indian Financial System Code) as for NEFT and start paying! In the far simpler world that we live in, your vendor's VPA or virtual payment address, is sufficient. This will be vegetableshop@bankname or even mobile-number@bankname which makes it easier to share! Going a step further, on some apps, if

you and the vendor use the same app, just his mobile number is enough for you to make the payment.

The easiest method is to scan the QR code of the payer and make payment. This cuts across language barriers and misspelling and mishearing errors.

Technology easy enough to use by the mass of people will be susceptible to fraud. Simple confidence tricks are enough to cheat people using UPI apps

You can link more than one of your bank accounts to the app and make a specific payment from a specific bank account. The top UPI apps today include PhonePe, Paytm, Google Pay, Amazon Pay and BHIM, the latter being the Government offering. There are dozens of others and their collective use is growing phenomenally. Demonetisation and the

pandemic may have been the triggers, but the sheer ease of use and accessibility of the technology surely laid the foundation.

Trouble points

The rose always has thorns. Technology easy enough to use by the mass of people will be susceptible to fraud. We need not go as far as hacking or high-tech methods, but simple confidence tricks are enough to cheat people using UPI apps.

For example, writing down your password or pin can land you in trouble if it gets into the wrong hands. Sharing them with strangers and allowing them to use your phone and app are equally risky.

Some common frauds take advantage of the fact that we may be unclear how the app works and dos and don'ts of online transactions.

For example, when you initiate a payment, you have to key in your PIN to complete the transaction. However, to receive payments you don't need a PIN. This can be grounds for confusion. Let us say you are selling your used furniture online. A fraudulent buyer would, instead of paying you, generate a request for money from you through the UPI app and ask you to approve the request saying that you have to enter your PIN to receive the money. Do that and, in effect, you have paid them!

To ensure you are flustered and confused they would put pressure on you smoothly, not allowing you the time to think or get suspicious.

Some UPI apps have an on-line/real-time chat and its easy for users to mistake the chat as being official instructions from the app itself. So, if the fraudster asks for your PIN on the chat you may well believe your app is prompting to enter the PIN. You just have to be alert always.

Another fraud is based on your registered mobile number (RMN). The SIM card of your phone/ your RMN is at the

heart of your account, its authentication and operations. Fraudsters try to replicate your SIM by cloning it or simply cloning you to cooperate so that they can get a replacement SIM!

Then its theirs to get OTPs (one-time passwords) and make digital transactions on your accounts.

For example, you may get a call from somebody posing as staff of your mobile phone company offering anything from upgrade of SIM to requiring a KYC verification. They will offer to do this for you online/ on their end if you just give them the OTP.

The process can even be initiated by an SMS that sounds alarming or threatening. Something along the lines of your bank account or credit card being deactivated, or your SIM.

Of course, you won't respond to the Nigerian prince offering you a fortune if you help him access his super fortune. But when you get an SMS saying your bank account will be deactivated, wouldn't you get anxious and want to respond?

On the contrary, your antennae should perk up if anything like this happens as you should never share any OTP with anybody and certainly not something pertaining to your SIM card or bank account. Your bank will never ask you for it and neither will your mobile service provider. Another widely prevalent fraud is through fake apps. Once downloaded and installed, these apps can steal much of your personal information. Bottomline, never download apps except from authorised sources.

A basic precaution would be to keep a low balance in the bank account linked to your UPI app. That way you minimise the risk should you fall prey to some scam.

Recourse

Should something happen, what should you do. Call your bank immediately and lodge a complaint. Your UPI app itself has a link to raise a complaint. You can complain to the cyber-crime cell as well.

As with cash, being alert and being circumspect, even a little paranoid, will go a long way in keeping you safe!

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

Investments are prone to market risks, ensure they aren't dud

Many of our investments are those that are not traded or thinly traded, in reality they are not assets, but liabilities

GAURAV MASHRUWALA

Discussion between three colleagues:

Niti: Where did you get these chocolates from, they are excellent.

Ramesh: Made by my niece, she is good at it.

Niti: How much did they cost?

Ramesh: She doesn't sell them. This is only for family and friends.

Niti: Oh, I thought I could order them. My neighbour makes nice chocolates as well; she sells them @ ₹450 per kg.

Ramesh: Do you want to consider purchasing from Mrs. Mehta, she sells them for ₹385 a kg and home-delivers it too.

Niti: Yeah, sure, give me her number, I'll try them out.

Peter: I like the ones made by Mrs Fernandes. She charges ₹525 a kg but they are amazing. Worth the extra amount.

Let us examine what has



Investing in something that is not liquid and cannot be bought or sold in the market is a much bigger risk. -GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

happened here. Ramesh's niece does not sell chocolates; they are not in the market. She does not face any competition. On the other hand, Mrs. Mehta and Mrs. Fernandes sell them, they are in the market place

and hence subject to market risks. Similarly, when we invest, we enter the market place. The investment could be in the equity market, bullion market, or real estate market. Even when we invest in fixed

income securities or bonds, we are exposed to the debt market and are subject to interest rate variations. The value of our investment can go up or down based on market conditions. This is called market risk.

Mrs. Bhattacharya always believed in investing in stock market from a long-term perspective. She had learnt about this from her late husband.

She would invest in stocks of good companies and not monitor their price movement regularly. Only once in a year she would review the overall situation. Since after purchasing the stocks she was not in the market place, the market risk to her portfolio was only notional.

Similarly, Manoj Jain had purchased a Government of India tax-free bond, which had a maturity of 10 years. He was clear from the beginning that the investment was for post retirement and he would hold it till maturity and not trade in it.

Mr. Jain had decided that after making the investment he would move away from the (debt) market and hence, movement of interest rate in market place would have no impact on him. As investors, we need to be clear while investing. Once we invest in any kind of instrument, we are subject to market risks. Based on the movement of those investments in the market, the value of our investment will change. However, after investment, if we decide not to sell or buy more, we technically move out of the market and there will be no impact of market risk.

Need for strategy

If we are clear about our strategy, we will know whether we are subject to market risk or not and can take appropriate action.

There is a need for a caveat here. Please ensure there is a market for your investments.

This means, if you have to liquidate for some reason, there should be an option to sell. Investing in something that is not liquid and cannot be bought or sold in the market is a much bigger risk.

Many of our investments are those that are not traded or thinly traded. In reality, they are not assets but liabilities. They are dud investments in our overall wealth, which is of no use. A few of my clients have made some exotic investments. One such client has invested in an instrument, whose 'fund manager' had deployed that money in the film industry. I used to pull his leg asking whether he was getting at least movie tickets. The last time we met, his wife said: "Now we watch everything on OTT, so even if we get a movie ticket that may not be of much use."

(The author is a financial planner and the author of 'Yogic Wealth')

Home Loan Interest Rates					Bank Fixed Deposit Rates									
Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)				Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)				Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh	(in %)		Upto 30 lakh	Above 30 lakh & upto 75 lakh	Above 75 lakh	(in %)	Bank Name	Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS					HOUSING FINANCE COMPANIES (HFCS)					SMALL FINANCE BANKS				
State Bank of India	6.70-7.65	6.70-7.75	6.70-7.85		LIC Housing	6.66-7.85	6.66-8.05	6.66-8.05		Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.25	6.00	6.00
Bank of Baroda	6.50-8.00	6.50-8.00	6.50-8.25		HDFC Ltd.	6.70-8.45	6.70-8.60	6.70-8.70		Suryoday Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.50	7.00	6.75
Union Bank of India	6.40-7.60	6.40-7.65	6.40-7.65		Bajaj Finserv	6.70-14.00	6.70-14.00	6.70-14.00		Ujivan Small Finance Bank	6.50	6.00	6.50	6.25
Punjab National Bank	6.55-7.95	6.50-7.65	6.50-7.60		Tata Capital	>=6.70	>=6.70	>=6.70		Jana Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.25	6.50	6.50
Bank of India	6.50-8.35	6.50-8.35	6.50-8.35		PNB Housing	7.20-12.00	7.20-12.00	7.40-12.00		Equitas Small Finance Bank	6.00	5.85	6.00	5.75
Canara Bank	6.90-11.45	6.90-11.45	6.90-11.45		GiC Housing Finance	>=7.90	>=7.90	>=7.90		Fincare Small Finance Bank	6.75	6.00	6.25	6.75
UCO Bank	6.90-7.00	6.90-7.00	6.90-7.00		Repco Home Finance	>=7.50	>=7.50	>=7.50		ESAF Small Finance Bank	6.25	6.25	5.75	5.25
Bank of Maharashtra	6.80-8.30	6.80-8.45	6.80-8.55		Indiabulls Housing	>=8.65	>=8.65	>=8.65		AU Small Finance Bank	6.00	4.85	6.00	5.75
Indian Bank	6.80-7.70	6.80-7.50	6.80-7.50		Aditya Birla Capital	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50	9.00-12.50		Capital Small Finance Bank	6.25	6.00	6.00	6.00
Indian Overseas Bank	7.05-7.40	7.15-7.40	7.30-7.40		Reliance Home Finance	9.75-13.00	9.75-13.00	9.75-13.00		PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS				
					Home First Finance	8.00-18.00	8.00-18.00	8.00-18.00		DCB Bank	5.95	5.55	5.95	5.95
PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS										RBL Bank	6.30	6.00	6.30	6.30
Kotak Mahindra Bank	6.55 onwards	6.55 onwards	6.55 onwards							SBM Bank India	6.50	6.00	6.50	6.00
ICICI Bank	6.70-7.55	6.70-7.55	6.70-7.55							Indusind Bank	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
Axis Bank	6.75-11.50	6.75-11.50	6.75-11.50							Nainital Bank	5.35	5.10	5.35	5.35
IDBI Bank	6.75-9.90	6.75-9.90	6.75-9.90							IDFC First Bank	5.25	4.75	5.00	5.20
HSBC Bank	6.45-7.10	6.45-7.10	6.45-7.10							Karur Vysya Bank	5.60	5.15	5.25	5.60
South Indian Bank	7.25-10.00	7.25-10.00	7.25-10.00							CSB Bank	5.50	5.00	5.25	5.50
Karur Vysya Bank	7.15-9.35	7.15-9.35	7.15-9.35							Axis Bank	5.75	5.10	5.40	5.75
										South Indian Bank	5.65	5.20	5.50	5.65
										Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	5.60	5.50	5.25	5.25
										Karnataka Bank	5.50	5.10	5.40	5.40
										PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS				
										Dhanlaxmi Bank	5.50	5.15	5.30	5.40
										Bandhan Bank	5.50	5.50	5.25	5.00
										HDFC Bank	5.50	4.90	5.15	5.30
										ICICI Bank	5.50	4.90	5.15	5.35
										DBS Bank	5.50	4.25	5.50	5.50
										Jammu & Kashmir Bank	5.30	5.10	5.30	5.30
										PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS				
										Union Bank of India	5.50	5.00	5.30	5.40
										Canara Bank	5.35	5.10	5.25	5.25
										State Bank of India	5.40	5.00	5.30	5.40
										Punjab & Sind Bank	5.30	5.05	5.30	5.30
										Indian Bank	5.25	4.95	5.20	5.25
										Bank of Baroda	5.25	4.90	5.10	5.25
										IDBI Bank	5.40	5.05	5.40	5.25
										Punjab National Bank	5.25	5.00	5.10	5.25
										Indian Overseas Bank	5.20	5.15	5.20	5.20
										Bank of India	5.05	5.00	5.05	5.05
										Bank of Maharashtra	4.90	4.90	4.90	4.90
										FOREIGN BANKS				
										Deutsche Bank	6.25	3.85	4.50	6.25
										HSBC Bank	4.00	3.10	4.00	4.00
										Citibank	3.50	2.75	3.50	3.50

Marsh, Warner light up Dubai night as Australia wins maiden title

Williamson's blistering 85, which set up New Zealand's challenging total, not enough; Hazlewood stifles and strikes in a brilliant spell

ICC T20 WC

AMOL KARHADKAR
DUBAI

Despite the coin landing in Aaron Finch's favour, Kane Williamson (85, 48b, 10x4, 3x6) played a blinder to nearly buck the trend of 'win the toss, chase the target, and win the game' in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. However, the Black Caps captain's heroics weren't enough to lead his team to a victory.

Rollicking stand

Thanks to a 92-run partnership between David Warner (53, 38b, 4x4, 3x6) and Mitchell Marsh (77 n.o., 50b, 6x4, 4x6) Australia coasted to the target of 173 to end its prolonged drought of a T20 World Cup triumph. It was the second time this week that Australia chased down a 170-plus total at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

While Finch and Co. left it for the lower-order to make a comeback into the semifinal versus Pakistan on Thursday, Sunday night saw Warner and Marsh setting alight the Ring of Fire right from the word go in Australia's reply.

Even though Finch continued his forgettable run in the UAE, top-edging Trent Boult in the third over, Marsh whacked 14 runs off the first three balls - 6, 4, 4 - off Adam Milne in the next over. After that, the scoreboard pressure never piled on Australia, with Warner carrying on his amazing run in the tournament.



Breaking a barrier: The Australian players are over the moon after finally tasting success on the world stage in the shortest format. •AFP

Even before the dew started making spinners' life miserable - Mitchell Santner and Ish Sodhi offered freebies as consistently as they had been stifling the oppositions thus far in the tournament - Marsh and Warner were at their marauding best.

While Warner's short-arm jab off Tim Southee in the fifth over was breathtaking,

Marsh's six over long-on off Sodhi would have pleased even the old-timers.

Glenn Maxwell joined the party after Boult got through Warner's defence. It was a Maxwell reverse-lap off Southee in the penultimate over that completed the formalities, with fireworks lighting up the Dubai skies adding to Australia's celebrations.

Had it not been for Josh Hazlewood's terrific spell - and a chance to Williamson in the 11th over - Australia would not have been chasing a stiff target.

Slow start

Thanks to Hazlewood's 14 dot balls in the three overs he bowled in the PowerPlay, Martin Gupthill and Williamson could only manage 32/1

after six overs and 57/1 at the halfway mark.

In the next over, Williamson, on 21, whipped Mitchell Starc off his pads and Hazlewood made a mess of a regulation catch at deep fine-leg.

In the next 25 balls he faced, Williamson made the Australians pay a hefty price by pounding 59 runs before being caught at deep mid-wicket by Maxwell off Hazle-

wood. The total was not enough, though.

Williamson was severe on Starc, scoring 32 runs off the nine balls, including six fours and a six, he faced off the left-arm pacer after the dropped catch.

The pick of his strokes were the straight-drive in the 11th over and the flick off his pads for a six in the 16th, the over that fetched 22 runs.

SCOREBOARD

NEW ZEALAND
Martin Gupthill c Stoinis b Zampa 28 (35b, 3x4), Daryl Mitchell c Wade b Hazlewood 11 (8b, 1x6), Kane Williamson c Smith b Hazlewood 85 (48b, 10x4, 3x6), Glenn Phillips c Maxwell b Hazlewood 18 (17b, 1x4, 1x6), James Neesham (not out) 13 (7b, 1x6), Tim Seifert (not out) 8 (6b, 1x4); Extras (b-1, lb-3, w-4, nb-1): 9; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 172.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-28 (Mitchell, 3.5 overs), 2-76 (Gupthill, 11.1), 3-144 (Phillips, 17.2), 4-148 (Williamson, 17.5).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING
Starc 4-0-60-0, Hazlewood 4-0-16-3, Maxwell 3-0-28-0, Cummins 4-0-27-0, Zampa 4-0-26-1, Marsh 1-0-11-0.

AUSTRALIA
David Warner b Boult 53 (38b, 4x4, 3x6), Aaron Finch c Mitchell b Boult 5 (7b, 1x4), Mitchell Marsh (not out) 77 (50b, 6x4, 4x6), Glenn Maxwell (not out) 28 (18b, 4x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-4, w-6): 10; Total (for two wkts. in 18.5 overs): 173.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-15 (Finch, 2.3), 2-107 (Warner, 12.2).

NEW ZEALAND BOWLING
Boult 4-0-18-2, Southee 3.5-0-43-0, Milne 4-0-30-0, Sodhi 3-0-40-0, Santner 3-0-23-0, Neesham 1-0-15-0.

Toss: Australia; **MoM:** Marsh. Australia won by eight wkts. with seven balls to spare.

HONOURS BOARD

2007	India
2009	Pakistan
2010	England
2012	West Indies
2014	Sri Lanka
2016	West Indies
2021	Australia

Innings scan

NEW ZEALAND		AUSTRALIA
43	Dots	40
15	Fours	15
6	Sixes	8
32/1	PP	43/1
8,60	RR	9,18

The Aussies peaked at the right time and had too many match-winners for New Zealand
— SHANE WARNER

The way Marsh began his innings from ball 1 took NZ completely by surprise
— SACHIN TENDULKAR

Williamson played one of the all-time classics, but Warner and Marsh were just unstoppable
— V.V.S. LAXMAN

Proud moment for Justin Langer and the team
— IAN BISHOP

Yellow is the colour of the 2021 season. Two teams in yellow (CSK and Australia) won two different tournaments at same venue.
— HARBHAJAN SINGH

Sometimes, the wait makes the victory even more sweet. Congratulations to Australia for finally winning the T20 World Cup
— DINESH KARTHIK

This is some World Cup win for the Aussies
— MICHAEL VAUGHAN

Congratulations to Australia on winning another ICC trophy. Very well played, Black Caps. It was a pleasure to watch Kane and Warner.
— RASHID KHAN

Many congratulations to Team Australia for a brilliant performance
— SURESH RAINA

Australia was top class and showed how it was done
— VIRENDER SEHWAG

So glad you guys lifted the ICC T20 WC trophy tonight
— LISA STHALEKAR

David Warner spectacle, Mitchell Marsh special put Australia on top of the world



Taking centrestage: Marsh and Warner took the wind out of New Zealand's sails. •GETTY IMAGES & AFP

Finch reveals he told coach Langer that the left-handed opener will be player-of-the-tournament

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DUBAI

David Warner came into the ICC T20 World Cup after being dropped from his IPL side Sunrisers Hyderabad, but finished with 289 runs and walked away with the player-of-the-tournament award.

The swashbuckling opener had scores of 89 not out (in the final group game against West Indies), 49 (in the semifinal vs Pakistan) and his third half-century in the title clash.

"Always pumped, wanted to put on a spectacle," Warner said after Australia's first T20 World Cup title triumph

that took its tally to six (five ODI World Cup trophies).

"There were some nerves around as always in a final, but great to see the guys deliver," he added.

"Always felt really well. Didn't get much time in the middle in the two practice matches obviously," said Warner. "But for me it was about going back to basics. Going to hard, synthetic wickets and try to hit some balls."

Australia had hammered New Zealand in the 2015 50-over World Cup final as well.

But its previous best in the T20 World Cup was a loss against England in the final

of the 2010 edition.

Warner said the latest triumph will be up there with the last of the five ODI World Cup victories.

"Definitely up there with 2015 (World Cup)," said Warner. "Losing to England a decade ago (2010) really hurt. These are a great bunch of guys, great support staff, and great support around the world, especially back home."

Skipper Aaron Finch lauded his star performer and revealed he predicted Warner's heroics to coach Justin Langer ahead of the tournament.

"You didn't expect that? I

certainly did," said Finch in response to a question on who backed Warner after his disappointing IPL.

"I promise you I called Justin Langer a few months ago and I said, 'don't worry about Warner, he will be man-of-the-tournament'."

"He is a great player. He is one of the all-time great batters and he is a fighter. He is someone when he has his back to the wall... that's when you get the very, very best of David Warner. Special finish to the tournament for him."

Warner has now scored 2,554 runs in 88 T20 matches since his debut in 2009.

Statosphere

1 Australia won its maiden men's ICC T20 World Cup in its seventh attempt

5 Fifth time New Zealand lost to Australia in five matches in the ICC knockout phase

6 Australia's ICC men's World Cup triumphs (50-over: 1987, '99, '03, '07, '15; 20-over: 2021)

85 Williamson's score is the highest by a skipper in a World T20 summit clash

173 Australia's chase is the biggest in a T20 World Cup final

IN BRIEF

Maharashtra Govt. allows 100% seating capacity at Wankhede
NEW DELHI
The Maharashtra government has given the go-ahead to Mumbai Cricket Association to allow 100% seating capacity for the India-New Zealand Test at Wankhede Stadium, beginning Dec. 3. Bandra-Kurla Complex will also host a preparatory camp for India's Test specialists. ANI

Mitchell in for injured Conway for India Tests
WELLINGTON
In-form batter Daryl Mitchell has replaced injured Devon Conway in the New Zealand squad for the upcoming two-Test away series against India. Conway was ruled out of the India tour with a broken hand. PTI

Laxman will be next NCA head, says BCCI official

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Former India batter V.V.S. Laxman will be the next head of the National Cricket Academy (NCA), a senior BCCI official confirmed on Sunday.

Laxman will take over from his former batting colleague Rahul Dravid, who was recently appointed as chief coach of the Indian team following the end of Ravi Shastri's tenure.

"V.V.S. Laxman will be the new head of NCA," the Board official told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

Laxman has already quit from his role as mentor of IPL team Sunrisers Hyderabad and will also not be part of any commentary panel or write columns for newspapers to avoid conflict of interest clause violation.

It is understood that Laxman's appointment will come into effect before the BCCI's Annual General Meeting, scheduled in Kolkata on December 4.

Laxman had initially declined the BCCI's offer as he



V.V.S. Laxman. •FILE PHOTO

was reluctant to shift base from Hyderabad as the NCA job will require him to stay in Bengaluru for a minimum of 200 days.

The two stalwarts of Indian cricket - Laxman and Dravid - will now work in tandem as the BCCI wants a smooth co-ordination between the chief coach and the NCA head.

As part of his job, Laxman will also oversee preparations of the India U-19 and 'A' teams which are pathways to the senior level.

Stunning win for Hamilton

REUTERS
SAO PAULO

Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton hunted down Max Verstappen to win the Sao Paulo Grand Prix on Sunday and slash his Red Bull rival's lead to 14 points with three races remaining. Verstappen finished second and Valtteri Bottas third for Mercedes on an astonishing, controversial and roller-coaster weekend in Brazil.

"Lewis, that's how you overcome a 20-place disqualification," Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff told him over the radio.



Hamilton. •AFP

Gritty Medvedev passes the Hurkacz test

Defending champion loses first set tie-breaker before pulling through in three

ATP FINALS

REUTERS
TURIN

World No. 2 Daniil Medvedev came from a set down to rally past ATP Finals debutant Hubert Hurkacz 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4 and get his title defence off to a winning start on Sunday.

The Russian, who won the US Open title in September for his maiden Grand Slam crown, saw his Polish opponent take the early advantage in the season-ending event following a tight tiebreaker before responding in style.

The 25-year-old fired 15 aces to Hurkacz's 12 and converted two break points on a fast court to seal victory in the Red Group ahead of potentially tricky challenges against Germany's Alexander Zverev and Wimbledon runner-up Matteo Berrettini.

"It was a very tight match," said Medvedev, looking to become the first back-to-back ATP Finals winner since Novak Djokovic claimed four between 2012 and 15. "One good shot and

the point is over.

"I think a lot of matches are going to be like this because the courts are super fast. The only two games I had break points I managed to break and that was the key."

Medvedev showed glimpses of the form that helped him beat Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Dominic Thiem en route the title in London last year, as he went up 3-0 in the second set after an early break.

He raised his level in the decider to close out the match, hitting more than 30 winners and not facing a single breakpoint in a clash lasting a little more than two hours.

The result: Red Group: Daniil Medvedev bt Hubert Hurkacz 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4.

■ The 25-year-old Russian fired 15 aces compared to Hurkacz's 12

■ Medvedev has potentially tricky challenges against Zverev and Berrettini



Hanging tough: Medvedev raised his level in the third set to begin his title defence in style. •AFP

What we can learn from philosophy to cope with these difficult times...

■ JOJAN JOB

An unexamined life is not worth living. - Socrates
Tragedies, it is often said, are great levellers. True to the same, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought back into focus some of the core ideas central to philosophy, which, interestingly, are perennially relevant to the field of journalism as well: the well-known five 'W's and one H principle. The coronavirus has thrown a new light on all aspects of life, including the perspectives in teaching, studying and practising philosophy.

An analogy from the field of journalism, one feels, would be appropriate. In journalism, a news report is often judged in terms of its completeness vis-à-vis the five 'W's: Who, What, When, Where, Why and the all-important H: how. The age-old philosophical system also looks for answers to the same questions, albeit at a more sublime level. Who am I?, Why I am here?, Where I am supposed to proceed?, What is happening within and beyond?, 'When', a time-related query, is also very relevant in the philosophical context. The question 'How' concerns how we are supposed to deal with all these in our limited span of time in the context of



ever-expanding universe.

Theory into practice
For students of Philosophy, the pandemic compels them to observe social behaviour in the new context. How the human being develops new insights and perspectives is an area to be observed, studied and analysed philosophically. Justice, sacrifice, compassion ... social values will be

re-examined here. A Philosophy student may evaluate the situation through various yardsticks of philosophical theories such as existentialism, utilitarianism, pragmatism, socialism, humanism and so on. From the perspective of political philosophy, students are also observing the democratic freedom and the right of the individual in the recent times..

Many of us make use of digital platforms to impart knowledge remotely. The MOOC courses are noteworthy in this context. It is important to prioritise what students are supposed to know for the future instead of doling out outdated theories. Let teachers use more social media platforms with compassion to guide the new generation of philosophers. Let the students also be

familiar with the e-sources such as Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Academia.edu.com, Research Gate, Project Gutenberg, Shodhganga, Sophia Project, PhilPapers, Stoicism Today, Internet archive, hundreds of digital libraries and e-magazines like *Philosophy Now*, *The Philosophers*

Let teachers use more social media platforms with compassion to guide the new generation of philosophers.

Magazine and Philosophers' Imprint, which are available on the Internet. We can encourage them to be creative, imaginative and grow beyond the syllabus and academic regulations. Maybe the onus is upon academicians to relive the timeless principles and enrich human beings with the values of compassion and universal brotherhood instead of focusing on linguistic and scientific terminologies alone. May be it is time for Stoicism and Humanism to make a triumphant comeback in their new avatars to make the world a better place. Let them know that, when they protect dharma or values, that will protect them. Let them know how to enjoy the sublime within. Let them be humble and enjoy that harmonious moment of the understanding that everything is one. Let them know through their experience that interpreting the world is not enough. But how to change within and beyond with a new perspective is more important. Let them know that life must be lived forward. Let them know that by reason alone we cannot understand the truth.

The writer is an Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Madras Christian College. jojan@mcc.edu.in

SCHOLARSHIPS

■ **Kotak Shiksha Nidhi**

Kotak Shiksha Nidhi helps students continue their education.
ELIGIBILITY: Loss of one/both parents or primary earning member of the family (other than parents). Applicants must be school or college students between 6 and 22 years(Class 1 to diploma/graduation)
PRIZES AND REWARDS: Selection and quantum of assistance will be based on fulfilment of the eligibility criteria and will be at the discretion of Kotak Education Foundation.
APPLICATION: Online
DEADLINE: March 31, 2022
b4s.in/edge/KSFA1

■ **HDFC Bank Pariwarta's COVID Crisis Support Scholarship Programme**

This programme aims to support students who have been through COVID-led crisis.
ELIGIBILITY: Indian students who have either lost their parent(s)/earning members or whose earning family members have lost their employment (or livelihood) during the pandemic and are currently studying in Class 1 to 12, diploma, undergraduate or postgraduate (including professional and non-professional) courses. They should be enrolled and continuing their education. Annual family income must be less than or equal to ₹6 lakh from all sources.
PRIZES AND REWARDS: Up to ₹75,000
APPLICATION: Online
DEADLINE: November 30
b4s.in/edge/CCSI

■ **Digital Bharati COVID Scholarship**

Digital Bharati COVID Scholarship aims to help children continue their education.
ELIGIBILITY: Open to Indian students from Class 1 to 12, who have lost one or both of their parents since January 2020.
PRIZES AND REWARDS: Vouchers to get educational subscriptions of leading ed-tech companies and access to tablets/laptops.
APPLICATION: Online
DEADLINE: November 30
b4s.in/edge/DBCSI

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

Broaden your horizon

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This Q&A column may help



OFF THE EDGE
NANDINI RAMAN

I am studying in Class 12 Humanities, and am interested and skilled in art, drawing and painting. Are there any professional courses in this field, and what are my career options? Simran Saroop

Dear Simran,
You could choose a professional degree in Fine Arts. It is a popular course among aspiring artists and also offers secure jobs. You could also consider architecture, conceptual art, sculpture, printmaking, interior design and visual communications. Courses include BA in Drawing and Painting, Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Bachelor of Visual Arts (BVA) and Bachelor of Applied Arts.

I am 28 years old and have completed a Diploma in Counselling and Family Therapy from IGNOU last year. Despite attending many interviews, I have not been able to get a job. Please help me. Shruti M.

Dear Shruti,
What might help is a form of structured internship, to start with. You will need to bridge the gap between theory and practice and enhance your existing skills. Also, what is your undergraduate in? Shortlist a good counselling practice across a public health centre / clinic / school / hospital / organisation / psychiatrist to work with till you feel confident to take on clients on your own.

I am a B.Sc. Geography graduate and would like to do my postgraduation in Germany with an environment-related courses. Should I opt for an M.Sc. Environmental Science or Environmental Management? Gayathri

Dear Gayathri,
Environmental Science is an interdisciplinary field that integrates physical, biological and information sciences (including Ecology, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Plant Science, Zoology, Mineralogy, Oceanography, Limnology, Soil Science, Geology and Physical Geography, and Atmospheric Science) to study the environment. Environmental Management is "the management of the interaction and impact of human activities on the natural environment. It identifies factors that have a conflict between meeting the needs and protecting the environment. Speak to two individuals working across both fields and then draw a list of pros and cons so that the writing is on the wall.

I am working in the armed police forces. I have done a security consultant course along with a few consultancies. What courses I can do to get a good job if I wish to switch to the corporate sector. Abhishek

Dear Abhishek,
While people from the armed forces are sought-after

candidates in the corporate world, what do you want to do? Security is a natural extension, ranging from physical, electronic security to high-end specialised roles such as counter-intelligence, fraud investigation, close protection of high value assets, disaster and crisis management. Admin, HR Management, Operations, Finance and Legal (should you be qualified), Marketing and Business Development are the other options. Identify your skill set and enhance the same with an education if you feel that is necessary and important.

Disclaimer: This column provides advice and suggestions on education and careers. It is merely a guiding voice from a practising career counsellor.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line 'Off the edge'.

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Sd/-
Director

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Director



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Text & Context

NEWS IN NUMBERS



Healthy efficacy

77.80 % efficacy of Covaxin against symptomatic COVID-19, according to an interim analysis of its phase 3 trial published in *The Lancet* on Friday. The study also said that findings of the third phase trials indicate that the vaccine induces a robust antibody response with no severe vaccine-related symptoms or deaths reported among the trial participants. As of Friday, Covaxin accounted for 11.3% of the total doses administered in the country. PTI

New peak

51,077 new COVID-19 cases recorded in Germany on November 11, the highest since the pandemic began, according to Our World in Data. This is the first time daily cases in the country have crossed the 50,000 mark. According to latest available data, the Delta variant accounted for over 90% of the daily COVID-19 samples sequenced. 69.33% of the country's population had received at least one dose of a vaccine as on November 11 and 66.84% were fully vaccinated.

Costly fuel

4.48 % retail inflation in October 2021 which is slightly higher than the 4.35% recorded in September 2021. This is the fourth successive month that it stayed below the RBI's upper margin of 6%. According to the data released by the National Statistical Office, the consumer food price index increased 0.85% year-on-year which is also marginally higher than the 0.68% rise recorded in September 2021. Fuel inflation also jumped by 14.35% year-on-year in October which is the highest since at least January 2019.

Untraced income

445.8 in ₹ crore was the total income of regional parties that came from 'unknown sources' in FY 2019-20, according to a recent report by the Association for Democratic Reforms. The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (₹89.2 crore), the Telugu Desam Party (₹81.7 crore) and the YSR Congress Party (₹74.8 crore) were the three parties with the highest income from 'unknown sources'. ₹426.2 crore or 95.6% of the total income from such sources were via electoral bonds, the analysis found.

Making history

1st time ever women's cricket will be a part of the Commonwealth Games when it debuts at Birmingham in 2022. Eight teams will be participating in the competition. The teams are split into two groups of four each. Two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals. India is part of Group A with Australia, Pakistan and Barbados. Group B consists of hosts England, New Zealand, South Africa and another qualifier which will be decided early next year. India is scheduled to play the inaugural match of the event against Australia on Friday, July 29, 2022.

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

EXPLAINER

Increase in digital connectivity but there are many who are still left out

How did COVID-19 impact digital connectivity in the context of healthcare, education and work? A survey provides answers

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

THE GIST

■ LIRNEasia tied up with the ICRIER to take part in a global study funded by Canada's International Development Centre in order to assess the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 by analysing access to services. The focus was on digital technologies in healthcare, education and work.

■ The survey found that 47% of the population are Internet users, a significant jump from the 19% who were identified as Internet users in late 2017.

■ The survey found that 80% of school-age children in the country had no access to remote education during the 18 months that schools were shut. Only 10% of those employed during the lockdown were able to work from home. Telemedicine and online doctor consultations surged during these times, but only 38% said they were able to access such services.

The story so far: Internet connectivity has shot up over the last year, with most new users attributing their connections to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a new nationwide survey has found that remote work, education and healthcare are still not equally available to all, even among those with digital access.

How was the study designed?

LIRNEasia, an Asia Pacific think tank focussed on digital policy, tied up with the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), to take part in a global study funded by Canada's International Development Centre in order to assess the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 by analysing access to services. The focus was on digital technologies in healthcare, education and work.

What did the study find about the pandemic's impact on Internet access and use?

The survey found that 47% of the population are Internet users, a significant jump from the 19% who were identified as Internet users in late 2017. An extrapolation of respondents would indicate that 34 crore people in the country were already online before 2020. An additional 8 crore came online in 2020, and at least 5 crore have become new Internet users in 2021. Of those who first started using the Internet in 2020, 43% said they came online due to COVID-19. Among non-users, lack of awareness is still the biggest hurdle although the percentage of non-users who said they do not know what the Internet is dropped from 82% to 49% over the last four years. Increasingly, lack of access to devices and lack of skills are the reasons why people do not go online.

Did increased digital connectivity help in access to remote education?

The survey found that 80% of school-age children in the country had no access to remote education at all during the 18 months that schools were shut. This happened even though 64% of these households actually had Internet connections. Less than a third of children in such homes were able to



Lack of access to devices and lack of skills are the reasons why people do not go online.

leverage connectivity into classes of any sort, mostly because of lack of larger screen devices as well as a lack of preparedness among schools. However, the situation was significantly worse for those homes without Internet connections, where only 8% of children received any sort of remote education. Apart from not having any devices, poor 3G/4G signal and high data cost were listed as the biggest hurdles.

Even among the 20% who received education, only half had access to live online classes which required a good Internet connection and exclusive use of a device. Most depended on recorded lessons and WhatsApp messages. The situation was significantly worse among those from lower socio-economic classes, or where the head

of the household had lower education levels. Nationwide, 38% of households said at least one child had dropped out of school due to COVID-19.

How did digital access impact work patterns?

Only 10% of those employed during the lockdown were able to work from home. There were significant geographical variations, with one in five Delhi residents working from home in comparison to 13% in Maharashtra and just 3% in Tamil Nadu. Predictably enough, those in the finance, insurance, information technology and communications fields formed the biggest chunk of those who were able to do remote work during the lockdowns. However, less than one in three workers even in these professions was able to work from home, the survey found.

A significant minority of those engaged in remote work ran into device and connectivity challenges. About 27% said they

were forced to share devices with another household member, while 16% said the available devices were unsuitable for work and another 16% faced poor network quality.

How did Internet access or lack of it affect healthcare during the pandemic?

About 15% of the sample respondents said they required healthcare access for non-COVID-19-related purposes during the most severe national and State lockdowns. Telemedicine and online doctor consultations surged during these times, but only 38% said they were able to access such services.

With regard to medical information on COVID-19, about 40% of respondents depended on television channels for advice, well above the quarter of respondents who depended on face-to-face interactions.

Only 1% went online to websites for information, although 4% depended on social media and 2% on the Aarogya Setu app.

Long distance learning:

Students in Tumari village have to walk long distances in search of vantage positions with good Internet connectivity to attend online classes. At times, they have to brave heavy rains. ■ THE HINDU

EXPLAINER

The Norovirus outbreak: prevention rooted in hygiene

What is the Norovirus and how does it spread? What is the cure for the infection?

C. MAYA

The story so far: Last week, an acute diarrhoeal disease outbreak reported amongst students of the College of Veterinary Sciences at Pookkode, near Vythiri in Wayanad district, was confirmed as Norovirus (NoV) by the authorities. These students were staying in hostels outside the campus and four out of the seven samples sent to the unit of National Institute of Virology, Alapuzha had tested positive for NoV.

Senior health officials later confirmed that the diarrhoeal outbreak had first begun in the second week of October amongst the inmates of the hostel inside the campus. While the illness seemed to subside within two days in the affected persons, the students were sent home by the college authorities as the disease began spreading fast. It was only when the outbreak spread outside the campus that detailed investigations were conducted and NoV was confirmed. Though the outbreak has been contained, the source of the infection has not yet been found.

The first documented NoV outbreak in Kerala was in Alappuzha district this year between June and August when 950 cases



of acute diarrhoeal disease, mostly in children, were reported from the municipal area and the nearby panchayats. The outbreak had begun following a pipe burst and water shortage, when water was supplied externally.

What is NoV and how does it spread?

Norovirus is an important cause of acute non-bacterial gastroenteritis in children as well as adults worldwide. The virus was first discovered in connection with

an outbreak of acute diarrhoeal disease in Norwalk, Ohio, in 1968 and was called the Norwalk Virus. Later, several stomach flu viruses closely linked to the Norwalk virus were found and together, these are now called Noroviruses. Many stomach flu outbreaks typically in cruise ships have been traced to NoV. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says over 20 million cases of acute diarrhoeal disease caused by NoV are reported annually in the U.S., a chunk of which are food-borne infections.

According to literature, in one study, in New Delhi, NoV was found to be the second most predominant virus (25.7%) after rotavirus. In southern India, norovirus infection rates of about 10% and 44.4% were reported in two different studies during 2005-06 while a birth cohort study found that about 11.2% of diarrhoeal episodes were attributable to NoV.

Infection is characterised by an acute onset of nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and diarrhoea. The symptoms usually begin 12 to 48 hours after exposure to the infective agent and generally subside within two days.

There is no specific treatment; rest and rehydration with warm fluids should be enough. The disease is self-limiting and rarely dangerous unless severe dehydration is allowed to set in. However, more care is needed if very young children, elderly or pregnant women are infected.

Transmission occurs predominantly by the faecal-oral route, directly or indirectly, through the ingestion of contaminated water or food or surfaces which might have been contaminated when handled carelessly by an infected person or his care-giver.

How are NoV infections prevented?

Prevention is rooted in hygiene. People should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water before eating and after using the toilet. Fruits and vegetables should be thoroughly washed before eating. Shell fish like oysters, which might have been grown in contaminated waters, should be well-cooked. Boiled and safe drinking water alone should be used.

Infected persons should rest at home and maintain utmost personal hygiene to prevent transmission.

What makes NoV infections a public health concern?

NoV is a highly contagious virus and transmission occurs at a rapid pace because of heavy viral shedding by the infected person.

Even the lowest infectious dose is enough to set off extensive outbreaks, typically in environments such as hostels, schools, hospitals or nursing homes.

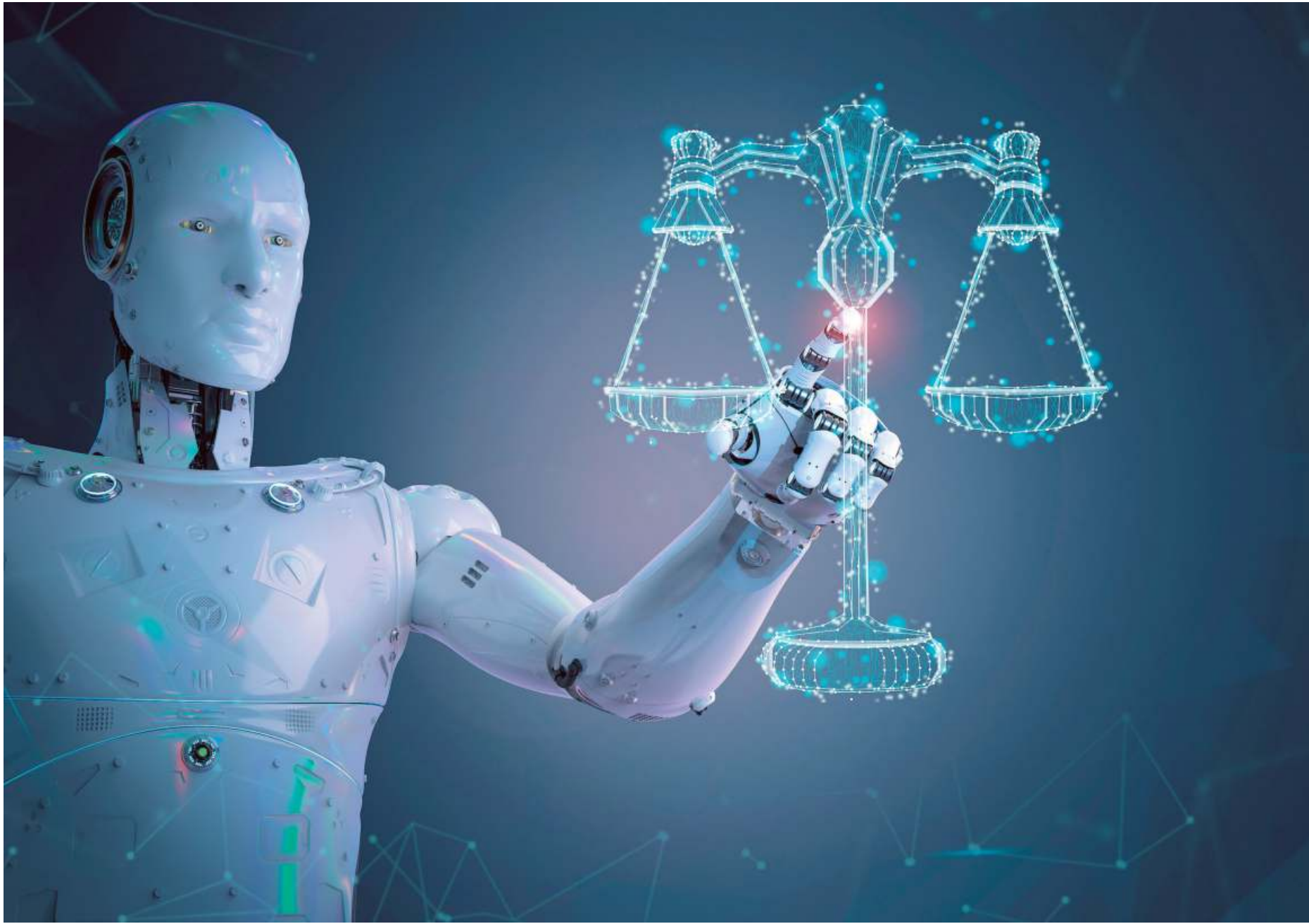
Experts also point out that NoV could increasingly become a public health concern because of rapid expansion of the food industry. One infected person in the kitchen or a food handler becoming infected even mildly can take the virus to hundreds of people.

THE GIST

■ Norovirus causes non-bacterial gastroenteritis in children as well as adults worldwide. The virus was first discovered in connection with an outbreak of acute diarrhoeal disease in Norwalk, Ohio, in 1968 and was called the Norwalk Virus.

■ Infection is characterised by an acute onset of nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and diarrhoea. The symptoms usually begin 12 to 48 hours after exposure to the infective agent.

■ NoV is highly contagious. There is no specific treatment; rest and rehydration with warm fluids should be enough.



KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Many a negligent photoholic

A column answering all your questions on the English language

SUPENDRAN

What is the difference between 'negligent' and 'negligible'? (D. Shakunthala, Madurai)

The two words have very different meanings. When you say that someone is 'negligent', what you are suggesting is that he is a careless individual. This carelessness is not occasional, but habitual. He does not give enough attention to the things or the people that he is responsible for; and because of his indifference to the task at hand, accidents happen - people may get hurt or even die. A parent who is negligent of his child does not take good care of the little one; he is irresponsible, and remains unconcerned about the child's welfare.

The term 'negligence' is frequently used in the legal profession; a person who doesn't take care of his children can be arrested for criminal negligence.

The lawyer argued that Satish had been negligent in not reporting the accident to the police.

Many people in our country are guilty of negligent driving.

Something that is 'negligible' is not at all important; it is something that can be easily ignored. For example, when you say that the raise in your salary was negligible, what you are suggesting is that it was minimal. In other words, the raise was insignificant.

The damage done to his property by the storm is negligible.

According to the baker, the fat content in the cake is negligible.

As for the pronunciation of the two words, the first syllable in both rhyme with 'leg', 'peg' and 'beg', while the 'ig' in the second, sounds like the 'idge' in 'bridge', 'ridge' and 'fridge'. The words are pronounced 'NEG-li-jent' and 'NEG-li-je-bl'.

Is it okay to say 'many a' instead of 'many'? (S. Harish, Hyderabad)

Yes, it is. 'Many a' and 'many' have more or less the same meaning. Many people would consider 'many a' rather literary; it is mostly found in formal styles of writing. Some would even argue that it is old fashioned. Whatever be the case, the expression 'many a' is grammatically acceptable. In terms of grammar, 'many a' is always followed by a singular noun - while 'many' is always followed by a plural noun.

Many a student/Many students decided to boycott the event.

Maya was late for class many a time/many times.

In terms of meaning, there is no difference between 'many' and 'many a'. Like 'many', the expression 'many a' suggests a large number of things or people.

What is the meaning of 'photoholic'? (K.V. Jyothi, Vellore)

If an 'alcoholic' is someone who loves to consume alcohol, and a 'workaholic' is someone who is addicted to work, then a 'photoholic' should be someone who loves photographs - in this case, he is someone who loves to take photographs. An over-enthusiastic photographer is sometimes referred to as a 'photoholic'. The use of the suffix 'holic' suggests that the individual is excessively fond of taking photographs. Thanks to the cellphone, some of us have become photoholics. Over the years, 'holic' has been added to a number of words to give us new nouns - this suffix is mostly added to show disapproval. Here are a few examples: chocoholic (someone who loves or is addicted to chocolate), foodaholic, travelholic, webaholic, etc.

"Alcohol is the anesthesia by which we endure the operation of life." George Bernard Shaw

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CACHE

A Chinese check on Algorithms

With algorithmic recommendations becoming ever-pervasive and each company using its own secret sauce to entice consumers, the Chinese government has turned to regulations

JOHN XAVIER

Algorithmic recommendations are at the heart of the digital transformation we are witnessing now. From buying laptops to groceries, most people have gradually adopted a new digital consumer lifestyle within a decade. The pandemic-induced policies have accelerated this shift and added more services that can be accessed online.

According to a report from an UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the e-commerce sector saw a "dramatic" rise in its share of all retail sales, to 19% from 16% in 2020. Online retail sales grew markedly in several countries, and global e-commerce sales jumped to \$26.7 trillion in 2019, up 4% from 2018. That's about 30% of the global gross domestic product (GDP).

A large proportion of these online purchases are made on smartphones and as we add items to our digital shopping cart, the app nudges us to consider alternative brands. It may also offer a related product, suggesting that other buyers bought the two items together. Unlike in a physical store, the online environment has no sales person to assist the buyer. Instead, a digital store's algorithm recommends ideas to the customer.

Recommender systems

These algorithmic systems are not confined to online shopping. Social media firms, transport service providers and food-delivery portals use their proprietary algorithms to engage users. Their algorithms are built using 'collaborative filtering', 'content-based filtering' or hybrid method.

In a 'collaborative filtering' approach, an online site uses product rating data gathered from various users to recommend items to a specific user. This approach uses both explicit and implicit forms of data.

Content-based filtering is impersonal and makes use of keywords to run its system. A classic example of this approach is Google search, which spews out a list of websites every time a user keys in words and phrases. The service doesn't require personal data to give its output.

Most platforms combine collaborative and content-based filtering systems to make recommendations. Netflix is a good example of a hybrid recommender algorithm. The platform suggests films and series by comparing the watching and searching habits of similar users and combining it with content that a particular user has rated highly.

Some other platforms use session-based algorithms to make recommendations in

Algorithms are built using mainly three methods: 'collaborative filtering', 'content-based filtering' or the hybrid method.

real-time. For instance, if a user purchased a smartphone last time, and now starts a new session to buy a book, data on the previous purchase are irrelevant to the app to make a book recommendation. So, this method relies on a sequence of recent interactions to suggest buying ideas.

Problems in the system

Within a decade, these algorithms, now embedded in most applications, have metamorphosed into intelligent recommenders telling us what's trending, what to buy, where to go on holiday, and which shows to watch. While algorithmic decision-making is useful in some cases, their use is problematic when applied to social settings. In 2017, some teachers in the U.S. state of Texas sued a multinational firm, SAS Institute, after the company's proprietary

algorithm was used by schools in Houston to judge teachers' skills based on their students' standardised test scores. The teachers complained that the company's Educational Value-Added Assessment System, or EVAAS, ranked them low without giving a good reason. And they had no way to check whether the algorithm was fair or not, as the SAS Institute did not disclose how its rating system worked.

A U.S. federal judge ruled that the use of EVAAS may violate teachers' civil rights, and the school district paid the teachers' fees and agreed to stop using the software.

China fills the gap

In December 2020, the European Commission had proposed draft rules on large tech firms that host content and make decisions about billions of users' posts, comments, messages, photos, and videos. While the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) remains the gold standard for data protection rules, there is a void in the regulation of algorithms. China is looking to fill that void with a ground-breaking model to regulate algorithmic recommendations.

In August, the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC) issued a statement that companies should not set up algorithm models that entice users to spend large amounts of money in a way that may disrupt public order. The country's Draft Internet Information Service Algorithmic Recommendation Management Provisions provides a framework for the regulation of algorithmic recommendation.

"This policy marks the moment that China's tech regulation is not simply keeping pace with data regulations in the EU, but has gone beyond them," said Kendra Shaefer, Partner at Beijing-based consultancy Trivium China.

The draft rules allow Chinese authorities to inspect algorithms and request rectifications should they find problems, the CAC added.

THE GIST

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In 2017, some teachers in the U.S. State of Texas sued a multinational firm, SAS Institute, after the company's proprietary algorithm was used by schools in Houston to judge teachers' skills based on their students' standardised test scores. The company refused to disclose its rating system.

China has proposed a ground-breaking model to regulate algorithmic recommendations.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Are you a technophile? Here's a quiz on everything to do with chips, semiconductor devices and people related to them

1 November 15 happens to be the 50th anniversary of the release of the world's first commercially manufactured microprocessor. Name it.

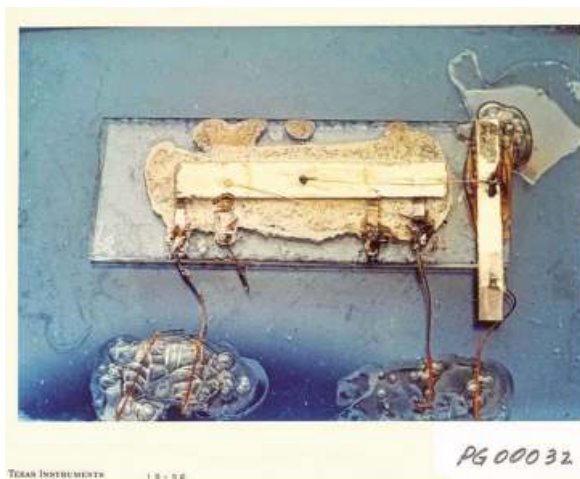
2 This inventor and electronics pioneer was one of two researchers who contributed to the invention of the most widely used electronic component today in the world - the MOSFET (metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect transistor). Later in his career, he also developed the Personal Identification Number (PIN) system. Name him.

3 Intel, one of the world's largest chip manufacturing companies, had a series of microprocessors released in the 1990s and 2000s that were the most widely used CPUs in general purpose computing - the Pentium series. Name the India-born engineer and entrepreneur who led the Pentium project.

4 This person was part of a team of NASA scientists in the U.S., that developed the "active pixel sensor technology" which produced the world's smallest camera in the 1990s and is now used widely in cell phone cameras. But he became even more famous for directing a film on freedom fighting revolutionaries belonging to the Anushilan Samity. Name him and the film he directed (and released in 2012).

5 In 1965, then chairman at Fairchild Semiconductors, this engineer wrote an article in the Electronics magazine titled, "Cramming more Components onto Integrated Circuit", which said that number of components in a dense integrated circuit had doubled approximately every year and speculated that it would continue to do so. Later, this prediction about miniaturisation in the semiconductor industry had a widespread impact in many areas of technology. What is the prediction properly known as (after the person).

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



◀ This image shows the first working integrated circuit that was created by an engineer with Texas Instruments in 1958. He pressed a switch, and the oscilloscope showed a continuous sine wave, proving that his integrated circuit worked, solving the problem of the "tyranny of numbers". Name the engineer who went on to win the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2000. • THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION . REPRODUCED FOR FAIR USE.

Answers to the November 12th edition of the daily quiz : 1. Chess great Viswanathan Anand 2. Shooting (including para-shooting) with 10 honourees 3. Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Mithali Raj 4. Sunil Chhetri, Dipa Karmakar, and Manika Batra 5. ₹25 lakh. It was ₹1 lakh when the award was instituted 6. Sushil Kumar 7. Homi Motivala and Pushpendra Kumar Garg.

Early Birds: Qaiser Mobin| Vedant Patnel| Saurav Dhakane| Krishnakanta Mantry| Mohd. Kiron Karim