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## WORLD

DESIGNER PIERRE CARDIN DIES AT 98  
PAGE 16

## BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY



## Days after Karnataka House ruckus, Dy Chairman found dead

DARSHAN DEVAIAH B P  
CHIKMAGALUR, DECEMBER 29

TWO WEEKS after he was caught in the middle of a ruckus in the Karnataka Legislative Council, JDS leader and Deputy Chairman of the House, S L Dharm Gowda, was found dead on the railway tracks in Kamataka's Chikmagalur district early Tuesday morning. He



S L Dharm Gowda

is suspected to have died by suicide. On December 15, as the BJP and Congress clashed over who would control the 75-member Upper House, Gowda, who

was ushered to the chairman's seat by BJP members, was pushed off his chair. According to the railway police, the JDS legislator was found dead on the tracks near his hometown Gunasagara in Kadur taluk of Chikmagalur district. Local police said they found a suicide note near his body.

According to police, on Monday evening, Gowda, accompanied by his driver, had left his farmhouse in Sakkarayapattana

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## IAF chief says Chinese air assets fully deployed, flags deepening Sino-Pak ties

KRISHN KAUSHIK  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

UNDERLINING THAT understanding China is "our most important national security challenge" and cautioning against its "possible game plan" and the "deepening and evolving Sino-Pak relationship", Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria said Tuesday that the Chinese have "fully deployed" their air assets



Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhaduria

to support troops along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh.

The IAF chief, speaking at an event organised by the Vivekananda International

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## All of you killed my parents...now you won't let me bury them: son's grief, anger shake a state

PAGE 1  
ANCHORSHAJU PHILIP  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DECEMBER 29

"ALL OF you killed my father, sir... All of you killed my parents. Now you say I can't even bury them?" cries the distressed young man in the maroon shirt, as he ferociously slams a garden hoe into the ground. A police officer tries to reason with him, telling him to

stop digging. A few people stand around watching silently.

The viral video has shaken the conscience of the public and triggered widespread protests in Kerala. It shows 23-year-old Rahul Raj trying to dig a grave for his father, a Dalit man who died on Monday after a week of battling serious burn injuries. Rahul's mother, who was alive at the time, died hours afterward. Like her husband, she too had suffered grievous burns.

Rahul's father, Pongil Rajan, 45, and his mentally-challenged wife Ambili, 36, of Athiannor pan-



The couple with their sons

chayat in Thiruvananthapuram district, accidentally set them-

selves on fire on December 22 while resisting attempts by the police to evict them from the three cents of disputed land on which they had built their small home.

In his dying declaration to a local magistrate, Rajan said that he had doused his wife and himself with petrol to bluff the police into backing off. "I had lit the lighter only to keep the police away. I had no plans to end my life. But a police officer swatted at the burning lighter, which fell on us and engulfed us both in flames," he said.

In his statement, Rajan said

that "he was shattered by the thought that his family would be deprived of a roof over their head. Deeply upset over that thought, I took my wife out and held her close, and then put petrol on both of us. I had thought the police would retreat from their attempt to evict us."

The couple had erected an asbestos-roof shed at a Dalit colony where they lived with their two sons, Rahul and Ranjith. A woman named Vasantha had objected to the shed, claiming that she owned the land, which

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## IN LETTER TO CENTRE, FARMER UNIONS LIST FOUR-POINT AGENDA

# Talks today, farmers to Govt: Will only discuss repeal, MSP legal guarantee

PM appeals against damage to infra, says keep it away from politics

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, LUCKNOW, DECEMBER 29

AHEAD OF the resumption of talks with the Centre Wednesday, farmer unions, protesting at the gates of Delhi against the new farm laws, wrote to the government saying the discussion can only be on a four-point agenda including modalities of repealing the laws and providing a legal guarantee on minimum support price.

In a letter to Sanjay Agarwal, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, representing 40 farmer unions, listed the two other items on the agenda as amendments to the Commission Ordinance for Air Quality Management in the National



Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the dedicated freight corridor via video conference, PTI

Capital Region and adjoining areas, 2020', and the procedure for withdrawal of the draft 'Electricity Amendment Bill 2020'.

Formally accepting the government's invitation to the talks, the Morcha said, "It is necessary

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA, RAAKHI JAGGA & AASHISH ARYAN  
JALANDHAR, LUDHIANA, NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

AMID GROWING concern over incidents of around 2,000 cellphone

## Farmers in Madhya Pradesh duped by traders, lens on key clauses in farm laws

IRAM SIDDIQUE  
BHOPAL, DECEMBER 29

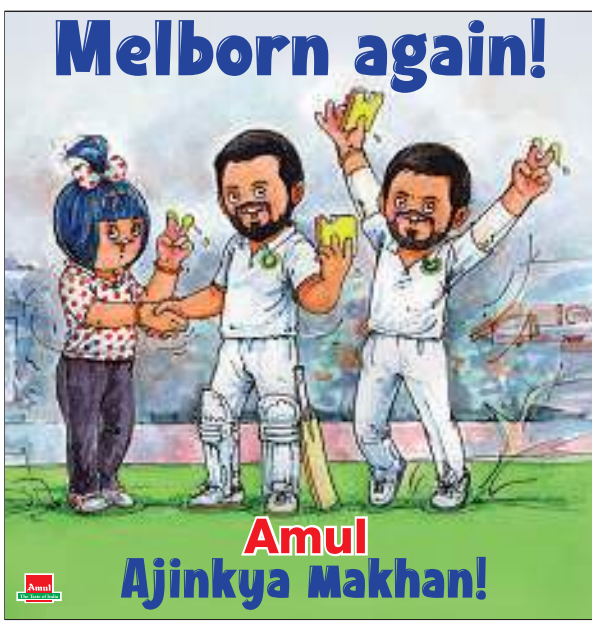
CITING THE newly enacted farm laws, Khoja Traders, a trader firm in Dewas owned by brothers Pavan Khoja and Suresh Khoja, duped 22 farmers in Harda dis-

trict of their 2,581 quintals of lentil and gram produce worth nearly Rs 2 crore.

The 22 farmers first tried to locate the trader by knocking at Dewas mandi since the Khoja brothers had shown them the trading licence registered by the mandi. But they realised that the

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh told *The Indian Express*, "I have directed police to take action against those vandalising the mobile towers. I will not allow anyone to take law in their hands. The situation is under control now."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



## 6 with UK strain in India; experts say vaccine will remain effective

Unproven therapies can trigger mutation: Govt; 5% positive samples to be sequenced

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M & SREENIVAS JANYALA  
NEW DELHI, HYDERABAD DECEMBER 29

THE VACCINES developed against the novel coronavirus would remain effective despite the emergence of the new, more contagious strain in the United Kingdom, India's top government medical experts said on Tuesday.

However, they cautioned that injudicious use of unproven therapies against Covid-19 puts "immune pressure" on the virus, which can lead to mutations.

The government on Tuesday announced that at least six persons who have returned recently from the United Kingdom have been found positive for the new "variant under investigation", which is being called VUI-202012/01.

Three of the positive samples were detected at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, two at the Centre for

EXPLAINED  
E.

### No cause for worry

WHILE IT is possible that a mutant of the UK or South Africa kind can emerge in India as well, there is no immediate cause for worry as long as effective surveillance and genome sequencing is carried out to detect the new strain early. Prof K Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, has also said that the vaccines being developed will work against this mutant strain as well.

Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad, and one at the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. The Pune sample is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## NIA: PDP's Para paid Rs 10 lakh to Hizbul via Davinder Singh

Para's lawyer declines comment; bail plea says being framed to settle political scores

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

JAMMU & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party leader Waheed Ur Rehman Para allegedly paid Rs 10 lakh to terror outfit Hizbul-Mujahideen to ensure its support ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, an investigation by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) is said to have found.

The Central agency arrested Para in November, just ahead of the District Development Council (DDC) polls in J&K, in



Waheed Ur Rehman Para was arrested in November

connection with its probe into suspended DySP Davinder Singh's links with the Hizbul.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

OFFICER TO FACE MILITARY COURT IN SHOPIAN CASE PAGE 8

## THE EDITORIAL PAGE

SECESSION OF THE SUCCESSFUL  
BY SANJAYA BARU  
PAGE 12

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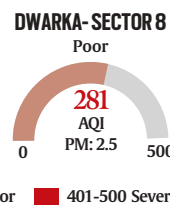
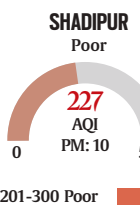
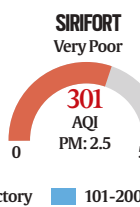
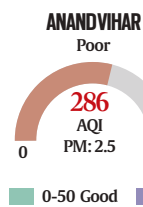
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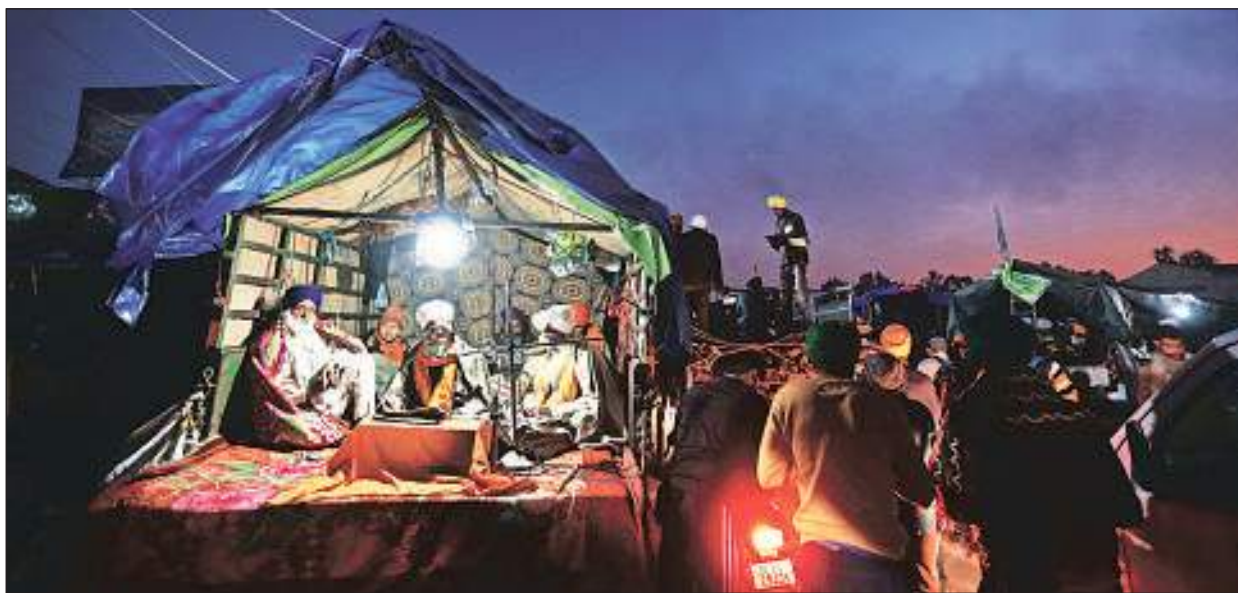




0-50 Good 51-100 Satisfactory 101-200 Moderate 201-300 Poor 301-400 Very Poor 401-500 Severe

**FORECAST: Dec 30**  
Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in morning. Cold wave in pockets

**MAX: 18** | **MIN: 4**  
2.5° C below normal | 3° C below normal



Gajendra Yadav

At the Singhu border; (below) the protest site at Ghazipur.

## At Ghazipur, small farmers from outside Punjab say MSP just a dream

**ASHNABUTANI**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

AMONG THOSE arriving at the Ghazipur border to join the protest against the farm laws is a sizable group of small farmers, mostly from Uttar Pradesh and some from Uttarakhand. Speaking to *The Indian Express*, many said they are being paid less than the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their crops, or, in the case of sugarcane farmers, haven't been paid at all for a year.

Farmers from all backgrounds insisted that small farmers, who own two acres or less, will be hit hardest by the laws. Ram Chand (43), from Pilibhit's Dhakia Natha village, has been forced to sell his yield at a price much lower than the MSP for as long as he can remember. He said, "I have 5 bighas of land (a little less than an acre), in which I alternate between sowing *gehu* (wheat), *dhan* (paddy) and *ganna* (sugarcane)."

His foremost concern, however, was that he has not been paid for his sugarcane crop for two years. He and other farmers at the border said they are on contract with the Sahkari Ganna



Prem Nath Pandey

Vikas Samiti, which pays them Rs 325 for a quintal of sugarcane. The FRP (fair and remunerative price) for sugarcane is 285 per quintal.

Chand, who has been at the border for 10 days, said, "I am still waiting for the pending amount. I had to take a loan of Rs 1.5 lakh last year for my son's wedding and for farming. This is the condition when it (farming) is under the government. Imagine the situation if corporates come in and there is no MSP in place..."

Farmers argued that in such a situation, they cannot go to court under the new laws but have to approach the SDM.

Non-payment of sugarcane dues was a concern echoed by farmers from Uttarakhand as well.

Mandeep Narwal (32), from Bazpur, said he has not been paid for sugarcane for two years: "Since it is the only crop that I grow, I manage to get 800 quintal of sugarcane in a year. But I have not received a rupee from it; I am managing the household by taking loans from local institutions."

Asked if he can grow something else instead of sugarcane, he said, "What else can we grow? The situation is no better for farmers who grow *dhan* either."

While the MSP for paddy is Rs 1,868 per quintal, not a single farmer at the protest site said they received over Rs 1,200.

Premnand Mahajan, an ex-MLA from Udhampur Singh Nagar in Uttarakhand, who reached the

site on Monday, said, "I got Rs 1,200 for *dhan* this year, despite having some influence in my area. So you can imagine how it is for smaller farmers. This is why we want a written notice from the government regarding MSP, stating that it will be followed."

Farmers said if MSP as well as middlemen are removed, they will be paid much less than what they are getting now. Puran Lal (38), from UP's Pilibhit, explained how he is left with only Rs 500 by the end of the year: "Last season, I got 4 quintal of *dhan*, which amounted to around Rs 4,000. Of that, I spent Rs 2,000 to grow a batch of *gehu*. After paying labourers, I am left with Rs 500 for six months... if someone falls sick in the family, I can't do anything about it. Four of my children study in a government school. They get a meal a day, but there is no teaching there."

He said that if MSP was assured, he would have been left with Rs 2,000 in hand, which he would spend on sending his children to a private school: "I don't want them to end up like me... but my eldest son, aged 12, helps with farming. That is the only way to cut down on labour costs."

## 3,800 HEALTHCARE WORKERS TRAINED

# City prepares for Covid shot, those at frontlines say ready

**ASTHA SAXENA**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

MOVING A step closer towards the Covid-19 vaccination programme, training of 3,800 healthcare workers — who will be playing a crucial role in carrying out the immunisation process in the capital — concluded on Tuesday.

As announced by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the government will vaccinate 51 lakh people in the first phase. The city will need 1.2 crore doses to cover priority categories comprising healthcare workers, police, civil defence volunteers, those aged above 50 and people aged below 50 with associated co-morbidities such as diabetes, heart ailments, among others.

*The Indian Express* spoke to five healthcare workers who attended the 'Training of trainers' (TOT) session and will now impart training to those in the next level.

**Dr Sunil Singhal (49)**  
President, East Delhi branch of Indian Medical Association



"It was an extensive training session on handling, storage and management of the vaccine, once it arrives in Delhi. We will now be imparting training to district- and local-level officials, who will be part of the immunisation programme, in January. We were informed that vaccination is expected to start by the third week of January," he said.

**Dr Ritika Bakshi (30)**  
Senior resident, department of community medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College

"During the training pro-



## CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL

	TOTAL CASES <b>6,24,118</b>	HOSPITAL BEDS		Total	Vacant
		VENTILATORS		1,525	943
	Daily cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests	
Dec 28	564	959	21	57,463	
Dec 29	703	850	28	84,889	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,122*</b>	<b>6,074.94</b>	<b>10,502</b>	<b>84,93,400</b>	

\*Total active cases

A mural spotted at New Friends Colony.

Amit Mehra

**Dr Warisha Mariam (30)**  
Senior resident, department of community medicine, MAMC



"I was given a huge opportunity to be a part of the training programme. It was an insightful session on how the government, at the central and state level, is doing micro planning in a comprehensive manner. To vaccinate 51 lakh individuals is a commendable task, we are glad to be a part of it," she said.

**Dr Veena Verma (48)**  
District immunisation officer

"We have started training of officers at the district level and are sharing experiences from our session. During our training programme, we have learnt everything about Covid-19 and the vaccination drive," she said.

gramme, we were informed about several vaccine candidates that are in the fray and what level the vaccination process is at. It was a full day-training, with details on Covid cases across the country and a brief background on what measures have been taken so far. We were told how everything related to the vaccination process will be operated through the Co-VIN mobile app. It was an extremely enriching experience," she said.

**Dr Ashwani Goyal (58)**  
Member, Delhi Medical Council

"During the session, we were apprised of the cold chain main-

tenance and how beneficiaries will be pre-registered. The vaccination area will be divided into three rooms — a waiting area, a vaccination room and an observation room. Training was also provided on how unused vials have to be kept and what are the measures that need to be taken for each beneficiary. We have been informed that healthcare workers will be provided pre-filled syringes that will automatically get locked," he said.



## Singhu border to get free WiFi hotspots so farmers can video call families back home

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

AAP WILL install free WiFi hotspots at the Singhu border for the convenience of protesting farmers, party leader and MLA Raghav Chadha said Tuesday. He said it was the initiative of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

"Any person needs three things to live a life of dignity: *roti* (food), *kapda* (clothes), *makaan* (home). But in today's time, a fourth thing has been added, which is internet. Our farmer brothers and sisters came to Delhi borders, and have been



Raghav Chadha said it was the CM's initiative

fighting for their rights for the past one month," he said at a press conference.

"*Sewadar* Arvind Kejriwal

gave *sewa* of blankets, langar, toilets and water, and now he will start another *sewa* of free WiFi at Singhu border," said Chadha.

He said the party had received demands from farmers at Singhu as there are network connectivity issues. Chadha said the radius of one WiFi hotspot would be 100 metres, which will cover an area of 31,000 square feet.

"These farmers at the Singhu border, who have been sitting miles away from their homes and fields, only have one wish after sundown — that they be able to make a video call to their families to speak to their wives, ageing mothers and children. Due to

the low signal strength, our farmer brothers and sisters were not able to speak to their families.

"The problems and inconveniences that these farmers are facing due to the three black laws, if we are able to reduce this even a little bit, we will consider ourselves successful. They will also be able to see the lies and propaganda of the Modi government, and gave them a befitting reply on social media," Chadha said.

Asked by reporters why hotspots were not being installed at Tikri border, he said Kejriwal and AAP would try "their level best" to do so if requests came from farmers there.

## No funds from Centre, MCDs find themselves with backs to the wall

**ABHINAV RAJPUT**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

BJP LEADERS from Delhi's civic bodies, over the past few months, reached out to the Centre for financial assistance so they can pay salaries to staff who haven't been paid in months. But with no money coming their way, the BJP-ruled MCDs have come under attack from the AAP.

AAP's MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak Tuesday said the BJP's top brass has lost all hope in the MCDs. "They asked for financial assistance from the Centre but were not provided any money," he said.

In October, North MCD Mayor Jai Prakash had met Union MoS Anurag Thakur, followed by a meeting last month with Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri to discuss the issue.

The political wing of the South MCD has also sought the Centre's help to resolve the issue, with a former mayor writing to Home Minister Amit Shah and

seeking his intervention. In the letter, he wrote that the local body of Delhi (Union Territory) should be treated on par with local bodies of other states and be included in the ambit of the 15th Finance Commission so that it is eligible for receiving grants from the central government.

Senior leaders in the BJP said several civic body leaders have conveyed to the state leadership that if the present condition persists and the Centre doesn't intervene, a negative perception will hurt their chances in the 2022 municipal elections.

North MCD Mayor Prakash confirmed that he met Puri and told him that arrangements should be made so that funds come directly to MCDs as the Delhi government has allegedly not paid Rs 13,000 crore due to the corporations.

The present financial crisis, meanwhile, has once again led to MCD employees issuing an ultimatum that they will stage a strike from January 7 at the L-G house if salaries are not paid.

## DCW, police rescue ex-MLA's daughter from family home

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

THE DELHI Commission for Women (DCW) and Delhi Police rescued a 44-year-old woman from her residence in Paschim Vihar on Monday night, after she wrote to the Delhi government alleging that her father, former minister and MLA Raj Kumar Chauhan, has held her captive at their home. She alleged her brother and father beat her up mercilessly.

ADCW official said, "The letter was addressed to the Chief Minister and was forwarded to two days ago. We acted on it immediately." Chauhan, who was a minister during Sheila Dikshit's time, did not respond to calls and texts seeking an account.

The woman told the team that she got married in 1999 and has two daughters, but is separated from her husband. With her husband married to another woman, she had been living with her parents for the past 10 years.

A divorce case is pending before a court in Chandigarh, but her family did not want her to get a divorce over "prestige issues", said DCW officials.

The woman told DCW her brother had beaten her up and threatened to kill her. After she was rescued, she was taken to Paschim Vihar police station, where her statement and those of her daughters were recorded. She said she did not want to live with her parents and was shifted to a shelter home, officials said.

DCP (Outer) Dr A Koan said, "A local enquiry revealed she was living with her two daughters, aged 20 and 13, on a separate floor in her father's house. Allegations levelled by the complainant were denied by her daughters." However, the DCW said the fact that she was beaten up was confirmed by her 13-year-old daughter.

The DCW said it has written to police, asking why only a DD entry has been registered in the matter. Police, however, said further enquiry is underway.

## No respite from cold wave till New Year

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

A COLD wave on Tuesday brought minimum temperature down to 2.6 degrees Celsius at South Delhi's Ayanagar, as per the IMD. At Lodhi Road, minimum or night-time temperature fell to 2.7 degrees Celsius, while the Safdarjung observatory, which is representative of Delhi, recorded 3.6 degrees Celsius, the IMD said.

The cold wave is expected to continue until January 1, as per an IMD forecast. Kuldeep Srivastava, head of IMD's regional meteorological centre, said, "We have cold winds blowing from the Western Himalayan region towards the plains of Northwest India, where many places have recorded a cold wave and also severe cold wave in some pockets."

Maximum or day-time temperature also dipped on Tuesday to 16.1 degrees Celsius at Southwest Delhi's Jaffarpur, 16.2 degrees at Palam and 17.7 degrees at Ayanagar. At Safdarjung, the maximum temperature was 18.1 degrees Celsius, lower than 20.9 degrees recorded on Monday.

Delhi has recorded six cold wave days so far this month and more are expected over the next two days. A cold wave is declared when the minimum temperature falls below 4 degrees Celsius, Srivastava said.

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**Bertram Devadas**  
National General Secretary

## EXTENSION OF PERIODICITY OF FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to extend the periodicity of the run of following Festival Special Trains as under:-

Train No. & Name	Already Notified Up to	Extended Up to
08237 Korbha - Amritsar Jn. Express Special	30.12.2020	29.01.2021
08238 Amritsar Jn. - Bilaspur Express Special	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
08215 Barauni - Udhampur Express	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
08216 Udhampur - Durg Express	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
02883 Durg - H. Nizamuddin Superfast Festival Spl.	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
02884 H. Nizamuddin - Durg Superfast Festival Spl.	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
02521 Barauni - Ernakulam Festival Special	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
02522 Ernakulam - Barauni Festival Special	03.01.2021	31.01.2021
02397 Gaya - New Delhi Festival Special	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
02398 New Delhi - Gaya Festival Special	01.01.2021	31.01.2021
05251 Darbhanga - Jalandhar City Festival Special	26.12.2020	30.01.2021
05252 Jalandhar City - Darbhanga Festival Special	27.12.2020	31.01.2021
05531 Saharsa - Amritsar Festival Special	27.12.2020	31.01.2021
05532 Amritsar - Saharsa Festival Special	28.12.2020	01.02.2021
05267 Raxaul - Lokmanya Tilak (T) Festival Special	26.12.2020	30.01.2021
05268 Lokmanya Tilak (T) - Raxaul Festival Special	28.12.2020	01.02.2021
05529 Saharsa - Anand Vihar (T) Festival Special	30.12.2020	27.01.2021
05530 Anand Vihar (T) - Saharsa Festival Special	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
02355 Patna - Ernakulam Tawi Festival Special	29.12.2020	30.01.2021
02356 Jammu Tawi - Patna Festival Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
03255 Patliputra - Chandigarh Festival Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
03256 Chandigarh - Patliputra Festival Special	31.12.2020	01.02.2021
05211 Darbhanga - Amritsar Festival Special	31.12.2020	29.01.2021
05212 Amritsar - Darbhanga Festival Special	02.01.2021	31.01.2021
05269 Muzaffarpur - Ahmedabad Festival Special	31.12.2020	28.01.2021
05270 Ahmedabad - Muzaffarpur Festival Special	02.01.2021	30.01.2021
02237 Varanasi Jn. - Jammu Tawi Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02238 Jammu Tawi - Varanasi Jn. Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
04041 Delhi Jn. - Dehradun Mussorie Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
04042 Dehradun - Delhi Jn. Mussorie Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
02231 Lucknow - Chandigarh Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02232 Chandigarh - Lucknow Express Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
02448 H. Nizamuddin - Manikpur Jn. Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02447 Manikpur Jn. - H. Nizamuddin Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021
04321 Bareilly - Bhuj Express Special	30.12.2020	31.01.2021
04322 Bhuj - Bareilly Express Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
04311 Bareilly - Bhuj Ala Hazrat Express Special	31.12.2020	30.01.2021
04312 Bhuj - Bareilly Ala Hazrat Express Special	30.12.2020	29.01.2021
02422 Jammu Tawi - Ajmer Superfast Special	31.12.2020	31.01.2021
02421 Ajmer - Jammu Tawi Superfast Special	01.01.2021	01.02.2021

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

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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### Why is Haryana blamed?



# 5 GOVT & POLITICS



## MP Cabinet clears Ordinance to stop forced conversions

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE  
BHOPAL, DECEMBER 29

THE MADHYA Pradesh Cabinet cleared the Freedom of Religion Ordinance, 2020 at a virtual special meeting on Tuesday. The Ordinance, which stipulates a jail term of up to 10 years and a penalty of Rs 1 lakh for forced religious conversion, will come into effect after it receives the approval of Governor Anandiben Patel.

Soon after the Cabinet meeting, Home Minister Narottam Mishra told reporters: "To stop our daughters from getting fooled, cheated, and lured into getting their religion converted, a law has been made and approved as an Ordinance and sent to Governor Anandiben Patel. It will soon be approved and become law."

The Ordinance was brought after a special three-day session of the Assembly was called off in view of the pandemic. The Cabinet also cleared an Ordinance stipulating life imprisonment for



Shivraj Singh Chouhan

adulteration of medicines and food items. A fake plasma racket was unearthed in Gwalior recently, and there were reports of possible adulteration in the Covid-19 immunisation programme.

The Freedom of Religion Ordinance seeks to sustain the freedom of religion as assured in the Constitution by ensuring no individual or an organisation uses allurements, misrepresentation, use of threat, force or undue influence, coercion, marriage or some fraudulent means to carry out conversion.

The Ordinance has put the burden of proof on the accused. It does not identify a person's return to their father's religion at the time of their birth as conversion.

Cases can be dealt only by po-

lice personnel of rank not lower than that of a Sub-Inspector, and only parents and siblings of the affected individual can file a complaint directly. In case a guardian or a custodian wants to register an offence, they must approach a Sessions Court authorised to deal with the matter, for an order. Those identified as frequent offenders can face jail terms of five to 10 years.

For those carrying out forced conversions, the Ordinance stipulates jail terms of one to five years, with a fine of Rs 25,000. The penalty in case of use of "misrepresentation" or "impersonation" for religious conversion will be higher, including a jail term of 3-10 years and a fine of Rs 50,000.

The Ordinance states that forced marriages done for purposes of religious conversion will be declared null and void by the concerned family court empowered to annul such marriages. But children born out of such marriage will not be illegitimate and will have rights in father's prop-

erty, while the woman would be assured maintenance. The matter of maintenance will be dealt as per Section 125 of the CrPC.

The Ordinance envisages a jail term of 2-10 years in case a person being converted is a minor, or belongs to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe, with a penalty of Rs 50,000. Those carrying out mass conversions will face a jail term of 3-5 years, with a penalty of Rs 1 lakh. Repeat offenders will face a jail term of 5-10 years.

Like in the UP Ordinance, organisations or priests carrying out conversions have to inform the district administration 60 days in advance, failing which the organisation can have its registration cancelled and the priest or facilitator can face a jail term. But the MP Ordinance stipulates a higher penalty (of Rs 50,000, and 3-5 years' jail term) in such cases.

With the new Ordinance coming into force, the 52-year-old The Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantra Adhiniyam, 1968, will be repealed.

FIRST CASE UNDER NEW LAW IN UTTARAKHAND

## 3 months after Hindu woman converted to marry, couple among four people booked

LALMANI VERMA  
DEHRADUN, DECEMBER 29

UTTARAKHAND POLICE on Tuesday booked four people for allegedly violating provisions of the Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act, 2018, after it was found that a woman had converted to Islam to marry a man in September this year without following provisions of the law.

The woman and her husband have been booked in the case along with the latter's uncle and a qazi who performed the conversion and solemnised the 'nikah'.

This is seen as the first case under the Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act since the law was enacted in 2018.

The FIR has been lodged at Patel Nagar police station of Dehradun against the woman, her husband Samir Ali, his uncle Shaukeen, and qazi Mufti Salim Ahmed.

According to police officers, the issue came to light earlier this year when Samir moved the Nainital High Court with a plea seeking protection for himself. The court directed the Dehradun district magistrate (DM) to conduct an investigation. Circle Officer (Sadar) Anuj Kumar was assigned the probe.

As per a police release, Samir had met the woman at tuition classes in Dehradun around a year and half ago – at the time he was 21 and the woman 19. According to police, they decided to marry this year with mutual consensus, and approached Mufti Salim Ahmed who, as per police probe, performed conversion of the woman and issued her a certificate of her new name

without allegedly completing due process.

The same day – on September 29 – the qazi solemnised their nikah in the presence of Samir's uncle, Shaukeen, according to probe.

Circle Officer Anuj Kumar said: "It was found that Samir, the woman, the qazi and Shaukeen have violated the Dharma Swatantra Adhiniyam, 2018 (Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act). On this ground, a case has been registered against them."

Kumar said the nikah was performed without knowledge of the woman's parents. At present, she is living with her husband, the CO said.

The FIR has been lodged under Sections 3, 8 and 12 of Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act.

Section 3 of the law relates to prohibition of religious conversion by misrepresentation, force, fraud, undue influence, coercion, allurements or marriage. Section 8 provides that the one who desires to convert should give a declaration at least one month in advance to the DM about his/her wish to convert at free will and without any force, coercion, undue influence or allurements. The religious priest who performs the conversion ceremony is required by law to give one month's notice to the DM, who in turn is required to get a police inquiry done on the "real intention, purpose and cause" of that proposed religion conversion, the law says.

Section 12 relates to people deemed involved in committing the offence by doing the act, or aiding others.

## ANNIVERSARY PLANS

AS INDIA and Bangladesh plan to jointly commemorate the 50th anniversary of the 1971 Liberation War, the Congress too has begun parallel efforts to celebrate the event. Congress chief Sonia Gandhi has set up a panel headed by former Defence Minister A K Antony to plan the party's activities to mark the anniversary. The Congress does not want to let go of the occasion since splitting of Pakistan by the Indira Gandhi government had been its counter to the BJP's nationalism plank. The committee includes Punjab CM Amarinder Singh, Meira Kumar and Prithviraj Chavan among others.

## PLAYING MEDIATOR

EYES ON Christian votes in Kerala, the BJP seems to be working hard on every possible opportunity. On Tuesday, Mizoram Governor and former BJP state chief P S Sreedharan Pillai brought the two warring factions of Jacobite and Orthodox church in Kerala to meet PM Narendra Modi. According to representatives of both factions, the PM gave them a patient hearing. While one side complained that their right to worship is being denied, the other side highlighted the 2017 Supreme Court verdict that stated that there could not be a division or separation of churches within the church. The order had given an upper hand to the Orthodox faction over the church's temporal properties, but the Jacobite faction wants the state's intervention to circumvent it. It remains to be seen if the BJP or PM would be able to resolve the decades-long dispute.

## 104 ex-bureaucrats write to Yogi: UP is now epicentre of politics of hate, bigotry

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

A GROUP of 104 retired bureaucrats have written to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, expressing "deep disapproval" and concern at the use of the "anti-love jihad" law and citing specific cases of its use.

Demanding withdrawal of the illegal ordinance, and suitable compensation for those booked under it, the letter states: "It has become painfully evident that, in

recent years, UP, once known as the cradle of the Ganga-Jamuna civilisation, has become the epicentre of the politics of hate, division and bigotry and that the institutions of governance are now steeped in communal poison..."

Among the signatories are retired bureaucrats such as Shiv Shankar Menon, Wajahat Habibullah, T K A Nair, K Sujatha Rao, and A S Dulat – they wrote that they have "no political affiliation but share a commitment to the idea of India as defined in our Constitution".

Citing the case of an arrest in Moradabad, the letter states that the police remained mute spectators as vigilantes "harassed the innocent couple and called it the effective murder of an unborn child".

The bureaucrats wrote that this was only one of a series of "heinous atrocities" committed against young Indians "who are simply seeking to live their lives as free citizens of a free country". They wrote: "These atrocities, regardless of the indignation of all Indians devoted to the rule of law, continue

unabated. The anti-conversion ordinance of your State is being used as a stick to victimise especially those Indian men who are Muslim and women who dare to exercise their freedom of choice."

Stating that UP has now become the epicentre of the politics of hate, division and bigotry, the retired bureaucrats wrote: "What is worse is that your law enforcement machinery, with the active backing of your government, is playing a role reminiscent of the secret police in authoritarian regimes..."

ADVERTORIAL

## Clean energy major ReNew Power's blanket donation drive gathers steam as cold wave grips Northern India



Ms Vaishali Nigam Sinha, Chief Sustainability Officer, ReNew Power and Founding Chair, ReNew Foundation

### Why do you think corporates have a responsibility to help society?

In today's world, businesses like every other stakeholder have a responsibility towards the society. Social responsibility today is no longer a 'nice to have' agenda, rather it is an integral part of the way of business is conducted. I also feel that in the process of nation building, the government needs wholehearted engagement and support from corporates - in the form of doing responsible business and for giving back to the society, especially in and around their areas of operations.

At ReNew, social responsibility is in our DNA. We are in a responsible business area and generate clean energy and thereby help the country mitigate its carbon footprint. We also actively give back to our communities. Our aim is to contribute to nation building not only through our business activities but also through social responsibility. Whether it is equipping schools to generate clean energy to power education or build the next generation of sportspeople by training the youth or empowering women through self-help groups, ReNew believes in strengthening the society and enriching the lives of the citizens of this country through its various social initiatives.

### How would you characterise the culture of giving at ReNew Power?

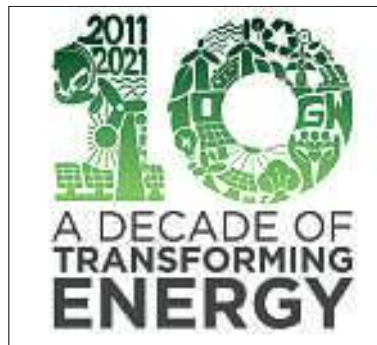
Our social responsibility journey began in 2011 with our inception. We started small with community welfare activities around our sites and eventually streamlined our initiatives in line with the UN SDGs. Over the years we have developed a culture of individual social responsibility where employees at ReNew through volunteering activities engage with the communities across our areas of operations. One such programme which we run during the winter season is Gift Warmth.

### What is Gift Warmth? How was this conceptualized?

Gift Warmth is an annual CSR initiative at ReNew Power. As the earth's climate changes due to carbon emissions from fossil fuels, many parts of the world are seeing extreme climatic conditions and unseasonal weather patterns. The Gift Warmth campaign is an attempt to help those, who are impacted the most by these extreme climatic changes. It is a humble bid to bring about a little comfort to those suffering from harsh and long winters, mostly in northern and central parts of India. Our aim is that 'no one in India should suffer due to cold weather' and towards this, we distribute blankets to

the needy individuals who do not have the means to fight the cold. We have been doing this for over 5 years at ReNew Power.

The idea germinated in the year 2015 when we were looking to do something for engaging our employees and giving back. During that period, we read reports that people on the streets of Delhi were dying due to cold and this is when this initiative was conceptualised. It started as an employee engagement activity and has now emerged as our annual flagship programme.



Highlights from the 6th Edition of the Gift Warmth blanket donation drive conducted by ReNew Power in MP, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Delhi – NCR. ReNew Power through its employees is distributing 50,000 blankets this winter to the needy

### Is this a pan India Initiative? How do you identify areas for distribution?

Yes, it is a pan India initiative. We started off in Delhi NCR and gradually moved to geographies which are low on HDI and are also cold. We zeroed down on areas in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat, some of them surrounding our areas of operations, and are now focussing on covering districts, blocks, and villages in these identified states. We closely work with the district administration to identify vulnerable populations in the districts and then organize distribution drives through our employees.

### How has Gift Warmth evolved over the years?

The initiative began in 2015 when we distributed 5000 blankets on the streets of Delhi NCR. This was solely done through distribution drives by our employees. Over the past 5 years, we not only have scaled up our efforts and distributed over 90,000 blankets, but we have also increased the scope of our geographies by targeting cold regions in Rajasthan, MP, UP, Haryana, and Gujarat. This

year our target is to distribute 50,000 blankets. We not only aim to help them combat the harsh winters but also create awareness in the society towards the climate emergency the world is facing.

### How do you visualize this in the next few years? Are there any major stakeholders that you are partnering with?

Our aim is to touch 1 million lives over the next 5 years starting this year. Our idea is to scale up this initiative through a collaborative approach with other members of the India Inc., the government, and other philanthropic organizations. Our programme was in fact appreciated by the erstwhile Secretary to the Honourable President of India, Mr. Sanjay Kothari. His guidance to scale up the initiative has inspired us to grow the 'Gift Warmth' campaign in scale and involve multiple stakeholders through an organized collaborative effort. We thank him wholeheartedly. I would like to invite others to join hands with us and experience this joy of giving.

### Given that Gift Warmth addresses an issue which is climate related, what do you think about the climate change situation in India?

The world today is at the brink of a climate emergency which if not addressed now will have catastrophic effects in the future. Over the last few years, we have seen extreme weather calamities in India, be it in the form of floods or extreme cold and heat. We have seen that winters are getting harsher every year and Gift Warmth aims to equip the vulnerable on the streets combat these extremely cold days. Through this initiative, we are also engaging with a range of stakeholders to create awareness around the climate change issue both globally and nationally.

### How can one become a part of this initiative?

Anyone who wishes to join this campaign can donate by logging on to [www.icharity.in](http://www.icharity.in). I would urge everyone to contribute as much as one can and help us reach out to many more needy individuals.





Govt. of Haryana



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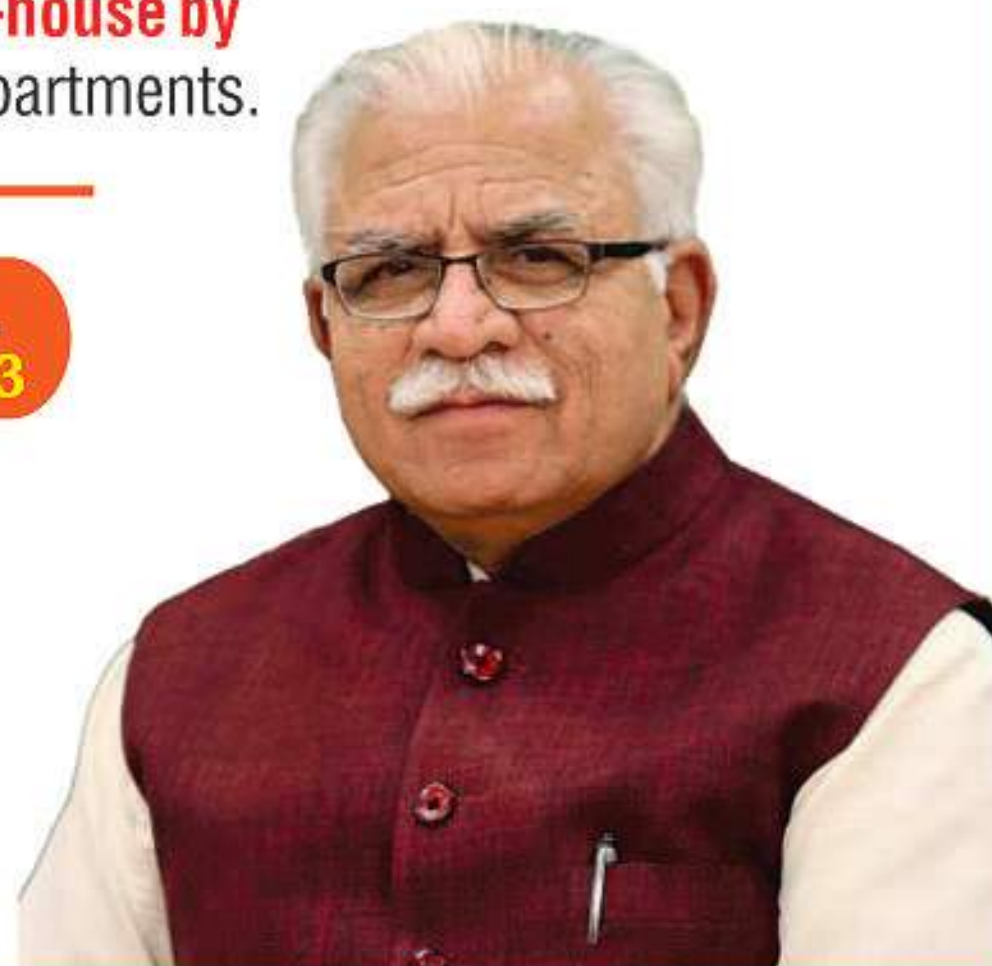
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welfare schemes can reach the grass root level.

**- Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana**



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New Delhi



# Cost squeeze in mind, Navy looks at ways to cut costs

KRISHN KAUSHIK  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

WITH INCREASED commitments and budgetary constraints, the Navy has been looking at various options such as rationalisation of requirements and international cooperation to cope with the challenges, a senior officer of the force told The Indian Express. Cost reduction is crucial, he said, with the Covid-19 pandemic hurting the economy across sectors, including defence.

“The Navy has rationalised its requirements, reduced plans,” the officer told The Indian Express, although he asserted that “nobody can come and bully India anymore”.

Although the Navy’s capital outlay increased from Rs 23,156 crore in 2019-20 to Rs 26,688 crore in 2020-21, the situation arising out of the pandemic may force changes.

With effects of the pandemic expected to remain for some time, the officer said rationalis-

ing requirements is important to deal with the downsizing of the budget. For example, he said, the Navy has revised some numbers in key acquisition projects.

It has cut down the requirement of 10 P8i surveillance aircraft to six. For minesweeper vessels, the requirement was slashed from the earlier 24 to 12. And now, the number might be further reduced to eight, although a proposal is yet to be submitted. Similarly, Landing Platform Docks, which are amphibious warfare ships, the requirement is being rationalised from the original four to two, the officer said.

He also cited the induction of unarmed version of Sea Guardian Predator drones from an American firm in November. While the three services have a joint demand for 30 such High Altitude Long Endurance drones, the Navy has taken two drones for surveillance on lease to plug the critical gaps.

“The Navy will do cost-benefit analysis for leasing for every-

## EXPLAINED The IOR challenge

WITH CHINA investing heavily to become a larger global power, and India placed on the major economic maritime highway in the Indian Ocean from where a major share of China’s trade passes through, the Indian Navy’s commitment in the Indian Ocean Region is expected to increase. With budget constraints and threats on both eastern and western fronts, the Navy has rationalised its requirements and is focusing on international cooperation to plug information gaps for maritime domain awareness, keeping up with its combat capabilities.

thing, and is willing to explore the option for everything,” the officer said.

Another project that has seen reduction in the numbers is for deck-based fighter jets. In 2017, the Navy had floated a Request for Information for 57 fighter jets from international manufacturers, but the officer said it is likely to be revised to 34 now.

The induction cycle will be timed in such a way, he said, that

by the time the current fleet of Mig29k starts fading out, the gap will be met by indigenously designed Twin-Engine Deck Based Fighter aircraft being developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited. The officer said, “The Navy is fully committed to supporting the HAL for the Twin-Engine Deck Based Aircraft.”

He said international cooperation also reduces costs along with improving own mainte-

nance and human resource.

“Instead of having 10 ships, assets of other countries can participate together [in a mission].” Cooperation with like-minded countries is essential, he said. “We tend to economise, try and get the most bang for the buck from partnerships, sharing information with other nations,” he said.

The officer said international cooperation helps build maritime domain awareness. Giving the example of the Navy’s Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), which came into existence two years ago, he said there are Naval officers from other nations too.

“Due to the IFC-IOR, we have information available from various sources, to develop a comprehensive picture. The sea is open to all, your friends, your enemies, your neutrals. Now, how do you know who is an enemy, who is a friend. What we are doing is creating maritime domain awareness,” he said.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
**www.indianexpress.com**

## Plan for maritime security coordinator

New Delhi: Setting up of a National Maritime Security Coordinator is being considered at the top echelons of the security establishment, senior Navy officials told *The Indian Express*. This will be in addition to Navy’s proposal, which is being considered by the Cabinet Committee on Security, to form a National Maritime Domain Awareness Center — a multi-agency forum of the Navy, Coast Guard, Intelligence agencies and state marine police forces among others for stronger integration for maritime security. **ENS**

## Bharuch MP quits BJP, set to resign from LS

EXPRESSNEWSSERVICE  
VADODARA, DECEMBER 29

BJP’S Lok Sabha MP from Bharuch and tribal leader Mansukh Vasava Tuesday resigned from the party. In a letter to Gujarat BJP president C R Paatil, Vasava stated he will submit his resignation as a Member of Parliament to the Lok Sabha Speaker during the upcoming Budget Session.

The BJP leader, who is slated to meet senior BJP leaders at his Rajpipla residence Wednesday, said, “I have resigned due to my age-related health issues. I have been nursing some back and spine issues that are also triggering migraines. I have told the party previously that it is difficult for me to undertake extensive travelling in the constituency, especially with so many important elections coming up at the taluka panchayats and district level. The resignation is purely for personal reasons and I do not intend to withdraw it. I have no grouse with either the party or the government.”

His resignation comes days after he wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking the withdrawal of a Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) notification declaring 121 villages in Narmada district as an eco-sensitive zone to “mitigate the protests” by tribal communities.

Vasava, who has raised several tribal issues in the past, however, said the issue of the eco-sensitive zone should not be associated with his resignation.

Meanwhile, senior BJP functionaries, sources said, have rushed to request Vasava to reconsider his decision. Paatil told reporters that the party was hopeful of a solution soon. “In the letter sent to me, Vasava only mentioned that he will quit as an MP during the budget session. He is unhappy over some issues and I discussed them with Chief Minister Vijay Rupani this morning... We are trying to convince Vasava and I am confident of a solution on this issue soon,” Paatil said.

A six-term MP, Vasava had earlier extended his support to the ongoing opposition of the tribals to May 5, 2016, MoEFCC notification.

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-III, DELHI 4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110 001.

Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993 in the matter of O.A.No. 4422019

ICICI BANK LTD. Vs. MR. RAJBUR

To, D1. RAJBUR S/O. SH. SHREE CHAND, R/O HOUSE NO. 71, 5A, NANGLA JARJABAD, SOLITA MOHALLA, CHANDIA, HARYANA-121017

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal on 02.01.2021 at 10.30 AM.

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

Due to ongoing Pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:- (i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the Cisco Webex application/Software; (ii) Meeting ID and Password for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer-I and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date of DRT Official Portal i.e. dtrt.gov.in under the Public Notice Head. (iii) In any emergency qua that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 23748469. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 14th day of Dec., 2020.

By Order of this Tribunal, Assistant Registrar, DRT-III, New Delhi

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-III, DELHI 4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001.

Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993 in the matter of O.A.No. 4422019

ICICI BANK LTD. Vs. MR. ANIL KUMAR GIRI & ANR.

To, D1. ANIL KUMAR GIRI S/O. SH. CHANDRA GIRI, R/O HOUSE NO. 435, KRISHNA NAGAR, MEERUT ROAD, GHAZIABAD-201001

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal on 02.01.2021 at 10.30 AM.

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By Order of this Tribunal, Assistant Registrar, DRT-III, New Delhi

## Rajinikanth aborts plan to enter politics, cites health reasons

ARUN JANARDHANAN  
CHENNAI, DECEMBER 29

ACTOR RAJINIKANTH, whose much awaited announcement of a political party was to be made on December 31, issued a statement on Tuesday and clarified that he will not join politics, or form the party, in view of ill-health and the prevailing pandemic situation.

Rajinikanth’s statement released on social media said that different people may react differently if he continues to say that he would enter politics but at a later stage. “For that reason, with a heavy heart, let me make it clear that I am unable to form a political party and enter politics. Nobody can understand my pain in making this decision,” he said in the statement.

The actor’s political entry has been a rumour since 1996, and Rajinikanth himself made the announcement in December 2017. Amid speculations in recent months that he might change the plan due to Covid-19, in view of his vulnerable health status, Rajinikanth had, earlier in December, announced that he would launch the party in January 2021.

The date for the launch was to



‘Nobody can understand my pain in making this decision’

be announced on December 31.

Two days ago, after Rajinikanth, 71, was briefly hospitalised for minor fluctuations in blood pressure, the hospital issued an unusual bulletin which not only revealed his health status but also revealed details of medical advice given. Besides describing in detail the doctors’ advises, such as complete rest for one week, the bulletin stated that the actor had been counselled to avoid any activity that increases the risk of contracting Covid-19, triggering rumours in political circles that it was a prelude to his plans to withdraw from the announcement of the party.

In his statement on Tuesday, Rajinikanth also stated that he was taking immunosuppressant medicines — seen as a way to communicate how vulnerable his health is. He thanked everyone who stood behind his preparations for the party launch and promised that he would serve people without getting into electoral politics.

## Howrah: TMC youth leader shot dead, RAF deployed after violence

EXPRESSNEWSSERVICE  
KOLKATA, DECEMBER 29

A TRINAMOL Congress (TMC) youth leader was shot dead in in Howrah district’s Shalimar area on Tuesday afternoon, following which local people vandalised several shops and buses, and torched motorcycles, police said.

Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel were deployed to bring the situation under control.

Sources said unidentified assailants shot Dharmendra Singh, acting president of Trinamool Youth Congress in Howrah’s Ward 39 at point-blank range while he was returning from Shalimar on a bike. The gunman manoeuvred close to his bike and shot Singh near Shalimar Gate Number 3 area and sped off. A person riding pillion with Singh was injured in the attack, police said.

Singh was taken to hospital with multiple injuries, and succumbed soon. Local residents went on a rampage in protest.

State minister Arup Roy, who visited the hospital, said: “He was our co-worker, he was shot from point-blank range. He succumbed to his injuries. The police have been asked to start an inquiry to find out those involved. Anyone found involved will face action.”



Motorbikes set on fire on Tuesday evening in protest. Police said a case has been lodged and investigation is on to find out who shot TMC youth leader Dharmendra Singh. *Express*

**VACANCIES IN ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN DELHI REQUIRED**

Army Public Schools in Delhi require competent, experienced teaching staff. For details of vacancies visit APS Shankar Vihar website. Candidates must meet CBSE norms. Qualitative Requirements — should be holder of a valid score card based on online screening test conducted by AWES. Proficiency in English and Computer is mandatory. Download the application from the school website [www.apssshankarvihar.ac.in](http://www.apssshankarvihar.ac.in). Application forms duly completed along with the details of online payment of Rs 100/- need to be uploaded latest by 1400hrs on 15 Jan 2021 as per instructions on the website. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview at APS Shankar Vihar. Tentative date of Interview is 08 Feb 2021 onwards.

**For Queries Email : [career.apssv@gmail.com](mailto:career.apssv@gmail.com), Phone – 26152559**

**FORM NO. CAA-2**  
(Pursuant to Section 230 (3) and Rules 6 and 7)]  
**BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, BENCH AT NEW DELHI**  
**C (CAA)-118/ND/2020**  
In the matter of the Companies Act, 2013  
And  
In the matter of section 230 to 232 and other applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013  
And  
In the matter of Scheme of Arrangement Between Outotec India Private Limited (Applicant Company 1/Demerger Company) and Metso India Private Limited (Applicant Company 1/Resulting Company) and their respective shareholders

**1. Outotec India Private Limited**  
ICIN U2748990L1992FTC050834  
Regd. Off: S-537, 3rd Floor, School Block, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092.  
PAN: AAACD943A3  
...Applicant Company 1/Demerger Company

**2. Metso India Private Limited**  
ICIN U748990L1992FTC050834  
Regd. Off: C-227, Ground Floor, Westend Marg, Near Garden of Five Senses, Paryavaran Complex, New Delhi, 110030.  
PAN: AAAC53407L  
...Applicant Company 2/Resulting Company

**Notice and Advertisement of notice of the meeting of unsecured creditors**

Notice is hereby given that by an Order dated the 23rd day of December 2020, the New Delhi Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal has directed separate meetings to be held of the unsecured creditors of both the Applicant Companies for the purpose of considering, and if thought fit, approving with or without modification, the Scheme of Arrangement between the Applicant Companies and their respective shareholders.

In pursuance of the said Order and as directed therein notice is hereby given that the separate meetings of the unsecured creditors of both the Applicant Company will be held as under without physical presence of the unsecured creditors at common venue:

**A. In relation to First Applicant Company (Outotec India P. Ltd.)**  
Meeting of unsecured creditors be convened on 1st February 2021 through video conferencing at 2.30 pm, subject to notice of meeting being issued.

**B. In relation to Applicant Company 2 (Metso India P. Ltd.)**  
Meeting of unsecured creditors be convened on 1st February 2021 through video conferencing at 11.30 am, subject to notice of meeting being issued.

The above meetings would be held in compliance with the General Circular No. 14/2020 dated April 08, 2020, General Circular No. 17/2020 dated April 13, 2020 and General Circular No. 20/2020 dated May 05, 2020, and other applicable circulars issued by the Dept. of Corporate Affairs (“MCA”).

Copies of the said Scheme of arrangement and the explanatory statement under the respective Applicant Companies or be obtained free of charge at the registered office of the respective Applicant Companies or at the office of its authorized representative, Shri Dhritiman Bhattacharyya/Ms. Deeti Gha, Advocates, Unity Legal S 369, GK 2, New Delhi 110048 ([newdelhi@unitylegal.com](mailto:newdelhi@unitylegal.com)). Persons entitled to attend and vote at the respective meetings, may vote in person or by proxy, provided that all proxies in the prescribed form and duly signed by the person entitled to attend and vote at the said meeting or by his authorized representative are deposited at the registered office of the respective companies as indicated above not later than 48 hours before the meeting.

In accordance with the direction of the Tribunal, individual notices of the said meetings, is being sent by the Applicant Companies to the unsecured creditors as per the list filed with the joint application, through email as per record of the respective Applicant Company with the date, time and VC details (link to join the meetings).

The Applicant Companies is providing remote e-voting facility. Additionally, the Applicant Companies would be providing the facility of voting through e-voting system during the meetings, as per schedule mentioned hereinabove.

The instructions for joining the meeting will be provided in the Notice of the meetings. Unsecured Creditors attending the meeting through VC shall be counted for the purpose of reckoning the quorum as per order dated 23rd December 2020 of the NCLT. Forms of proxy can be had at the registered office of the respective Companies.

Any unsecured creditor requiring any assistance/clarification regarding the meetings may write to the Company on [ncltconvenedmeeting.outotec@gmail.com](mailto:ncltconvenedmeeting.outotec@gmail.com) (for Applicant Company 1) and [ncltconvenedmeeting.metso@gmail.com](mailto:ncltconvenedmeeting.metso@gmail.com) (for Applicant Company 2).

The Tribunal has appointed Mr. Rajiv Shankar Divvedi, as the Chairperson, Mr. Somnath as the Alternate Chairperson and Mr. Indrajeet Singh, as the Scrutiniser of all the said meetings. The above mentioned Scheme of Arrangement, if approved by the meeting, will be subject to the subsequent approval of the Tribunal.

Sd/-  
**Rajiv Shankar Divvedi**  
Dated this 28 day of December, 2020 Chairperson appointed for the meetings.

## झारखण्ड सरकार स्वास्थ्य, चिकित्सा शिक्षा एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग सूचना

झारखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग द्वारा विज्ञापन संख्या 02/20 के आलोक में चिकित्सा पदाधिकारी (मूल कोटि) के पद पर नियुक्ति हेतु अनुशंसित चिकित्सकों का नियुक्ति पत्र वितरण दिनांक 30.12.2020 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे स्वास्थ्य निदेशालय के IPH सभागार नामकुम, राँची में करने का कार्यक्रम निर्धारित किया गया है।

2. प्रेस विज्ञप्ति के आलोक में जिन अभ्यर्थियों के द्वारा मूल प्रमाण पत्रों का सत्यापन करा लिया गया है, वे उक्त निर्धारित स्थान पर नियुक्ति पत्र प्राप्त करने हेतु ससमय उपस्थित होना सुनिश्चित करेंगे। (प्रमुनाथ शर्मा)

सरकार के अवर सचिव  
PR238384 (Health Med Edu and Family Welfare)20-21'D

**INDIAN RAILWAYS**  
**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS**  
**(INDIAN RAILWAYS ORGANIZATION FOR ALTERNATE FUELS)**  
**Corrigendum-1**

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) In order to develop Technical specifications for development of fuel cell/battery based hybrid power train along with associated control and suitably designed Energy Management Strategy (EMS) and storage module for retrofitment on 700 HP Narrow Gauge ZDM3 Diesel- Hydraulic Locomotives running on Kalka- Shimla section, EOI (IROAF/CME/BD/FUEL CELL POWERED LOCO) is invited on 29.10.2020.

**The date of submission of EOI in the prescribed Form is extended from 31.12.2020 to 21.01.2021**

Please visit website IROAF <https://iroaf.indianrailways.gov.in/> → IROAF Tenders → Expression of Interest.

**Contact person:**  
**Chief Mechanical Engineer/BD,**  
**Indian Railways Organization for Alternate Fuels (IROAF),**  
**Government of India, Ministry of Railways**  
**4th Floor, Railway Office Complex, Tilak Bridge, New Delhi-110002**  
**Telephone no.:- 011-23379107, Fax no.:- 011-23379083**  
**Email: [cmebdироaf@gmail.com](mailto:cmebdироaf@gmail.com)**

2882/2020

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

## INVOKING TAGORE IN SANTINIKETAN

# Mamata takes on Visva-Bharati V-C, BJP politics

ATRIMITRA  
BOLPUR, DECEMBER 29

CHIEF MINISTER Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday invoked Rabindranath Tagore in her speech at a public meeting here in Birbhum district, and hit out at the BJP saying that the land of Tagore would never allow hate politics to triumph over secularism.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief attended a four-kilometre roadshow before addressing the rally in which she accused the saffron party of enabling communal politics at Visva-Bharati, which was founded by Tagore. She also targeted Visva-Bharati University (VBU) Vice-Chancellor Bidyut Chakrabarty, calling him a “BJP man”.

Alleging that the Opposition party had defamed both Santiniketan, the Bolpur neighbourhood where Visva-Bharati is located, and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, Banerjee said, “Those who do not respect Mahatma Gandhi and other icons of the country are talking of building ‘Sonar Bangla [Golden Bengal]’. Rabindranath Tagore already created ‘Sonar Bangla’ several decades ago, all we need to do is to protect the place from the communal onslaught of the BJP.”

Last week, the VBU administration wrote to the state government, alleging that Amartya Sen was among the illegal occupants of land it owns. Sen has denied the allegations, and Banerjee has re-



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee with a portrait of Rabindranath Tagore during a rally in Santiniketan, Birbhum. Partha Paul

peatedly defended the Nobel laureate, saying he is being targeted since he is ideologically opposed to the BJP.

“I feel bad when I see efforts are on to pursue communal politics at Visva-Bharati. The V-C there is a BJP man, he is trying to tarnish the heritage of this institution by practising communal politics,” Banerjee alleged.

Reiterating that the BJP is a party of “outsiders”, she said, “They are blackmailing us in the name of agencies. I would like to tell them today, we will not bow our heads before those who killed Gandhi ji and insulted Rabindranath Tagore.”

**HARYANA ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION**  
Bays No. 33-36, Sector-4, Panchkula-134109  
Telephone No. 0172-2582531; Fax No. 0172-2572359  
Website: <http://herc.gov.in>  
**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Inviting Objections/Comments/Suggestions on the Petition filed by M/s. L R Energy Pvt. Ltd. under Section 62 of the Electricity Act, 2003 and all other enabling provisions of the Act read with the relevant provisions of Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (Terms and Conditions for determination of Tariff from Renewable Energy Sources, Renewable Purchase Obligation and Renewable Energy Certificate) Regulations, 2017 for determination of Project Specific Tariff of 20 MWp (AC) Solar PV Power Plant located at Tosham, Dt. Bhiwani, Haryana. (HERC/PRO-70 of 2020).

The aforementioned petition can be downloaded, free of cost, from the HERC website. All interested parties may submit ten copies of their objections along with supporting documents, if any, to the **Secretary, HERC, Bays No. 33-36, Sector-4, Panchkula-134112** along with an Affidavit and Soft Copy of the same at E-mail ID: [secretary.herc@gov.in](mailto:secretary.herc@gov.in) and [dir.trf.herc@gov.in](mailto:dir.trf.herc@gov.in), on or before **25.01.2021**. A copy of the Comments/Objections may be directly sent to the Petitioner (**E-mail ID: [ceo@lrenergy.in](mailto:ceo@lrenergy.in)**). The objections should carry full name, complete Postal Address and Phone Number/E-mail Address, if any, of the person sending the objection.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission will hold public hearing in respect of above case on **09.02.2021** through virtual Court. The link along with its code, will be E-mailed to the stakeholders filing written comments, separately.

Sd/-  
**Director/Tariff, HERC, Panchkula.**

1140/4/HR

**HARYANA STATE CHILD PROTECTION SOCIETY**  
**WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
Bays No. 15-20, Pocket-II, Sector-4, Panchkula,  
Phone No. 0172-2580359  
**ADVERTISEMENT**

Applications are invited to fill up posts of Chairperson, Child Welfare Committee & Member Child Welfare Committee/Juvenile Justice Board as per provisions under Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016 as per following Qualification, Terms and Condition:

Sr. No.	Name of Post	District wise Number of Posts
1.	Chairperson (Child welfare Committee)	Ambala
2.	Member (Child Welfare Committee)	Bhiwani-1 Post & Rohtak-2 Posts
3.	Member (Juvenile Justice Board)	Faridabad-1 Post (Reserved for Female) & Sirsa- 1 Post

**Qualification of JJB Member**

Minimum seven years experience of working with Children in the field of Education, Health, or Welfare Activities, or should be a practicing professional with a Degree in Child Psychology or Psychiatry or Sociology or in the field of law.

**Age of JJB Member:**

Not less than 35 years on the date of Advertisement.

**Qualification of Chairperson/ Member of CWC**

Seven years of experience of working with Children in the field of Education, Health, or Welfare Activities, or should be a practicing professional with a Degree in Child Psychology or Psychiatry or Social Work or Sociology or Human Development or in the field of law or a retired Judicial Officer.

**Age of CWC Chairperson & Member**

Above the age of 35 years on the date of advertisement.

**Tenure:**

Three Years

**Honorarium:**

Member of the Juvenile Justice Board, Chairperson and Member of Child Welfare Committee shall be paid as per sitting which shall include Sitting Allowance, Travel Allowance and any other Allowance, as the State Government may prescribe.

**TERMS & CONDITIONS:**

1. Applicant must have a domicile of Haryana
2. Applicant will maintain his/her headquarter as the presence is required even at odd hours or on short notice and the appointment will be cancelled if headquarter is not maintained.
3. Applicant shall have to submit a Self-declaration/Affidavit on the following points with application form. All conditions from (i) to (vii) of the following point must be fulfilled.
  - i. He/she does not previous conviction record.
  - ii. He/she has not been involved in any immoral act or in the Act or Child abuse or employment of Child Labour.
  - iii. He/she is not holding such other full time occupation that does not allow him/her to give necessary time and attention to the work.
  - iv. He/she will give details about his/her Previous/ Present post tenure in any District of Juvenile Justice Board and Child Welfare Committee.
  - v. No enquiry is pending against him/her in any Agency/Court.
  - vi. The applicant should not have any past record of violation of Human Rights or Child Rights.
  - vii. The applicant should not have been removed or dismissed from service of the Central Government or a State Government or an Undertaking or Corporation owned or controlled by the Central Government or a State Government.
4. Willing candidates may send/submit their application form on the prescribed form on or before 29.01.2021 till 5.00 P.M. along-with supporting documents i.e. Educational Qualification and Experience Certificate etc. in the office of concerned District Programme Officer- Women and Child Development of respective District.
5. Direct application received at Headquarters of WCD, will be rejected.
6. Department has reserved the right to reject the incomplete application form without any prior notice of the candidate.
7. Incomplete Application form in any manner will be rejected.
8. Prescribed Application Form may be downloaded from the departmental website [www.wcdhry.gov.in](http://www.wcdhry.gov.in).

**Member Secretary**  
**Haryana State Child Protection Society**  
**Women and Child Development Department,**  
**Haryana, Panchkula.**

1133/4/HR



# 8 EXPRESS NETWORK

## Clashes break out in Indore village as rally by Hindu outfits chants slogans outside mosque

IRAM SIDDIQUE  
BHOPAL, DECEMBER 29

CLASHES ERUPTED in a Muslim-dominated village in Indore district when members of right-wing Hindu groups, participating in a rally to collect donations for construction of Ram Temple, stopped in front of a mosque and chanted slogans Tuesday. Until late night, police were trying to bring the situation under control.

This comes three days after similar clashes erupted in Muslim-dominated Begum Bagh neighbourhood of Ujjain when a rally being taken out by Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha chanted slogans, leading to stone pelting.

Responding to questions on a demolition drive being carried out in Ujjain at the home of a Muslim

resident, who was allegedly caught on camera pelting stones during the clashes, Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra said on Tuesday: “*Jahan se pathar aaenge, wahan se toh nikale jaaenge* (The direction from where the stones come, that decides the eviction).” Tuesday’s clash took place in Chandankhedhi village under Gautampura police station when the rally of around 200 people stopped outside the mosque and chanted slogans. Senior police officials said this resulted in heated exchanges between members of the two communities leading to stone pelting.

Some local residents claimed that those participating in the rally chanted Hanuman Chalisa outside the mosque while prayers were being offered inside. The situation turned violent when some



A vehicle being overturned during the clash. Screengrab

of them – holding saffron flags and chanting “Jai Shri Ram” slogans – climbed atop the mosque and tried to damage the minaret. Videos of the incident showed the Hindu outfit members also trying to burn down a house and damaging several vehicles.

Yogesh Deshmukh, Inspector

General of Police, Indore, “Twenty-four people, mostly from the village, have been rounded up based on video evidence. There will be more arrests on both sides and people who climbed atop the mosque will be identified and booked under relevant sections.”

Senior officials, including Collector Manish Singh and SSP Harinarayan Chari Mishra, were at the spot till late night, trying to defuse the situation.

Meanwhile, in the Ujjain stone-pelting incident, police have booked eight more people.

A total of 15 people have been arrested, of whom five have been booked of under National Security Act and 10 others have been booked for attempt to murder and rioting. All the 15 arrested are residents of Begum Bagh. No one from among those who took out

the rally has been arrested so far.

Superintendent of Police Satyendra Kumar Shukla said three or four people were seen pelting stones and they are in the process of being identified. “The house that was demolished by the revenue department was of an individual who had resorted to stone pelting,” said Shukla.

A delegation of five Congress MLAs headed by former minister Sajjan Singh Verma met Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains and DGP Vivek Johri and demanded an impartial probe into the Ujjain clash. Congress MLA Arif Masood said: “If the Assembly session is cancelled because of Covid-19, how is it that permission is granted to carry out rallies. And if these people did not have permission, how is it that no action has been taken against them.”

### SHOPIAN ENCOUNTER

## Army set to take over proceedings against Capt from civilian court

NIRUPAMA  
SUBRAMANIAN  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 29

THE ARMY is in the process of taking over proceedings against a Rashtriya Rifles officer in the Shopian fake encounter case from a civilian court where a chargesheet has been filed against him, The Indian Express has learnt.

The Army has decided that the officer, an Army Captain, will be tried in a court martial. A Junior Commissioned Officer is also to stand trial in the case in the military court.

Police have filed a chargesheet in the Shopian Chief Magistrate’s Court against Captain Bhoopendra Singh, who went by the operational alias Major Basheer Khan, and two civilians, Tabish Nazir and Bilal Ahmed Lone. The JCO is not named in this chargesheet.

While the police arrested the two civilians, they could not arrest the officer “for procedures under AFSPA”. An Army source said Captain Singh and the JCO were placed under arrest by the Army soon after evidence emerged of wrong doing, and they are in the custody of military police.

The chargesheet accuses Captain Singh and the two civilians of staging the July 18 encounter at Amshipora in Shopian district and setting up the evidence, later destroying the evidence, and “purposely projecting false information” as part of a criminal conspiracy to claim Rs 20 lakh reward money, which is given carrying out successful encounters.

“As per procedure, the court asks the Army in such cases whether the Army wants to conduct the trial or it can proceed as a civilian trial. The Army has indicated that they will be taking over,” a source told *The Indian Express*. The court wrote to the Army to choose between a civilian or military trial on December 27 when the chargesheet was filed. “We have to give our consent in writing, and that is in process,”



Police personnel take the bodies that were exhumed in Baramulla. Express file

a senior Army official said.

The precedent for a transfer of any case involving an Army officer from a civilian court to the military court came with the 2012 Supreme Court judgment in the Pathribal case following the CBI indictment of five officers. The Supreme Court ruled that no cognizance could be taken of any offence committed by a soldier in the course of official duty without prior sanction from the government.

The Supreme Court also gave the Army the option of choosing the “venue” of the trial between a civilian or a military military. The Army had invoked the Armed Forces Special Powers Act to argue that the men could not stand trial in a civilian court.

The two civilians chargesheeted in the Shopian case cannot be tried by the Army, and their trial will go ahead in the district court, the source said.

The Army has paved the way for a court martial against the Captain and the JCO. A Court of Inquiry, which recorded the evidence, and a Summary of Evidence, a process that collects evidence admissible in a military court, have already been completed. The police chargesheet against the Captain is likely to become part of the proceedings in the military court.

The Summary of Evidence findings, which broadly reflect the findings of the police, are now with the Judge Advocate General branch of the Army for “validation”. A second officer said the Army was committed to ensuring justice in the case. “It is a critical

case, and we have acted with great speed as soon evidence came up in a preliminary inquiry that something was amiss about this encounter. On August 11, a Court of Inquiry was ordered. Normally, a Court of Inquiry gets 90 days, but in this case, because of the importance of this case, everything was wrapped up in 30 days, after which the Summary of Evidence process began immediately,” he said.

He also said that unrelated to the trial of the Captain, the Army was planning to investigate if others in the unit were in any way responsible for the Amshipora incident. “When something goes well, everyone up the hierarchy takes credit. When something goes wrong, everyone up the hierarchy gets the stick. That is the Army’s internal accountability, and that will go on and is not linked to the trial,” this officer said.

A day after the Amshipora encounter, the Commander of 12 Sector RR, Brigadier Ajay Katoch, held a press conference on July 19 to announce that three terrorists had been killed in the encounter, giving detailed account of the “encounter”.

He said the officer and two soldiers accompanying him came under heavy fire, they retaliated, and police and CRPF were also rushed to the spot. He also said the “search party” came under fire from a house and “in the ensuing action, three terrorists were neutralised”.

On the bodies of the terrorists recovered by the search team, Katoch said arms, ammunition and IED material were found. He praised J&K Police for preventing stone pelting by villagers.

The story came apart after a family in Rajouri filed a missing person’s complaint early in August about three of its family members – Imtiyaz Ahmed, Abrar Ahmed and Mohd Ibrar – who had travelled to Kashmir to look for work and had not been in contact since July 16. From photographs on social media of the encounter, they had identified the bodies as those of the three missing family members.

### TRACKING INDIA’S COVID CURVE

**302** DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN  
**CASES: 10,224,303**  
**ACTIVE CASES: 268,581**  
**DEATHS: 148,153**  
TESTS: 169,801,749 | RECOVERIES: 9,807,569

DEC 28 CASES 16,432 DEATHS 252 RECOVERIES 24,900 TESTS 983,695



#### STATES WITH RISING ACTIVE CASES

	ACTIVE CASES	RISE IN LAST WEEK
Kerala	64,098	3,536
Sikkim	625	171
Puducherry	357	25

#### STATES WHERE ACTIVE CASES ARE DECLINING

	ACTIVE CASES	DECLINE IN LAST WEEK
West Bengal	13,161	3,742
Chhattisgarh	12,962	3,098
Delhi	6,297	2,958

#### STATES REPORTING MAXIMUM CASES

	ON DEC 28	TOTAL
Kerala	3,047	743,564
Maharashtra	2,498	1,922,048
Chhattisgarh	1,188	276,337

#### STATES REPORTING MAXIMUM DEATHS

	ON DEC 28	TOTAL
Maharashtra	52	50,440
West Bengal	27	9,625
Chhattisgarh	26	3,319

Data as on December 28, released by Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Indian Council of Medical Research and state governments. Often the numbers released every day contain data from previous days as well. As such, trends based on daily numbers are only indicative and not definitive

## OBCs constitute 25% of police; STs get better representation: Data

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

BACKWARD CASTES, Dalits and tribals constitute almost 67 per cent of India’s population, but their representation in police forces in the country is only at 51 per cent. The latest data on police organisations released by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) shows that only Scheduled Tribes have better representation in police forces in comparison to their share in population while all other backward classes fare poorly.

According to the data, 14 per cent of all positions (from constable to deputy superintendent of police) in police forces across the country were represented by Dalits at the end of 2019. According to Census 2011, Dalits make up 16.6 per cent of India’s population.

Tribals, who form 8.6 per cent of the population, have 12 per cent representation in the police forces, placing them at a comparatively better position.

The Other Backward Classes (OBCs) fare the worst on the representation front. The data shows against a 41 per cent share in the population, OBCs constitute only 25 per cent of the police forces, causing a deficit of almost 40 per cent in representation.

Notably, the goal of proportionate representation has remained unfulfilled despite all state governments providing reservation to these categories.

While women too continue to be represented poorly, their situation has improved considerably over the past five years. Since 2014, when the actual strength of women in police forces stood at around 1.11 lakh, their represen-

**According to data, 14 per cent of all positions in police forces across the country were represented by Dalits at the end of 2019**

tation has almost doubled to 2.15 lakh. In fact, over 2018, the strength of women in police forces increased by 16 per cent in 2019. However, at still 10 per cent of the actual strength of the police in the country, women have a long way to go in claiming a representation proportionate to their population share, which is 48 per cent.

It is also reflected in women population per woman police ratio, which stands at 3,026 nationally. At the national level, the actual strength of woman police in other departments such as traffic police is 5,979. In special branches dealing with intelligence collection, it is 3,632, while in special police units dealing with insurgency, extremism and terrorism among others, it is a poor 516.

The data also shows that police-population ratio (number of police personnel per one lakh of population) declined in 2019. From 198 in 2018, it dropped to 195 in 2019. While Andaman and Nicobar Islands have the best police-population ratio at 816, Jharkhand (45) and Bihar (55) have the worst. Odisha (67), Assam (68), Andhra Pradesh (85), Gujarat (87), Uttarakhand (95) and West Bengal (97) are part of the bottom 10 states.

Among larger states, Jammu and Kashmir (399) and Punjab (236) have the best police-population ratio. The UN mandated police-population ratio is over 220.

## PAYING TRIBUTE

Mumbai Police personnel carry a chadar from Mahim police station to Mahim dargah to pay tribute to Makhдум Ali Mahimi on the occasion of his Urs or death anniversary. Mahim dargah is dedicated to Mahimi and Mumbai Police lays the first chadar. Amit Chakravarty



### ELGAAR PARISHAD CASE

## Navlakha, Babu: Books sent by family returned by jail authorities

SADAF MODAK  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 29

THREE ACCUSED in the Elgaar Parishad case said they were being denied access to books over the past few months in jail. In separate applications made before the special court on Tuesday, Delhi University associate professor Hany Babu and academician Gautam Navlakha said for the past four months, books sent to them by family members were not accepted by authorities of Taloja jail and were returned.

The two have also said they did not get access to newspapers for the past six months stating that it is a violation of their right to remain informed.

Lawyer Sudha Bharadwaj, who is lodged in Byculla women’s jail, also made a similar plea. While she is being provided newspapers, she too said the prison library does not have enough books and those from outside are not being allowed.

The applications made by the three state that as writers and academicians, they had spent a lifetime reading, studying books

and texts and the denial of books could not be arbitrary. Referring to the state’s prison manual, they have sought permission to access five books a month from outside with a plea for directions to jail authorities to accept books sent by their family and lawyers.

Kaustubh Kurlekar, Taloja jail superintendent, said, “We are not denying books to prisoners from outside or those in our library. We are in process of taking a decision on delivery of newspapers.”

Byculla jail superintendent Sadanand Gaikwad also denied that a court order was sought when Bharadwaj approached him. He added that newspapers were being provided to prisoners.

“In view of Rule 13 of the Maharashtra Prison Manual, it is within the province of the superintendent of prison to allow such activities. Hence, the advocate for the applicant is called upon to place on record an affidavit stating that she had approached the prison authorities and that the same had refused to accept the books,” the court said on Tuesday.

## Five Jharkhand archers to get assistance from state govt

*Ranchi:* The Jharkhand government on Tuesday announced financial assistance of Rs 2.5 lakh each to four state archers and Rs 2.7 lakh to a fifth archer as it launched a new sports policy to mark its first year in office.

National level players Krishna Pingua (16), Jagarnath Gagrai (18), Asmita Biruli (20) and Gunaram Purty (23) have been offered Rs 2.5 lakh.

“We can now compete at the international level as we can buy equipment. One day we will bring home medals from the Olympics,” said Pingua, who won bronze at the Khelo India Archery Championship in 2017 and gold at the 64th National School Championship Archery Championship in 2019.

The government also announced assistance of Rs 2.7 lakh to 18-year-old Komolika Bari, who won a gold medal in the World Youth Archery Championship, 2018. She has also been selected for the next Olympic games and is currently training in Maharashtra.

“Till now she plays on a rented bow, now she will have our own...I hope the government also gives her a job,” her father said. **ABHISHEK ANGAD**

### NUMBERS DOWN TO JUST 150

## Conservation plan on table to save bat species in Kolar caves

### ESHA ROY

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

TILL SEVERAL years ago, the Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bat was found in only two caves in the village of Hanumanahalli in Kolar district of Karnataka. For reasons that are still unknown, the bat became locally extinct in one of the two caves. And now, the Karnataka Forest Department, along with the Bat Conservation India Trust, is on a war footing to save the remaining bats, which are endemic to the area, from extinction.

The Bat Conservation Society, which has been entrusted with drawing up a conservation plan,



The Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bat

has also been awarded a grant to conduct further research on this species of bats.

Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests in the Karnataka Government, Vijay

Mohan Raj, says that it was in 2014, after a study conducted by Osmania University, that the state government first came to know of the bats becoming extinct in one of the caves. The government immediately notified the 30 acres around the caves as protected area.

“The Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bat is exclusive to Karnataka and we are very proud of this fact. There has been a lot of focus on the conservation of larger animals like the tiger, but in Karnataka, we have consistently chosen smaller, lesser-known species and made them flagship species for conservation and created awareness around them,” said Raj, adding that with the area be-

ing notified, any development work here, including construction of new infrastructure, will need the permission of the National Board for Wildlife.

“We know very little about this bat – what ecology it thrives in, what its diet is, its behaviour and what would happen to it if the cropping pattern changes in the area in which it resides,” he added.

“Bats are one of the least studied mammals in the country, though there are 130 species in India. They are very adaptable creatures and therefore can often be found near human habitation or even in urban settlements, which makes them vulnerable. They also have a bad

image in the public eye, as carriers of diseases. But the truth is, bats are absolutely vital for the ecology as they are pollinators, their main diet being nectar. The plants that bloom at night are entirely dependent on bats and moths for pollination. Bats also help in insect control and therefore, help in the protection of crops,” said Rajesh Puttaswamaiah of the Bat Conservation India Trust.

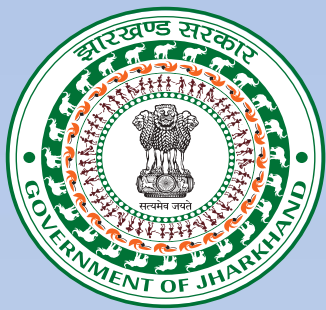
Since the Covid-19 pandemic, and the unverified association with bats, there have been incidents in the Western Ghats and in states such as Rajasthan and Odisha, where bats have been attacked or killed.

There are five species of bats

that live in the caves of Hanumanahalli, of which the Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bat is just one. According to recent estimates, there are just 150 Kolar Leaf-Nosed Bats left in these caves.

“There has been very little on-ground monitoring happening so far. We have started a detailed study of these bats. Apart from the caves themselves and the nearby areas, we have to identify and conserve the bats’ foraging area. We are running an intensive awareness campaign in the nearby communities and they have come to understand the threat to the species and have started guarding this area from encroachers,” he adds.





# A Year Completed, Fulfilling the Promises Committed

## TOURISM

Major initiatives have been taken to rejuvenate the state's hidden natural beauty into a world-class tourist destination.

Employment opportunities through community based tourism

Focused events on Eco-Tourism being planned in 2021

MoU signed with ITDC to take back complete ownership of Hotel Ashoka, Ranchi

Launch of new Tourism Policy 2020

## SPORTS

A new Sports Policy is being prepared focusing on welfare of sportspersons and grassroots development of sports

24 District Sports Officers were appointed to ensure development and implementation of sporting activities across the state

Direct recruitment of 38 eligible sportspersons in the State Government.

## INDUSTRY

68 industrial units have been established across the state.

4,062 jobs added with total investments worth Rs. 579.79 Cr

Investments worth Rs. 4,951.86 Cr in pipeline with committed 4,860 jobs.

Rs. 164.85 Cr has been invested in the textile sector with 2,550 jobs

Rs. 120.21 Cr has been invested in the Auto component sector.

**HEMANT SOREN**  
CHIEF MINISTER, JHARKHAND

Information & Public Relations Department, Government of Jharkhand

New Delhi

The Indian Express DELHI

PR No. 238421

Abua Raaj Ka  
**SAAL**  
Shuruaat Anek



## EMERGING JHARKHAND

## Taking Confident Steps towards Prosperity

LED BY its dynamic Chief Minister Hemant Soren, the state of Jharkhand in eastern India is witnessing all-round development in many sectors. Carved out of the southern part of Bihar on November 15, 2000, Jharkhand is becoming a symbol of positive change that is far-reaching with the promise of a healthy and prosperous life to all sections of society living in its geographical area.

Empathetic policies and swift progress are going hand-in-hand in Jharkhand as a result of a strong administration by the government that has constantly kept the welfare of the people at the centre of its decision-making.

## 3 New Development Initiatives to Provide Impetus to Rural Economy

In a bid to "revive the rural economy", affected by the pandemic, the Jharkhand government recently launched three schemes under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The three schemes launched are – the Birsa Harit Gram Yojana for rural plantations, Neelambar Pitambar Jal Samridhi Yojana for water conservation and the Poto Ho Khel Vikas Scheme for making playgrounds.

Under the Birsa Harit Gram Yojana, over two lakh acres of land will be used for rural tree plantation drives. Five lakh families would be given nearly 100 fruit-bearing plants, with initial plantation, maintenance, land work and afforestation to be taken up through MNREGA. It is expected that by the third year onwards, each family will receive an annual income of Rs 50,000 from the produce.

Under the Jal Samridhi Yojana, water storage units will be constructed to store rainwater and runaway groundwater. This scheme will primarily be implemented in the Palamu division, which faces severe drought.

Under the Poto Ho Khel Vikas Scheme, the state government aims to develop 5,000 grounds, with at least one in one Panchayat. There are around 4,300 panchayats in the state. Avinash Kumar, Principal Secretary, Rural Development Department, said the rural economy has been hit badly by the pandemic, and the government is trying to create employment opportunities for those who will return from other states. "In Birsa Harit Gram Yojana, Rs 660 crore will be spent in a year, in which Rs 520 crore will be the only wage component, leading to the creation of employment of 270 lakh person days and assets in 2,20,000 hectares. Under the Jal Yojana, Rs 1,200 crore will be spent with 90% being the wage component. For playgrounds, we will develop 1,000 in one year, generating employment of 850 lakh person days," he said. Speaking about the schemes, Chief Minister Hemant Soren said his focus will be on their proper implementation.

## Notable Achievements

- Jharkhand government airlifted 60 migrant labourers stuck in Leh following the lockdown.
- The government aims to give a distinct identity to the **Palash** brand in the country and across the globe in times to come.
- CM Hemant Soren launched community kitchens in Ranchi and other districts, with an aim to curb hunger during the lockdown.
- Free food for the poor arranged under the 'Mukhya Mantri Dal Bhaat Yojana'.
- 7,000 community kitchens mushroomed across the state in no time, serving free food to the poor.
- Food grain and ration were given for free to the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana.
- The government adopted a new logo of the state in July.
- CM Hemant Soren is proactive in tapping the limitless potential of Twitter for good governance in the state.
- **The recovery rate among COVID-19 patients is above 97% in the state.**
- 81960.8 COVID-19 tests done per million, ahead of the national average of 81582.4
- Jharkhand is 7th among the Indian states with most number of tests done for COVID-19.

In order to ensure **Ease of Doing Business** in the state, the Jharkhand government has laid due emphasis on strengthening standard operating procedures and simplification & introduction of information technology to make government facilitation of businesses more efficient and effective.

It is the government's priority to improve civic amenities and basic facilities for the people of the state irrespective of whether they live in cities or villages. Since we were voted to power, we have been trying our level best to address public issues and focus on bridging the gap between the government and the people of state.

— Hemant Soren  
Chief Minister, Jharkhand

## EMPLOYMENT &amp; TRAINING

Government of Jharkhand through Department of Labour, Employment and Training is committed to provide enhanced social security to the aged, to protect the interests of its working class in the organised and unorganised sectors in the fast-changing economic scenario, to effectively implement various labour laws and to produce trained manpower. In order to achieve these objectives, the Jharkhand government has shown commitment in participating in all major Central initiatives like Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana, Upgradation of ITIs and Converting ITIs to Centres of Excellence. At least one ITI (General) in all districts & sub-divisions and at least one ITI (Women) in every district would be set up. This will result in training of almost 10,000 youths through them.

## Women Empowerment

For the economic empowerment of rural women, the state government has started a livelihood promotion skills (ASHA) campaign. Under this campaign, self-employment opportunities related to local resources will be made available to rural women under agri-based livelihoods, animal husbandry, forest produce and processing, and entrepreneurship. Through the livelihood enhancement skills campaign, 17 lakh rural women will be linked with strong means of livelihood. Additionally, the launch of Phulo Jhano Ashirwad Abhiyan and the Palash Brand was unveiled by CM Hemant Soren in September. The main objective of these schemes is to connect rural women with self-employment. In different cities of the state, women have opposed the production of Hadiya-Daru. The Chief Minister has also said that Hadiya-Daru is a curse in the society. Livelihood Promotion programmes such as Hunar Abhiyan, Phulo Jhano Ashirwad Abhiyan and Palash brand have been launched so that women are no longer forced to run a family by selling alcohol.

## Sports

Believing in the potential of sports as an attractive and viable career option, plans are afoot to promote sports and sportspersons in the state. For this, a Sports Policy 2020 has also been made. Facilities will be made available with international capacity standard by creating a database of players. A MoU was signed on Monday (28 December) between All India Football Federation and Sports Department for the development of football in the State. Selected players will get appointment letter for direct appointment. Games library for players and researchers will be launched.

Foundation stone will be laid for the construction of new hockey stadium in selected 15 schools across the State. Previously, in October, the Jharkhand government made a state-level portal-cum-dashboard operational for sportspersons from various disciplines. Inaugurated by Chief Minister Hemant Soren at Project Building, the 'Jharkhand Sportspersons Registration Portal-cum-Dashboard' aims to keep records of the state's current and former sportspersons for providing them with financial assistance and jobs in future. Besides the portal, the CM has also launched a state-level website sports.jharkhand.gov.in which will disseminate information regarding various government schemes among the state's athletes, budding players and retired sportspersons.

## Tackling Covid-19

From March 24 onwards, CM Hemant Soren enforced the lockdown very seriously and the administrative and police machinery toiled 24x7, sealing borders, creating awareness by ensuring people wore face masks and maintain social distancing. Government staff (except for key departments) were asked to stay home while closure of shopping malls, restaurants, cinema halls and other outlets, except essential services, was strictly implemented. The most challenging task before the government was to bring back the lakhs of labourers who had ventured out to remote and distant places such as Andaman & Nicobar and Ladakh and big cities in the south or Mumbai, Delhi, West Bengal, Bihar etc. Against all odds, the government acted with grit and firmness and was able to bring back its people home not only by the Shramik special trains and buses but also by air. The state hence achieved the distinction of being the first state to bring home the first lot of migrants in the entire country. The homecoming did not stop till the last man was in. Under the rural job scheme MGNREGA, a number of projects were launched for sustenance of labourers in their native places.

## SOCIAL WELFARE

Making efforts to ensure welfare of various sections of the society means successful and meaningful governance. Social welfare is one such important sector that the Jharkhand government has sought to improve earnestly. Welfare of the most underprivileged sections of the society namely the Schedule Tribes, Scheduled Castes, Backward classes and minorities and the empathetic task of bringing the fruits of development to these sections has been a challenging task that the government has embraced with dedication. The government has quite a few achievements in the areas of nutrition, care for the physically challenged and empowerment of women. Successful campaigns against malnutrition among children between the ages of 0 to 6 years and successful immunization in children and mothers in Anganwadi Centres has brought new light in the eyes of people.

## TOURISM

The potential of tourism can never be undervalued in any economy. Realising the sector's vast offerings, both directly and indirectly, to its economy, the state government launched New Tourism Policy, 2020, aimed at wooing private investments and generating one lakh jobs. For the first time, the state has provided for 30% subsidy on capital investment or up to Rs 10 crore, whichever is lesser. If the investment is in a scheduled area, an additional 5% subsidy will be granted on capital investment. In the earlier policy, the maximum subsidy was Rs 1.5 crore, which did not generate interest among private players. Realising the massive opportunities that the twin industries of tourism and hospitality offer, the Tourism Secretary said the government has now decided to open this sector to private players so that they can set up facilities, create infrastructure, whilst the government acts as facilitators.

Under this new tourism policy, the government is hoping to generate anywhere between 75,000 to 1,00,00 jobs. Creation of Tourist Security Force (TSF) has also been provided in the new policy. The tourism department has segregated state's tourism activities into different tourist circuits – religious, ecological, cultural, rural, craft, adventure, weekend getaway, film, water sports, recreation, wellness and mines – for segment-specific intervention. There is also a plan to geo-tag all the tourist places, document their significance, and host them at a single-window platform so that all the needs of tourists can be availed at the click of a button.







# Facts from the field

MSP-APMC system benefits a minority of farmers. To help small and marginal farmers, right approach is through Farmer Producer Organisations, not APMC mandis



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH  
BY ASHOK GULATI

ONE HOPES THAT the talks between the agitating farmers and the government lead to an amicable solution soon. But if farmer leaders stick to demanding a repeal of the farm laws, then I am afraid the stalemate is likely to continue. In such a charged environment, rationality often becomes victim to anger and hatred, which does not serve anyone's purpose, including the farmers'.

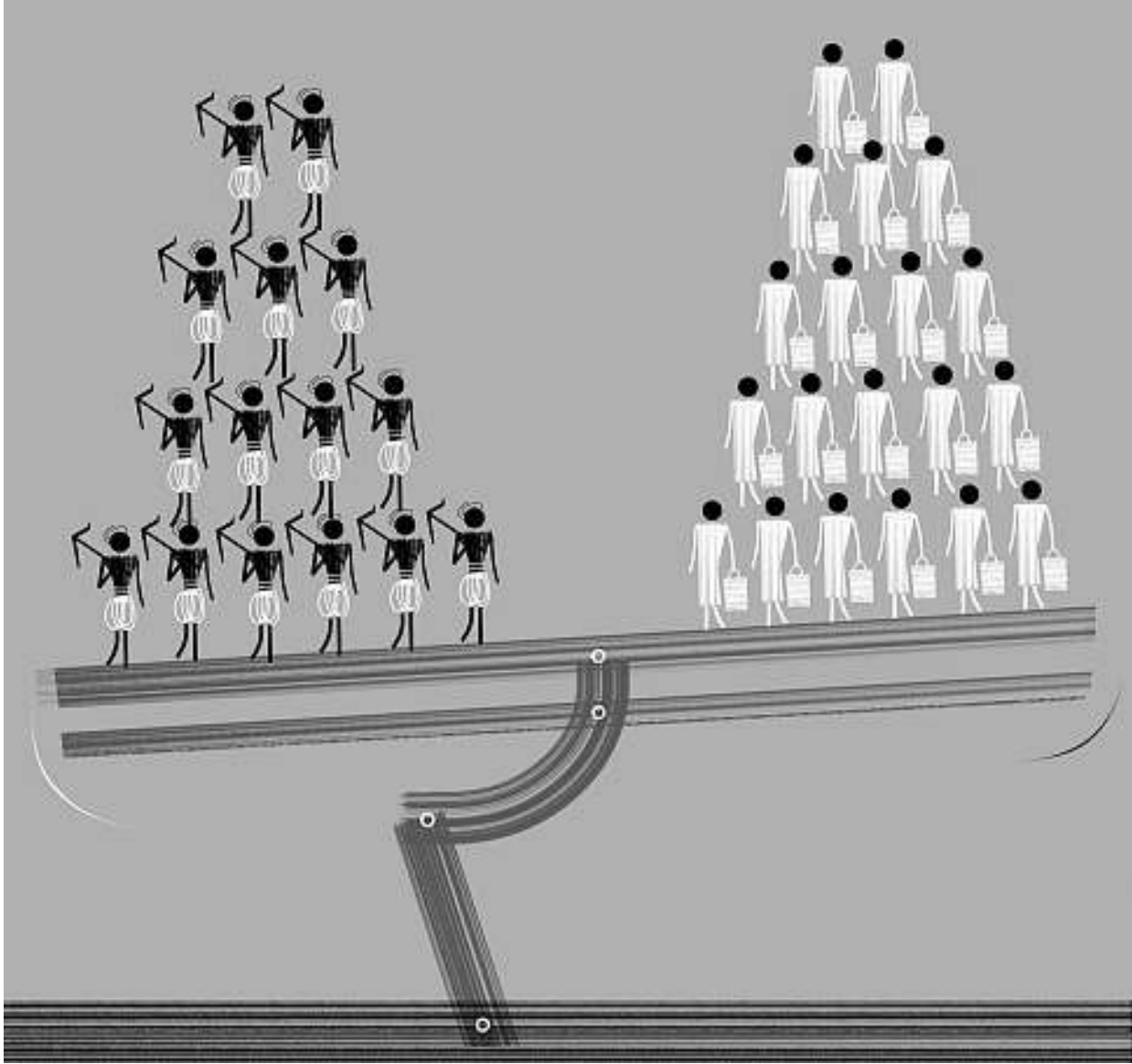
Nevertheless, let me spell out some basic facts about Indian agriculture, which may help negotiators on both sides, with a common objective of benefitting the larger interest of the farming community.

A major study that we at ICRIER conducted with OECD showed that over the period 2000-01 to 2016-17, Indian agriculture was implicitly taxed to the tune of almost 14 per cent of its value. This was primarily due to restrictive trade and marketing policies, ranging from export controls and stocking limits to the restrictive mandi system. The way to improve farmers' price realisation, therefore, was to liberate agriculture from these various controls. The farm laws under discussion are intended to do precisely that. Interestingly, this has been a long-standing demand of one of the tallest farmer leaders, the late Sharad Joshi, since the 1991 reforms. But somehow, a fear has been created that these farm laws will rob farmers of APMC markets, MSP, and they may even lose their lands to big corporate houses through contract farming. These fears, genuine or imaginary, have been blown out of proportion for political reasons.

There is no doubt that APMC markets and MSP will face competition from private markets and out-of-APMC mandi transactions. But will this hurt the farmers or play in their favour? Opinions differ. I believe it will help the farmers at large, especially small and marginal ones. The creation of an additional 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and the promised Agri-infrastructure Fund of Rs one lakh crore will aid this process. But many among the agitating farmers fear losing the MSP for wheat and paddy that they get in Punjab-Haryana.

What is the reality about MSP? The NSSO's Situation Assessment Survey (70th round) revealed that in 2012-13, only 6 per cent of farmers sold their produce at MSP. And of course, a majority of them were from the Punjab-Haryana belt. After that, there is no such survey available in the country. In recent research with my colleague, Ritika Juneja, we worked out the value of agri-produce (paddy, wheat, pulses, oilseeds and cotton) bought by government agencies at MSP for the year 2018-19, and how much that constitutes as a percentage of the total value of agri-produce. Interestingly, the number again comes to about 6 per cent.

So, in all these years since the MSP was given birth to in 1965 through a newly-constituted Agricultural Prices Commission (now renamed as Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, which I had the privilege to chair during 2011-14) and the Food



C R Sasikumar

Corporation of India (FCI), only 6 per cent of farmers and broadly, 6 per cent of the value of agri-produce has benefitted from this system. And remember, the MSP and APMC system primarily helps those who have large surpluses, mainly the large farmers. So, if one really wants to help the small and marginal farmers, the right approach is through FPOs at the village level and not in APMC mandis. And, about 86 per cent of Indian farmers are small and marginal (less than 2 ha), operating roughly 47 per cent of the total operated area in the country. So, those who are arguing for APMC mandis and MSP are basically arguing for those 6 per cent of farmers or 6 per cent of the value of agri-produce.

Given these basic facts, how do we dispel the fears of agitating farmers? First, the government should be ready to give in writing that the existing system of APMC markets and MSP will continue and be strengthened. Second, the government can also give in writing that the contract will be for the produce, not the land. Third, farmers can take disputes to district courts, if they like. Fourth, to add to these written assurances, the government can also commit to creating a fund of Rs 25,000 crores under the Price Stabilisation Scheme, which can be used to support market prices of specified commodities that take a dip of more than 10 per cent below MSP. This is akin to NAFED's operations to support market prices of pulses and oilseeds, or the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) for cotton prices, and can be extended to maize,

Given these basic facts, how do we dispel the fears of agitating farmers? First, the government should be ready to give in writing that the existing system of APMC markets and MSP will continue and be strengthened. Second, the government can also give in writing that the contract will be for the produce, not the land. Third, farmers can take disputes to district courts, if they like. Fourth, to add to these written assurances, the government can also commit to creating a fund of Rs 25,000 crores under the Price Stabilisation Scheme, which can be used to support market prices of specified commodities that take a dip of more than 10 per cent below MSP.

sorghum, pearl millet, etc.

One major question in this approach is how to deal with the losses when these government-procured stocks are unloaded in the market, as they will invariably incur losses. And if stocks keep piling up, as is the case with wheat and rice today, how do we correct this imbalance in demand and supply? In that case, either limit the size of procurement or go for price deficiency payments to those who buy "put options" at MSP for specified quantities at the time of sowing. An expert committee will have to be set up to look into its operational guidelines. A further positive step will be to announce a diversification package for the Punjab-Haryana belt.

I must also say that repealing these farm laws would be like robbing more than 90 per cent of farmers — who never gained from the MSP system and who are largely small and marginal — of their rights. And asking for making MSP a statutory binding even on the private sector will turn out to be anti-farmer as much of the private trade will shun such a system, leading to chaos. It will be worse than repealing these laws.

Finally, one must remember that farmers always want a higher price for their produce, but higher food prices can also bring pains to poor consumers. The art of policymaking is to balance the interest of producers and consumers within reasonable financial resources.

Gulati is Infosys Chair Professor for Agriculture at ICRIER

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Boris Johnson has a range of political skills, but international diplomacy is not among them. His greatest asset is a campaigning charisma with limited cultural range."  
— THE GUARDIAN

# A year of fractured memory

Pandemic has pushed back process of wealth generation, of shifting people from poverty to some kind of comfort and security



SALIL MISRA

HOW ARE WE going to collectively remember the year 2020? It was a year of unprecedented and unanticipated crisis. It was not an economic crisis, even though it did have an economic dimension. It was a crisis that threatened the collective medical health of the entire humanity.

When was the last time the entire world was gripped by a crisis of such magnitude? The World War II comes to mind. It was a global crisis which gripped all of humanity. It was a political crisis brought about by the expansionist drives of the political leaders of Europe. Over 50 million people died on the battle fronts and in the genocides. Many disappeared and could never be traced. Europe and the rest of the world experienced unprecedented violence and brutality.

But the War also turned out to be a great democratising experience for Europe. It established responsible and accountable governments. It helped to bridge the class divide by bringing different classes closer to one another. It triggered a phase of economic affluence. Interestingly, the maximum benefits

of the post-War period went to the vanquished in the War — Japan and Germany. The War was followed by decolonisation in Asia and Africa. The world as a whole benefitted as the real threat of a Fascist takeover of the world was averted. A better future burst forth from beneath the thick crust of the War. How does the current crisis fare in comparison?

Unfortunately, the picture beneath the surface is as gloomy and depressing as it appears on the surface. There is, however, a silver lining. Because of the global nature of the crisis, all nation states have come closer. After environment and terrorism, the pandemic has become the third major issue which can be tackled only through global cooperation.

But having blurred the national barriers, the current crisis appears to have sharpened the class barriers. The experience of the current crisis, unlike that of the World War, has been very different across the class divide in India. For the upper crust of the 10-15 million (or so) of the labour-extracting, decision-making, institution-heading elite with secure salaries and accessible resources, the experience of the crisis was nothing more than an inconvenience, albeit a huge one, or at best an ethical dilemma. It was a kind of a trade-off between comfort and safety. Letting the domestic help come from outside and do all the work brought about comfort at the expense of safety. Keeping them out was possibly safe, but it brought the nuisance of having to do all the domestic work. Apart from this, the availability of provisions, online supplies, TV, Internet and Wi-fi ensured that there was no existential crisis for the

Indian elite.

Not so for the large majority on the other side of the class divide. For them — unorganised labour, domestic help, daily wagers, street hawkers, migrant labours, nomadic people, rickshaw pullers, urban poor — the pandemic was nothing short of a life-changing experience. For those living below the social equator, the crisis destroyed their whole universe. Those who were hoping to break out of the poverty grid have had their dreams shattered. They had played their part in running a system which let them down badly. The crisis may have been generic and uniform, but the concrete experience of the crisis was not. It was uneven and differentiated, particularly along the line of class.

It was partly for the differentiated nature of the experience that the crisis ended up reinforcing prejudices. Muslims were particularly at the receiving end of it and were stigmatised as the villains of the pandemic. The crisis, instead of creating new solidarities as such events often do, only ended up reinforcing the stereotypes and social prejudices. The whole society took another step backwards.

Then there was the glee of the environmentalist — the feel of fresh air without pollution, clean rivers, peacocks dancing on the street, happy jungle and the contented environment. Finally, we had found the solution to the huge environmental problem. If all human activities can be stalled, and all the humans locked in, pollution can be prevented and we can achieve the pristine purity of the world. Viewed from the vantage point of the

vast majority in India, this glee was in very bad taste. Poverty continues to be our greatest polluter.

The pandemic clearly had a medical, a socio-economic and an epidemiological dimension. The three ran parallel to one another without any meeting point. They suggested three different prescriptions.

The medical prescription was society-neutral and human-blind: Whatever can be done to flatten the curve, should be done. The epidemiological perspective took a certain amount of human loss for granted and worked towards minimising the loss. It is the socio-economic perspective that should have played a greater role in the formulation of the policy. That might have gone some way towards preventing a long-term catastrophe. In the end, the real crisis of 2020 was not so much what happened, but what it has led to, and will lead to. The real crisis starts now.

A transition society, with a precarious grip on resources and economic development, cannot afford to lose time in its march towards affluence. The process of wealth generation, poverty reduction, and of people gradually shifting from poverty to some kind of comfort and security had been going on for the last three decades. That has been pushed back by the pandemic. That is the real bad news of 2020.

There is going to be no collective remembering of the year and the pandemic. It will be a fractured memory divided across the impenetrable class barrier.

The writer is a historian at the Ambedkar University Delhi



JAGVIR SINGH

I DISAGREE WITH *The Indian Express's* editorial on the matter of laws on inter-faith marriages and conversion ('Strike one', IE, December 1). The last couple of months have seen many high courts frowning upon the state's interference in interfaith marriages, being matters of personal choices. Alongside, several BJP-ruled states framed laws to regulate such marriages and any associated conversions. Are these pieces of legislation legally and logically viable? To answer this question, the matter must be viewed through two prisms: One, conversion of a bride before or after marriage; and two, an interfaith marriage without conversion.

An interfaith marriage where the bride converts has three key elements: One, a girl has to convert because she has to align with the religion and "culture" of the boy. Does this not reek of male chauvinism and patriarchy, which feminists across the globe have waged war against? They try to rationalise this by using disingenuous sophistry, that women have minds of their own and thus, can make their own decisions. Yes, they can. Women are not being subject to criticism here. Nor are women in traditional households, who eat only after their husbands and/or touch their feet and/or are generally obsequious to them, either out of religious belief, love or devotion. We treat such husbands and the patriarchy surrounding them

# Double standard on conversion

Outrage misses the point: No community is entitled to be close-minded

as criminal. Doesn't a man who expects that his wife should convert to his religion suffer from the same malaise?

Second, when a man has even a slight expectation of conversion, does it not exhibit his discomfort, for whatever reasons, to live with a person of another faith? This is bigotry.

Third, conversion is predicated upon an abominable notion of the other faith being inferior and thus, comes from a community-level supremacist attitude. One fails to understand how the liberals reconcile these facts and do not deem the practice communal.

I firmly endorse B R Ambedkar and believe that to dismantle societal divides such as caste, religion, race and ethnicity, more and more inter-community marriages must take place and are largely accepted by society. Consequently, should an interfaith marriage, sans conversion, be welcome? As a principle, yes. However, is the religion of the bride relevant? Ideally, not at all. The fact of a girl being from one community in a marriage and the groom being from another

should be coincidental. But it is not. That is what causes the inter-community schism.

Due to a clear ban on the marriage of Muslim women to men of other faiths in their scriptures, and a majority of the community adhering to them and women having been steeped in the religion since childhood, in interfaith marriages involving Muslims, the girls mostly come from non-

Muslim communities. Girls from non-Muslim communities are raised in a more liberal milieu, faith consciousness not being that important for them, especially in non-spiritual matters. Thus, though marriage is fundamentally an act of individual choice, at the macro and communities' levels, marriages involving Muslim men are viewed by other communities as deliberate attempts to lure and deceive women from other communities, while restricting their own women from marrying outside the community. An honest liberal and feminist intellectual shall see this organic mental restraint on a Muslim girl as being completely devoid of her "agency".

How are we to deal with these issues?

We need laws regulating conversion. One person converting another is a political act under the garb of exercising religious freedom. However, any person's informed decision to embrace another faith out of their free will, untainted by extraneous factors, is and should be welcomed as a fundamental right. Conversely, if the conversion is for other reasons, including as a precondition for or consequence of marriage, it should be outlawed. To ensure that this does not happen, a marriage before and after two years of conversion should be void, irrespective of the original religion of the convert.

In today's era, religion ought to have no role in social, political and economic spheres and should relate only to spiritual aspects. It should be pronounced irrelevant in marital unions. All religious communities should raise their children with a sense of the irrelevance of religion in dealing and communicating with fellow citizens, including while choosing life partners. But, if a religious community deems it impossible to afford its womenfolk the agency to select partners of their choice, for religious compulsions or otherwise, for the sake of communal amity, it should forbid its men from forging an alliance with women of other faiths as well. Honest inter-community dialogue will work wonders.

The writer is a senior lawyer based in Delhi

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### NECESSARY ALLIANCE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Squeeze in Bengal' (IE, December 29). West Bengal's ground realities require the Left and the Congress to join hands to take on the twin threats of the BJP and TMC. As a matter of fact, there is very little to distinguish the two. Much like the BJP, there is no low to which the TMC would not stoop to to cling to power. The TMC, too, has been engaging in political mobilisation along religious lines. Mamata Banerjee and the BJP have together polarised the electorate along communal lines, a phenomenon never before witnessed in Bengal. Bengal politics is in desperate need to be rid of the amoral influences that have infiltrated it in the past one decade or so. That alone makes the alliance of the Left and the Congress a necessity.

Susobhan Sarkar, Kolkata

### EDUCATION WOES

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Systems challenge' (IE, December 29). US universities are flush with endowment funds, which are essentially private in nature. This financial independence gives them the liberty to not only design courses, choose faculty, interact with other private entities for R&D but most importantly, it enables them to keep politicians and bureaucrats out. India needs to al-

## IDEAS ONLINE

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low private capital to come in a big way in the field of education.

HN Bhagwat, Chiplun

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Systems challenge' (IE, December 29). It is an excellent precis of the maladies plaguing our educational system and how ill-suited it is to prepare our students to meet the challenges of the future. It supplements a brilliant investigative series, which is tracking the school toppers of the last two decades. I wish the educators would listen to the voices of these 86 yesteryear toppers.

K Sahasranaman, Mumbai



## Raid on Pracha

of the Delhi Police in this case.

Consider: **MARCH 4, 2020:** On February 24, Irshad Ali complained to police that his rented mattress shop at Moonga Nagar was ransacked and set ablaze by a mob, resulting in a loss of Rs 17-18 lakh to him and Rs 10 lakh to store-owner Rekha Garg.

Delhi Police named several people, including councillor Tahir Hussain, former member of the Aam Aadmi Party; Gulfiim; Mohd Abid; Arshad Qayyum; Shahdab; Shah Alam; Riyasat Ali and Rashid Saifi as accused in this case.

**AUGUST 7-8:** During the hearing of bail pleas of two of these accused, Abid and Qayumm — both represented by lawyer Javed Ali — Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav was told about two subsequent complaints by Irshad Ali in May and July.

In these, Irshad Ali alleged that police had falsely implicated the accused in the case and that “the persons who looted his shop are not Muslims”.

**AUGUST 10:** Lawyer Javed Ali included Irshad Ali’s complaints in the bail application of Abid and Qayyum. The court asked the DCP (North-East) to file a report on these complaints by Irshad Ali.

**AUGUST 22:** The Delhi Police filed its report in court that Irshad Ali had now named three residents — Deepak, Navneet alias Nanu, and Mintu — but when called before ACP (Gokulpuri), he said he knew them only by name

and did not identify them in the video.

Police said that Irshad Ali told them that Pracha — who was initially representing another accused Gulfiim in the same case — called him to his office and told him that he has an eyewitness, namely Sharif Malik. And that if Irshad Ali attaches Malik’s complaint to his own, Ali’s case would become stronger.

In their report submitted to the court on August 22, the police made two key allegations:

One, the statement by Malik, himself wanted in a similar case registered at Dayalpur police station, that he “witnessed the whole incident” of rioting was “false, concocted and fabricated” by Pracha and sent to various offices by him through his email ID.

Two, Irshad Ali’s July affidavit — confirming on oath the complaints attached were his — which was part of Abid and Qayumm’s bail petition, was found attested by Notary Public Sanjay Saxena, who had died three years ago.

Saxena’s wife Sangeeta Saxena is said to have told the police that she has no knowledge of any document attested by her husband’s stamp.

ASJ Yadav, in his order on August 22, said the matter should be investigated either by the Crime Branch or Special Cell and asked the Delhi Police Commissioner to pass appropriate directions.

The Special Cell registered an FIR on August 22 alleging false complaint, false evidence and forgery.

## FROM PAGE ONE

**AUGUST 27:** ASJ Yadav said that Delhi Police Commissioner himself had informed the court that an FIR had been registered and that “progress of investigation shall be submitted” before the court “as and when directed”.

**NOVEMBER 24:** Delhi Police didn’t oppose the anticipatory bail pleas filed by Sharif Malik in an rioting and attempt to murder case, and two similar cases registered by Dayalpur police station.

The Public Prosecutor submitted that “the applicant has joined the investigation and for the present, he is not required to be arrested in the matter. However, it is requested that the applicant may be directed to continue to join the investigation,” the court said while granting pre-arrest bail to Sharif on separate but similar orders in the three cases.

**DECEMBER 3:** The Delhi High Court granted bail to Riyasat Ali, who had also been named as an accused in the Irshad store looting case. It said that the presence of Riyasat Ali “is not established through CCTV footages/at the spot”. “... however, without commenting on the merits of the prosecution case, I am of the view that the petitioner deserves bail,” the court said. Similarly, Shah Alam, and Mohd Rehan were also granted bail. On December 9, Gulfiim was granted bail by a Delhi court.

**DECEMBER 17:** Qayyum and Abid were granted bail on grounds of parity. The Sessions Court of ASJ Yadav put on record three arguments made by the defence on the

handling of the case by the Delhi Police.

That both had been “falsely implicated” by the police; that investigation in the matter “has not been conducted in an impartial and fair manner”; and that persons “belonging to a particular community have been falsely roped in by the investigating agency”.

“There is no electronic evidence available against the applicants, either in the form of any CCTV footage(s) or their CDR location, which could prima facie show their presence at the scene of crime on the date of incident,” the court noted on the defence argument.

**DECEMBER 24:** The Special Cell, issuing a notice to Pracha, said: “One complaint... by Sharif Malik... respect to arson and rioting... was drafted under your instruction on your computer in your office and got signature and thumb impression... in your office itself... Malik has denied having sent any of the copy... but several such complaints have been received in police station bearing name of... Malik.”

“Investigation conducted so far has provided reasonable substance in the allegations, so an order of search and seizure has been obtained... for recovery and seizure of incriminating documents from your office and computers,” the police said.

Asked about Malik being granted bail exactly a month before the searches, Ved Prakash Surya, DCP Northeast, said: “We never arrested Sharif. He filed for anticipatory bail and was granted

the same by the court. We don’t think there’s any connection to Pracha here.”

A senior police officer from NorthEast district said, “Granting bail is the prerogative of the court. There might have been complaints against the accused and due to insufficient evidence, Malik was granted bail. The police are not involved here. Also, the district police gave a report to the court. Subsequent searches and investigation is done by Special Cell. The bails aren’t linked to the Special Cell investigation.”

Following the searches, police said while advocate Javed Ali co-operated, it faced opposition during the searches at Pracha’s office.

In his computers, the Special Cell claimed, it was looking for “incriminating documents, allegedly drafted by him/on his instructions maybe” while referring to Malik’s complaint and the Section 160 CrPC reply given to police in the name of or behalf of complainant Irshad Ali.

In this reply, Irshad Ali is said to have spoken in favour of the accused persons.

Police have now filed another FIR against Pracha for allegedly obstructing the investigation during the search operation.

Pracha represents at least three accused in the “larger conspiracy case” in the Delhi riots and many other accused in riot cases registered by police. He has called the searches an attack on due process, legal profession and Constitution of India.

WITH JIGNASA SINHA



The farmers were marching towards Raj Bhavan when they were lathicharged. PTI

## Farmers lathi-charged in Patna, several injured

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
PATNA, DECEMBER 29

OVER HALF-A-DOZEN farmers suffered minor injuries when police lathicharged them near Dak Bungalow crossing in Patna on Tuesday. Over 2,000 farmers, under the aegis of All India Farmers Struggle Coordination committee, were marching towards Raj Bhavan to submit their memorandum of demands when they were lathicharged. The farmers, however, were not allowed to reach Raj Bhavan. Left parties are also backing the farmers.

All India Kisan Mahasabha’s

state secretary Ramadhar Singh said farmers had come to Patna from Purnea, Araria, Gopalganj, East Champaran and Siwan and their own and their protest would only intensify in the coming days. A major segment of these farmers are share-croppers, he added.

Singh said Bihar farmers are in complete solidarity with farmers protesting along the Delhi-Haryana borders. “We want roll back of all the three farm laws. Bihar government did away with the mandi system in 2006 but did not provide any alternative system. Most farmers have to sell their paddy much below MSP,” Singh alleged.

## Loan ‘scam’: J&K HC grants bail to Hilal Rather

ARUN SHARMA  
JAMMU, DECEMBER 29

THE JAMMU and Kashmir High Court on Tuesday granted bail to Hilal Rather, son of former J&K finance minister A R Rather, who had been in jail for the past 10 months in connection with an alleged Rs 177-crore J&K Bank loan scam.

Ordering his release on bail subject to his furnishing a personal bond of Rs 5 lakh along with two sureties of the same amount, Justice Javed Iqbal Wani after hearing both the sides observed that “deprivation of liberty tantamount to punishment”.

“Prison hell destroys the manifestation of feelings and sensibility of a person,” Justice Wani observed, adding that the petitioner has been languishing in jail for more 10 months and he cannot be stopped from preparing his defence, which is of an essence in a criminal trial. The discretion for grant of bail has to be exercised on the well-established propositions and principles laid down from time to time by the apex court, the judge said.

While granting bail, the court also ordered the petitioner to co-operate with the investigating agency as and when required, without fail. He will face trial before the trial court without fail and will present himself before it as and when asked to do so, the order said.

Hilal Rather was arrested by the Anti Corruption Bureau on charges of misappropriation of crores of rupees granted as loan by Jammu and Kashmir Bank for construction of his ambitious Paradise Avenue township project at Narwal Bala in Jammu in 2012.

**TIRUCHIRAPPALLI CITY CORPORATION**  
**TENDER NOTICE No. 189/2020-2021**

The tenderers willing to submit tenders for various Improvement works (7 Works) valuing at the cost of **Rs. 6800.00 Lakhs**, to be executed under the **Tiruchirappalli Smart City Mission** are requested to submit tenders through **E-Tendering** procedure in <http://tntenders.gov.in> as well as through sealed hard copies on or before **03.00 p.m. of 02.02.2021**, which will be downloaded and opened at **04.00 p.m.** in the same day. If the date of receipt of tender happens to be holiday, then tenders will be received in the succeeding working day at the same time and venue. Other details may be obtained in the Engineering section, Main office during office hours in working days.

Tender conditions are available in the above said website.

**Commissioner,**  
**Tiruchirappalli City Corporation**

(E/1/0452/2020(Main) DIPR/5023/TENDER/2020

**NOTTICE INVITING e-TENDER (Re-Tender)**

College of Agriculture, Tripura invites electronic Bids through e-Procurement Portal of Government of Tripura (<https://tripuratenders.gov.in>) from reputed organizations for **SUPPLY OF HONEY BEE BOXES AND NUCLEUS HIVES** under NBB funded project ‘Integrated Beekeeping Development Centre/ Centre of Excellence’ at College of Agriculture, Tripura, Lembucherra, West Tripura. Detailed tender notice, schedules and tender documents can be obtained from <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>. **Last Date of submission of the e-Tender: 15/01/2021, 2:30 PM.**

Sd/-  
(Dr. D. Sen)  
**Principal In-charge**  
**College of Agriculture, Tripura**  
**Lembucherra, West Tripura**

ICA-C-2581-20

**Office of The Director General, Medical Health & F.W.,**  
Danda Lakhound, Sanastradhara Road, P.O. Gujraa, Dehradun, Uttarakhand  
e-mail: dghealth.uttarakhand@gmail.com, Phone no. 0135-2608736, Fax no. 0135-260874

Bid Identification No. 15P/Store/45/2020/21943 Dated 28.12.2020

**Government of Uttarakhand**  
**“e” procurement e-tender Notice**

1. Name of the Work: Supply of Dual test kit for HIV and Syphilis Screening for the Government Hospital in Uttarakhand as per details given in tender notice on <https://ukntenders.gov.in> portal.
2. Date and time of availability of bid documents in the portal: 31.12.2020 at 3:00 PM
3. Last Date and Time for receipt of bids in the portal: 13.01.2021 at 3:00 PM.
4. Name and Address of the Officer Inviting the Bid: Director General, MH & FW Uttarakhand, Dehradun.
5. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtaining from the website <https://ukntenders.gov.in>
6. Portal Registration: The contractor/bidder intending to participate in the bid is required to register in the portal using his/her active personal official id as his/her Login id and attach his/her valid digital signature certificate (DSC) to his/her unique login id. For any other queries the bidders are asked to contact through e-mail [cmsd.uk@gmail.com](mailto:cmsd.uk@gmail.com)

Sd/-  
**Director General**  
**Medical Health & FW**  
**Uttarakhand, Dehradun**

**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE**  
**Office of the Executive Engineer,**  
**Project Division, Yelahanka Zone,**  
**Byatarayanapura, Bengaluru-560 092.**

No.: BBMP/YNK/EE(Project)/TEND/17/2020-21 Date : 24.12.2020

**SHORT INVITING TENDER (NIT)**  
**SHORT TERM TENDER (TWO COVER SYSTEM)**  
(Through GoK e-Procurement Portal Only)

The Executive Engineer, Project Division, Yelahanka Zone, BBMP, Bengaluru on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP invites tenders from eligible contractors for the below mentioned construction works.

Sl. No.	Name of the Projects	Amount put to tender (Rs. in lakhs)	EMD (in Rs.)
1	Improvements to Someshwara Hill and surrounding areas at Attur Ward No. 03 in Yelahanka Satellite Town Sub-Division.	334.96	Rs. 5.03 lakhs
2	Improvements to roads and drains at Harohalli in Ward No. 02, Chowdeshwari Ward (2nd Call).	83.32	Rs. 1.67 lakhs
3	Providing and New Sculpture in Ward No. 10, Doddabommasandra (5th Call).	40.00	80,000/-
4	Maintenance and repair works at Primary Health Center at Agrahara Layout in Ward No. 05.	30.00	60,000/-
5	Maintenance and repair works at Primary Health Center at Jakkur in Ward No. 05.	40.00	80,000/-
6	Construction of Library Building at Agrahara Layout and Kattigenahalli in Ward No. 05.	83.30	Rs. 1.67 lakhs

**Calendar of Events:** (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from e-Procurement portal <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> (2) Last date & time for queries (through online) : **07.01.2021 upto 3.00 pm.** (3) Date & time of Pre-bid meeting: **07.01.2021 at 4.00 pm.** (4) Last date & time for receipt of tenders : **08.01.2021 upto 4.00 pm.** (5) Date of opening of Technical bid: **10.01.2021 at 11.00 am.** (6) Date of opening of Financial bid : **12.01.2021 at 4.00 pm, if possible.** Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, Project Division, Yelahanka Zone**

**COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC. BE AWARE**

Wear Mask, 6 Feet Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene

**TIRUPPUR CITY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**  
**TENDER NOTICE**

Tenders are invited in Two Cover System for **4 Packages** of Road works to a Sum of **Rs. 2000.00 Lakhs** under Special Road Programme (SRP) 2020-21 by the **Commissioner, Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation upto 03.00 P.M. on 05.02.2021** and the same will be opened by the Commissioner or his authorised person on the same day at **03.30 P.M.** in the presence of the contractors or their representatives present at that time. The tender documents can be downloaded from the website upto **2.00 P.M. on 04.02.2021**. Any further details will be heard from **Engineering Section of the Tiruppur Corporation office** in any of the working day if required. Commissioner, Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation reserves the rights to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof. **E-Submission of Tender is also accepted.**

**Web site address : <https://tntenders.gov.in>**  
Roc. No. : E/1/6680/2020  
Place : Tiruppur  
Date : 24.12.2020

**Commissioner,**  
**Tiruppur City Municipal Corporation**

DIPR/ 5029 /TENDER/2020

**KUVEMPUR UNIVERSITY**  
**Office of the Registrar Jnanasahyadri,**  
**Shankaraghatta-577451, Shivamogga District.**  
**Ph: 08282-256221, e-mail: kureg14@gmail.com**

**KU/DDE/ELMS/1757/2020-21** Date: 21-12-2020

**E-TENDER NOTIFICATION**

Kuvempu University, Shankaraghatta, invites tender for “**Setting-up of Fully Managed, Promotable, Scalable E-Learning Management System along with Development and Supply of E-Content for Kuvempu University**” from reputed/ eligible vendors as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements Act. The tenderers who have registered under e-governance, Government of Karnataka may participate through e-tendering system. Tender documents may be downloaded from the e-procurement Website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. The eligible tenderers shall submit their e-tender through e-procurement platform as scheduled in e-portal. For more information contact The Registrar, Kuvempu University, Jnanasahyadri, Shankaraghatta, Phone: 08282-256221, 9449825221.

Sd/- Registrar

DIPR/SGNG/79-12ZEN/ENR/2020-21

**JHARKHAND BIJLI VITRAN NIGAM LIMITED**  
CIN No. U40108JH2013SGC001702  
**Regd. Office : Engineering Building, H.E.C.,**  
**Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004,**  
**Telephone :-0651-2400799 &**  
**Fax : 0651-2400799 / <https://www.jbvnl.co.in>**

**CANCELLATION TENDER NOTICE**

Due to some unavoidable circumstances NIT No. 39/PR/JBVNL/2020-21 is hereby cancelled

स्वाहित एवं राष्ट्रहित में ऊर्जा बचावों। कृपया अपनी शिकायतों को टोल फ्री नं० 1800 345 6570 पर दर्ज करायें। Sd/-  
PRNo.234615 General Manager (IT)

**PR 238377 Jharkhand Bijlee Vitran Nigam Ltd(20-21).D**

**NOIDA** **New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida-201301 (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)

**E-TENDER NOTICE**

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

(A)	1.	66/NOIDA/GM/SM(WC-9)/ET/2020-21, Name of Work:- M/o Road (C/o Footpath & Drain infront of Plot No.-2 in Sector-94), Noida. <b>Cost-Rs. 50.31 Lacs</b>
Which can be uploaded by date <b>12.01.2021</b> upto <b>5.00 P.M.</b> . Pre-qualification shall be opened /downloaded on date <b>13.01.2021 at 11.00.AM.</b>		
(B)	1.	59/NOIDA/GM/SM(WC-9)/ET/2020-21, Name of Work:- Emergency Work (Fencing with RCC Post for Vavant Noida Land for Safety of land of Different Village and Sector of Work Circle-9), Noida. <b>Cost-Rs. 51.54 Lacs</b>
Which can be uploaded by date <b>05.01.2021</b> upto <b>5.00 P.M.</b> . Pre-qualification shall be opened /downloaded on date <b>06.01.2021 at 11.00.AM.</b>		
<b>General Manager, NOIDA</b>		

**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**

Tender No. 132-DRM-MB-20-21 Dated : 29.12.2020  
Sr. DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. 132-DRM-MB-20-21 closing date 28.01.2021 16:00 hrs. **Name of work :** Miscellaneous track work in connection with Electronic Interlocking work in the section of ADEN/HRI-I. **Tender Closing date/time :** 28.01.2021 16:00. **Cost of work :** Rs. 2796498.20. **Earnest Money :** Rs. 55900.00. **Tender Cost :** Rs. NIL. **Bidding start date :** 14.01.2021 and **period of Completion :** 06 months. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. For detail information please log into [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. **2894/20**

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
(POWER WING)

**CORRIGENDUM No. 02 NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS**  
It is hereby intimated to all concerned that the opening date of E-NIT No.: 04/2020-21/O&M DKT dated 02.12.2020 for Procurement of control cables/electrical accessories for replacement of 66/33 KV, 20 MVA Transformers with 16/20 MVA Transformers at 220 KV Sub Station Dhulkote & 66 KV Sub Station Chandigarh is hereby EXTENDED as under:-

**Document download start date & time** 1700 Hrs onward on 02.12.2020  
**Download end date & time** Up to 1700 Hrs on 11.01.2021  
**Last date & time of online Bid submission** Up to 1300 Hrs on 12.01.2021  
**Date & time of online Bid opening** After 1500 Hrs on 12.01.2021

For detailed E-NIT terms & conditions etc. please visit/download from [BBMB Website www.bbmb.gov.in](http://BBMBWebsite/www.bbmb.gov.in) or <http://bbmbeproc.apcprocure.com>  
**Sr. Executive Engineer, O&M Division, BBMB, Dhulkote, Ambala City**  
**1278-PR-TS-4** for your better tomorrow save energy today

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**

Sr. DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No 133-DRM-MB-20-21 closing date 14.01.2021 16:00 hrs. **Name of work:** GIS mapping of Indian Railways off track assets under Sr. DEN/II/MB. **Tender closing date/time:** 14.01.2021 16:00. **Cost of work:** Rs 749649.73; **Earnest Money:** Rs. 15000.00; **Tender Cost:** Rs.-NIL; **Bidding start date:** 31.12.2020 and **Period of Completion:** 01 Month. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. For detail information please log in to [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. **No.: 133-DRM-MB-20-21 Dated: 29.12.2020. 2893/20**

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
(Power Wing)

**Notice Inviting E-Tender**

NIT No.: 484/PHD/BH-14/76 Dated: 29.12.2020  
Name of office: Chief Engineer, System Operation, Planning & Design (Phendari) Dte., BBMB (P/W), Flat no. 75, SLDC Complex, BBMB, Industrial Area, Phase-I, Chandigarh

**Name of work:** Design, Manufacture, Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of new Microprocessor based digital type electro hydraulic Governors alongwith integration with existing SCADA of 5 no. machines of Bhakra Left Bank Power House.

<b>Tender documents download start date &amp; time</b>	30.12.2020 from 1100 hrs.
<b>Last date &amp; time of uploading complete prequalifying document</b>	29.01.2021 upto 1700 hrs.
<b>Tender document download end date &amp; time</b>	16.02.2021 upto 1700 hrs.
<b>Last date &amp; time of online bid submission</b>	25.02.2021 upto 1100 Hrs.
<b>Date &amp; time of online bid opening (Part-I)</b>	25.02.2021 from 1500 hrs. onwards

The Bids are to be submitted online. For the cost of specification, Earnest Money Deposit and detailed NIT, please visit BBMB website <https://bbmbeproc.apcprocure.com> & [www.bbmb.gov.in](http://www.bbmb.gov.in)

**402-PR-SO-5 For Your Better Tomorrow Save Energy Today**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**E-Tender Notice**

Sr. DEN/II/MB acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders against Tender No. 131-DRM-MB-20-21 closing date 28.01.2021, 16:00 hrs. **Name of work :** Improvement of goods shed at HRI station in the section of SSE/W/HRI under ADEN/HRI-I. **Tender closing date/time-** 28.01.2021 16:00. **Cost of work :** Rs. 3683761.80. **Earnest Money:** Rs. 74000.00. **Tender Cost :** Rs. NIL. **Bidding start date :** 14.01.2020 and **Period of Completion :** 06 Months. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. For detail information please log into [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. **Tender No. 131-DRM-MB-20-21 Dated : 29.12.2020 2895/2020**

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**STATE INDUSTRIES PROMOTION CORPORATION OF TAMILNADU LIMITED**  
19-A, RUKMANI LAKSHMIAPATHY ROAD, EGMORE, CHENNAI - 600 008.  
CIN U74999TN1971SGC005967

Tender Notice NIT.No.110/CW/DO/T.N.114/2020-21 Dt.:28.12.2020

For and on behalf of State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited, sealed tenders are invited under “Two Cover System” for the following work from Class-I State level Civil Contractors registered in TN - State/Central or Quasi Government Organisations having experience in similar nature of works. Tenders will be received upto 3.00 PM on **19.01.2021** and the same will be opened on the same day at 3.30 PM.

Name of Work	Approx. value of work	EMD
A)Construction of Solid Waste Disposal Centre at SIPCOT Industrial Complex, Thoothukudi.	Rs.505.50 Lakhs (including GST @12%)	Rs.2,62,750/-*
B) Providing Arrangements in the Solid Waste Disposal Centre such as Construction of RCC Compound Wall, Pipe Culvert and Construction of Steel Truss including Formation of Road at SIPCOT Industrial Growth Centre Gangaikondan.		

\* in the form of Demand Draft drawn in favour of SIPCOT Ltd., payable at Chennai. (In the Tenderer's Name only)

The tender Schedule can be Downloaded at free of cost from the website: [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in)

DIPR/5041/TENDER/2020 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SIPCOT, CHENNAI-8

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**  
**APEWIDC, VIJAYAWADA**  
Door No: 9-76, Sai Fortune Heights, Block-A, Vaddesavaram, Guntur (DT) - 522 502

**National Competitive Bidding**  
**e-procurement Notice Inviting Tender**  
e-mail:[apewidc.mdpeshi@gmail.com](mailto:apewidc.mdpeshi@gmail.com),  
Mobile No: 9704701529, 9704701236 & 08465295758  
NIT No.:107/MD/APEWIDC/VJA/2020-21 Dated: 29.12.2020

Tenders are invited on e-procurement platform for “Construction of Tribal Engineering college at Kurupam (V&M) of Vizianagaram District” with an estimated cost of Rs.122.60 Crs.

Submission of Tender through Online: From 30-12-2020 to 12-01-2021 upto 16.00 Hrs and opening on :12-01-2021 at 16.30 Hrs. For all details, visit -procurement Platform @ <https://tender.apcprocurement.gov.in/>

Tenders shall be submitted through Online e-procurement Platform [www.apcprocurement.gov.in](http://www.apcprocurement.gov.in),

**Note:** Changes / Modifications if any will be communicated through the above e-Procurement platform only.

**Sd/- Managing Director, APEWIDC, Vijayawada**

**INDIRA GANDHI INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES**  
(A Super Speciality, Autonomous Institute Of Govt. Of Bihar)  
IGIMS Medical College, IGIMS Nursing College  
Sheikhpura, Patna-14. EPBX:0612-2297099/2297631, Website: [www.igims.org](http://www.igims.org)

**Notice Inviting Tender**  
Etendering mode only on website- [www.eproc.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in).  
**E-Tender Notice No.: 11/2020-2021/Bio-Medical Equipment/IGIMS/Store**  
Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Patna invites e-bids from eligible and qualified manufacturers or their authorized distributors / agents for supply, installation and commissioning of Modular OT and supply of Fowler bed for the state cancer institute, as per following schedule.

1. Name &
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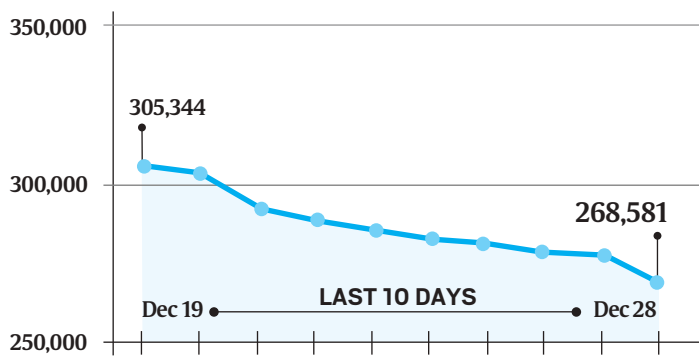
#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to [explained@indianexpress.com](mailto:explained@indianexpress.com)

## CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

### INDIA ACTIVE CASES

268,581



Note: The Dec 28 figure in this graph is based on the government update on Dec 29

### INDIA TOTAL CASES

10,224,303

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on Dec 29

### WORLD TOTAL CASES

81,508,329

Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11 pm on Dec 29

## Study: Kids can identify emotions on masked faces



Sadness, anger and fear. Ashley Ruba, UW—Madison

WHEN MASKS cover a significant part of the face, how well can people understand the facial expressions of the people wearing them? Children can still understand, to an extent, the expressions on masked faces, according to a new study published in PLOS One.

"We now have this situation where adults and kids have to interact all the time with people whose faces are partly covered, and a lot of adults are wondering if that's going to be a problem for children's emotional development," researcher Ashley Ruba said in a statement on the research released by the University of Wisconsin—Madison.

Psychologists at UW—Madison showed more than 80 children, ages 7 to 13, photos of faces that were unobstructed, covered by a surgical mask, or wearing sunglasses. The faces displayed sadness, anger or fear. From a list of six labels, the children were asked to assign an emotion to each face.

When the faces were uncovered, the children were correct as often as 66%. This was well above the proba-

bility (about 17%) of guessing one correct emotion from the six options. With a mask in the way, they correctly identified sadness about 28% of the time, anger 27% of the time, and fear 18% of the time.

"Not surprisingly, it was tougher with parts of the faces covered. But even with a mask covering the nose and mouth, the kids were able to identify these emotions at a rate better than chance," Ruba said.

Sunglasses made anger and fear difficult to identify, suggesting the eyes and eyebrows are important to those facial expressions. Fear, often confused with surprise, was also the trickiest for children to spot behind a mask.

The faces were revealed to the children slowly, with scrambled pixels falling into their proper place over 14 stages. This was to simulate the way real-world interactions may require piecing things together from odd angles or fleeting glimpses.

Source: University of Wisconsin—Madison



PAPER CLIP

NEW RESEARCH

# Lessons from a pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought rare attention to science, particularly aspects related to healthcare, and India's response has underlined its existing scientific capabilities. In 2021, the country can look forward to improvements in vaccine research, among other scientific achievements



AMITABH SINHA

SCIENCE EDITOR

THANKS TO the Covid-19 epidemic, 2020 brought rare attention on science, particularly on the health sciences. Not only did subjects like public health, the mechanism of spread of viral diseases, or the state of country's scientific research become part of mainstream discussions, a large number of people even became aware of issues like the intricacies of vaccine development, or the difficulties in clinical trials of drugs and vaccines.

Science, and the tools it has gifted, was the primary weapon to be deployed in the fight against the pandemic, whether it related to carrying out of diagnostic tests, or clinical management of more serious patients to prevent deaths, or the search for effective drugs and vaccines.

### Not as bad as feared

India hasn't fared as badly as many had feared at the start of the outbreak. This is not to belittle the nearly 1.5 lakh deaths that have been attributed to the disease, or the millions whose livelihood has been affected. But, considering India's population and density, the disregard for public hygiene, and the rickety public health infrastructure, much worse had been predicted.

Part of it could be attributed to sheer luck, at least until we fully understand the biological reasons behind the steady decline in the number of cases in the last three months. This decline has survived state Assembly and local body elections, a crowded festival season, and a gradual lifting of all restrictions on movement and assembly of people, and seems irreversible now. This, when most other major countries are struggling to cope with a second or third wave. Relatively speaking, the disease has been much less severe in India, and has caused much fewer deaths on an average.

But the interventions made to reduce the impact of the pandemic have worked as well, some of these more effectively than the others. There was a lot that did not go right, but most of these related to administrative decisions, or the lack of effective communication. For example, most scientists now believe, that the lockdown, though essential, could have been implemented in a better way, and the problem of migrants starting to walk back to their villages should have been anticipated. Similarly, the messaging from the Indian Council of Medical Research, or the Health Ministry left a lot to be desired.

It is the lessons learnt from this crisis that we could see guiding our science and technology policy in the coming years, not just in the realm of health sector, but science in general.

### Inherent scientific capacities

After the initial period of confusion, India could benefit from the fairly robust science and technology infrastructure and network it has built over the years. Nothing exemplified this better than the ramping up of number of diagnostic tests that were carried out to detect coronavirus infections. It started with just one laboratory in Pune, but very soon more than 1,500 laboratories, government as well as private, had begun testing samples. At its peak, India was testing 14 to 15 lakh samples every day.



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

No other country, including some in the developed world, could boast such widespread testing network. Increasing the number of people being tested contributed in a major way to restricting the spread of the disease.

Another example was the way in which the initial problem of lack of adequate testing kits, reagents and chemicals, and medical equipment like PPE suits and even sanitisers, was overcome. Most of these used to be imported, not because India could not manufacture them domestically, but probably it was more cost-effective to get it from abroad. But the supply became increasingly uncertain due to travel restrictions, and burgeoning global demand.

In a matter of weeks, Indian companies in collaboration with research institutions began producing these at home. New, more economical, diagnostic tests were developed and deployed. PPE kits was no longer in short supply. Similar was the case with equipment like ventilators and oxygen meters. The private industry, especially small start-ups, contributed in a big way to filling the demand gap.

One relatively unappreciated fact has been the utilisation of primary healthcare network, and ASHA and anganwadi workers, in contact tracing and awareness efforts. In some cases, more than 100 contacts of an infected person were traced, tested and isolated. It showed that while the primary healthcare network might be weak, and not empowered, it was not entirely broken.

### Vaccine development

Vaccines are another area where India's existing capacities are a big asset, and can be leveraged effectively. Notwithstanding who develops the vaccine, India is going to be an important player in the manufacturing and distribution of these vaccines, because of the production capacities that have been built over the years. That would also mean that

India would also get early access to these vaccines, with the government not having to spend large sums of money like the United States or some European countries had to do to pre-book the vaccines.

We are already seeing this unroll. The first vaccine is likely to become available not later than a few weeks from now. Early logistical planning for transport, storage and distribution already having been finalised would ensure quick deployment.

### Looking ahead

An event as disruptive as the Covid-19 pandemic invariably turns out to be a blessing in disguise for making systemic improvements, if those in command are willing to imbibe the lessons that have emerged. Here are some of the things that we are likely to see happening in the science and technology, and health, sectors in the coming months and years.

### ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT: If anything, the experience of this

pandemic has made the government more convinced of the need for self-reliance, at least in the strategic sectors. And that would include the science and technology sector as well. The fact that India was not even producing relatively simple things like ventilators had come as a shock to the government authorities at the start of the outbreak. Going forward, there is likely to be greater encouragement for laboratories and industry to support domestic manufacturing of components and instruments. Scientists and industry expect relevant policy changes in the coming year.

**PROMOTING STAR-UP CULTURE:** This is related to the *atmanirbhar* push. The present government had been promising support to start-up ventures long before the outbreak. But the pandemic also showed how important this is. It was these start-ups that filled the supply gaps in medical equipment and instruments. The most reliable information man-

agement systems, providing crucial data about the epidemic, were set up and run by young entrepreneurs, students and researchers.

During the pandemic itself, the government announced a major push for private participation in the space sector, for example. About half a dozen new space-related enterprises have sprung up in the last two years, some of which even had a special audience with the Prime Minister a couple of weeks ago. A similar push is expected for start-ups in the health sector as well.

### STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION:

Collaboration between government, academia and industry is again a process that was initiated before the pandemic but is likely to gain momentum. Related to this is this government's belief that there is need to give a 'direction' to scientific research, at least to the scientific output, that comes out of our laboratories and industry. This obviously upsets those who believe that basic research must not be constrained in any way. But the government has been insisting that several scientific facilities could be much more productive if they align their research towards finding technology solutions to the country's needs.

The space for institutionalised collaboration between the government, industry and the scientific community is already being created in several new missions, or technology hubs, that are being set up. In most of these missions, or hubs, it is the industry or the academia that is playing the lead role, while the government tries to facilitate an enabling environment.

### STRONGER HEALTH SYSTEM:

The dreadful aspect of the pandemic is that it might not be the last one. In the last few years, we have seen outbreaks of several viral diseases. Thankfully, they never became as widespread as the current one. But that is no guarantee that a future one would not be more infectious, or deadly. The current pandemic should prompt a strengthening of the public health infrastructure. A few states are already working on creating, or augmenting, a dedicated surveillance workforce that can detect similar outbreaks in future, and help contain it at an early stage. Greater empowerment of primary healthcare staff is also expected.

Also, while the ICMR, essentially a research organization, was put in the forefront of the fight against the epidemic, the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), set up in 2004 for precisely this purpose, was pushed in the background. As we ramp up our preparedness to deal with similar epidemics in future, scientists say it would be more effective to empower the IDSP, rather than burden ICMR with a job that is not its core expertise.

**VACCINE RESEARCH:** Though the existing vaccine manufacturing capacity is coming in handy, India has been found wanting in development of its own vaccine. As of now, there are only two Indian candidates in stage three clinical trials. A country the size, and scientific capability of India, should have been one of the front-runners in vaccine research. But that has traditionally been one of the weak points, which some research institutions now want to address.

**NEW SCIENCE POLICY:** A new Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy is in the final stages of preparation, and is likely to be unveiled in the next three to four months. It is expected to do to the science sector what the National Education Policy, released earlier this year, seeks to do for education. Not unexpectedly, it is likely to be heavily influenced by the lessons learnt during the pandemic.

**TOMORROW: GOVERNMENT & POLITICS**

# Why Dedicated Freight Corridor matters — for Railways, the country

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi inaugurated a 351-km section between Khurja and Bhaupur in Uttar Pradesh for commercial operations of the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) on Tuesday. He also dedicated to the nation a state-of-the-art Operation Control Centre in Prayagraj.

The total 2,843-km project — billed as the largest rail infrastructure being built in independent India — has been in the making since 2006 with little movement on the ground. It is finally ready to take off, albeit in phases.

### What is the DFC?

The DFC consists of two arms. The section launched on Tuesday is part of the 1,839-km Eastern DFC that starts at Sohnewal (Ludhiana) in Punjab and ends at Dankuni in West Bengal. The other arm is the around 1,500-km Western DFC from Dadri in Uttar Pradesh to JNPT in Mumbai, touching all major ports along the way.

The 351-km section stretches between Khurja, the 12th stop after Sohnewal in the North, to New Bhaupur, near Kanpur. Other

stretches are Sohnewal to Khurja (365 km), Bhaupur to Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay (Mughalsarai) (400 km), then to Sonnagar in West Bengal (137 km), then to Dankuni via Gomoh in Jharkhand (538 km).

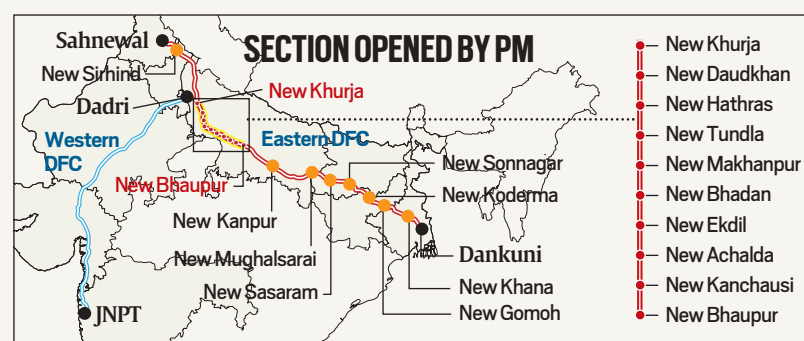
There is also a section under construction between Dadri and Khurja to connect the Eastern and Western arms.

### Why is it important?

Around 70% of the freight trains currently running on the Indian Railway network are slated to shift to the freight corridors, leaving the paths open for more passenger trains.

Built at a cost of Rs 5,750 crore through a loan from World Bank (which is funding a majority of the EDFC; the WDFC is being funded by the Japan International Cooperation Agency), the new stations in this section are Bhaupur, Kanchausi, Achalda, Ekdil, Bhadan, Makhanpur, Tundla, Hathras, Daudkan and Khurja. This section passes through Kanpur Dehat, Auraiya, Etawah, Firozabad, Hathras, Aligarh and Bulandshahr districts in Uttar Pradesh.

This is like building an entire railway network from scratch, independent of Indian Railways. All the installations are new.



Including the stations, and that's why the names of a majority of its stations are prefixed with 'New', such as New Bhaupur, New Khurja etc.

Tracks on DFC are designed to carry heavier loads than most of Indian Railways. DFC will get track access charge from the parent Indian Railways, and also generate its own freight business.

### What trains will use the new section?

Freight trains plying on this section from now on will help decongest the existing Kanpur-Delhi main line of Indian Railways, which currently handles trains at 150% of its

line capacity. This section currently has over 50 passenger trains and around 60 goods trains jostling for paths daily. The new section means on the Indian Railway main line, more passenger trains can be pumped in and those trains can, in turn, achieve better punctuality.

Foodgrain and fertilisers from the northern region are transported to the eastern and Northeast regions. From East and Northeast, coal, iron ore, jute and petroleum products are transported North and West.

### What else will change?

There are certain firsts for this section. For instance, 68 existing level crossings have

been eliminated to augment speed, the only major section on Indian Railways that is free from any permanent or temporary speed restrictions. This in a way sets the bar for rest of the DFC to also make stretches free from speed restrictions, or "cautions" as they are termed in Railways.

Freight trains usually suffer from unpredictable running times and low speeds of around 25 km per hour. But on this new section they can run at 50-60 kph.

This section will also catch the freight traffic originating from key centres such as Kanpur Dehat, Auraiya, Etawah, Firozabad, Hathras, Aligarh and Bulandshahr. The existing industrial areas of Aligarh, Khurja, Firozabad, Agra and Bhaupur will become major growth centres of the area, the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation projects in its business development plan.

These areas are agriculture hubs producing potato, paddy and maize. "The agricultural produce will get a pan-India market because of cheaper and faster DFC connectivity," a spokesperson for the DFCCIL told *The Indian Express*.

New Makhanpur (Firozabad) and New Daudkhan (Aligarh) will be opened as common user terminals aimed at local farmers in

sending their produce to the larger markets.

### What about the rest of the DFC?

More sections will keep getting commissioned in the coming months.

There is 61% progress in the Bhaupur to Deen Dayal Upadhyay section, and 180 km of the 402 km will be complete by December 21, year while 22 km will be done by June 2022. Thereafter the stretch to Sonnagar will see 100 km completed by March next year.

The 401-km Khurja to Sanhewal section has had only 39% progress. It will be done by June 2022.

A 46-km link between Khurja (Eastern) and Dadri (Western) will be ready by March 2021. By December 2021, Kanpur-Khurja area will get connected to the western ports of Kandla, Mundra, and Pipava, via the 127-km Dadri-Rewari section in the Western arm, its target advanced by several months.

In the Western DFC, the section between Rewari (Haryana) and Madar (Rajasthan) has been completed. The subsequent sections are up to Palanpur in Gujarat (to be done in the next three months), then to Makarpura (by March 2022) and finally to JNPT (June 2022).



TOPOF THE  
WORLD

Ghislaine Maxwell

## UNITED STATES

## Trafficking case: British socialite denied bail

**New York:** A US judge on Monday denied bail to Ghislaine Maxwell, citing the risk the British socialite might flee from charges she assisted in the late financier Jeffrey Epstein's trafficking of girls. US District Judge Alison Nathan in Manhattan said federal prosecutors persuaded her that Maxwell "poses a flight risk" despite her proposed \$28.5 million bail package, and should remain jailed because "no conditions of release" reasonably assured she would appear in court. Maxwell, 59, has pleaded not guilty to helping Epstein recruit and groom girls as young as 14 years old for sex in the mid-1990s, and not guilty to perjury for denying her involvement under oath.

REUTERS

## ETHIOPIA

## Journalist held, no reason given by police, say kin

**Nairobi:** A Reuters cameraman, Kumerma Gemechu, was arrested in Addis Ababa on Thursday and will be kept in custody for at least two weeks, his family said. No reason was provided to the family for Thursday's arrest, and police did not respond to Reuters requests for comment. Kumerma, 38, has worked for Reuters as a freelance cameraman for a decade. At a brief court hearing on Friday, where no lawyer was present, a judge ordered Kumerma's detention for a further 14 days to give police time to investigate, the family said.

REUTERS

## CROATIA

## 1 killed as 6.4 magnitude quake strikes

**Zagreb:** An earthquake of magnitude 6.4 struck central Croatia Tuesday, killing a child, injuring many people, officials said. Rescuers tried to pull people from the rubble of collapsed buildings. TV footage showed, and army were sent in to help. Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic said: "We have information that one girl was killed. We have no other information..." In neighbouring Slovenia, the STA news agency said the sole nuclear power plant, which is 100 km from the epicentre, was shut down as a precaution.

REUTERS

## US House votes to override Trump's veto of defense Bill, over to Senate

Senate to also wrangle over \$2,000 stimulus cheque amid Democrat push

## REUTERS

WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 29

THE US Senate was set to grapple on Tuesday with whether to increase payments to Americans reeling from the Covid-19 pandemic and override President Donald Trump's veto of a \$740 billion defense bill.

Democrats, with help from Trump's Twitter feed, are pushing for a vote on the additional money, a step they believe could give them an advantage in two Georgia runoff elections next week that will determine which party controls the Senate under Joe Biden.

The bill faces a tough path in the Republican-led Senate, with many Republicans pointing to hundreds of billions of dollars in added costs of Covid-19 relief.

A combined \$892 billion bipartisan coronavirus relief package and \$1.4 trillion spending bill that Trump signed into law on Sunday contains \$600 cheques for people hit hard financially by the pandemic. The Democratic-led House of Representatives on Monday approved the increase in direct payments to \$2,000.

Separately, the House on Monday voted to override

**EXPLAINED** What is the NDAA?

THE NATIONAL Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which authorises \$740 billion in spending and outlines Pentagon policy, typically passes with strong bipartisan support as it funds the US's security portfolio. It has been signed into law every year for nearly six consecutive decades.

Trump's veto of the defense policy bill by 322-87. If the Senate seconds the House action, it would be the first veto override of Trump's presidency, which ends on January 20.

A Senate vote on the defense bill veto had been expected on Wednesday but could be delayed until the weekend by political wrangling over the stimulus money.

With the New Year's Day holiday and a new Congress due to be sworn in Sunday, lawmakers have only a short time to act.

## Biden says Trump aides setting 'roadblocks' for transition team

## REUTERS

WILMINGTON, WASHINGTON, DECEMBER 29

PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE Biden said on Monday many of America's security agencies had been "hollowed out" under President Donald Trump and the lack of information being provided to his transition team by the outgoing administration was an "irresponsibility."

"We've encountered roadblocks from the political leadership at the Department of Defense and the Office of Management and Budget," Biden said after a meeting with his foreign policy team. "Right now we just aren't getting all of the information that we need from the outgoing administration in key national security areas. It's nothing short, in my view, of irresponsibility."

After Biden beat Trump in the November 3 election, the Democrat's team only began meeting with administration officials in late November to coordinate the handover.



Construction for the upcoming presidential inauguration ceremony outside the US Capitol Building. Reuters

Trump, a Republican, has refused to concede defeat and his administration only authorized cooperation with Biden on November 23. Biden takes office on January 20.

Earlier this month, Biden's team said they had met resistance to requests for information from some Pentagon officials.

The Pentagon pushed back. In a statement, acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller said

the Pentagon had conducted 164 interviews with over 400 officials and provided more than 5,000 pages of documents.

But Biden reiterated his team's concerns on Monday. When he takes office, he will inherit a wide range of foreign policy and national security challenges, including China, Iran and North Korea, as well as the coronavirus pandemic raging across the globe.

## Russia's jail service tells Navalny to appear or face imprisonment

ASSOCIATED PRESS MOSCOW, DECEMBER 29

RUSSIA'S FEDERAL penitentiary service has given top Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny one day to report to its office or face imprisonment if he comes back to Russia after the deadline.

Navalny is convalescing in Germany after his August poisoning with a nerve agent, which he has blamed on the Kremlin. Russian authorities have denied their involvement.

The Federal Penitentiary Service issued a statement on Monday saying that an article by doctors from Berlin's Charite hospital and published in medical journal *The Lancet* indicated that Navalny has fully recuperated.

The prison service demanded that Navalny report to its office in line with the terms of a 3 1/2-year suspended sentence he received for a 2014 conviction. If he misses the deadline, he could be imprisoned, the statement said.

Navalny's lawyer, Vadim Kobzev, tweeted that the agency told the politician to show up at its office on Tuesday morning.

Navalny, who previously said that he planned to return to Russia once he fully recovered, scoffed at the demand, saying that the Federal Penitentiary Service's reference to the article in *The Lancet* amounted to the government accepting he was poisoned.

"That means that the state has officially recognized the poisoning," he tweeted.

"And where is the criminal case then?"



Protesters take part in a rally against the dissolution of Parliament in Kathmandu on Tuesday. Reuters

## Madhav Nepal: Will forget everything if Oli accepts mistake

SHIRISH B PRADHAN KATHMANDU, DECEMBER 29

CHAIRMAN OF the ruling Nepal Communist Party's rival faction Madhav Kumar Nepal said on Tuesday that the party could still be united if Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli was willing to accept his mistakes, as thousands of protesters marched through the streets of Kathmandu against the dissolution of Parliament.

Madhav Nepal made the comments while addressing a massive protest rally organised by his faction in Kathmandu, which was attended by former PMs Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' and Jhala Nath Khanal.

"We are ready to forget everything if Oli accepts his mistakes," Madhav Nepal said.

He also accused Oli of practicing anti-democratic activities by making decisions against the Constitution and the general public.

"All the political parties, intellectuals, teachers, students and public are on the streets against the unconstitutional move of the Oli-led government. The lower House will soon be revived," Madhav Nepal was quoted as saying by *My Republica* newspaper.

Nepal plunged into a politi-

cal crisis on December 20 after Oli, known for his pro-Beijing leanings, in a surprise move, recommended dissolving the 275-member House, amidst a tussle for power with Prachanda.

Acting on the PM's recommendation, President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House the same day and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10, sparking protests from a large section of the NCP led by Prachanda, also a co-chair of the ruling party.

Nepal's Supreme Court on Friday issued a show-cause notice to the Oli-led government, asking it to submit a written clarification over its decision to abruptly dissolve Parliament.

## China delegation holds talks with opp leaders

Guo Yezhou, a vice-minister of the Communist Party of China, on Tuesday met the main opposition Nepali Congress chief Sher Bahadur Deuba and discussed the latest political developments in the country following the dissolution of Parliament by Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

The meeting also focused on relations between Nepal and China. *The Kathmandu Post* quoted shadow foreign minister Narayan Khadka as saying. PTI

## Nirav Modi's remand extended till Jan 7

ADITI KHANNA LONDON, DECEMBER 29

FUGITIVE DIAMOND merchant Nirav Modi appeared via video-link for a routine 28-day remand hearing on Tuesday before Westminster Magistrates' Court in London, where he was further remanded in custody until January 7 to conclude hearings in his extradition case.

Nirav, 49, wanted in connection with the estimated \$2-billion PNB scam case, has been in Wandsworth Prison in London since his arrest last year following India's extradition request.

The final hearings in the extradition case are scheduled over two days, on January 7 and 8, when District Judge Samuel Goode is scheduled to hear closing arguments from both sides before he hands down his judgment a few weeks later.

At the last full hearing in the case in November, Judge Goode heard the arguments for and against the admissibility of certain witness statements provided by the CBI and ED and ruled that the evidence to estab-



Nirav has been in a UK prison since his arrest last year

lish a prima facie case of fraud and money laundering against the fugitive diamantaire is broadly admissible.

He concluded that he considered himself "bound" by the previous UK court rulings in the extradition case of Vijay Mallya.

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), arguing on behalf of the Indian authorities, had stressed that the evidence, including witness statements under Section 161 of India's CrPC, meets the required threshold for the UK court to determine whether Modi has a case to answer before the Indian judicial system.

That Mallya has a case to answer in India in his fraud and money laundering case has cleared various levels of the UK judicial system and is currently undergoing a "confidential" legal issue before UK Home Secretary Priti Patel can consider signing off on his extradition. PTI



Rohingya refugees disembark a Navy vessel as they arrive at the Bhasan Char island. Reuters

## Bangladesh sends more Rohingya to island

## REUTERS

BHASAN CHAR, DECEMBER 29

AS A Bangladeshi naval ship anchored off a remote Bay of Bengal island, some of the Rohingya Muslim refugees aboard clapped in anticipation of starting a new life on a piece of land that did not even exist two decades ago.

Carrying poultry and sacks of belongings, they are part of a second group of about 1,800 Rohingya that Bangladesh moved on Tuesday from cramped refugee camps on the mainland to the low-lying island despite opposition from rights groups.

"Welcome to Bhasan Char," read a banner as the refugees

walked off the jetty on the island. Navy trucks and tractor trailers took them to multiple rows of concrete houses with their pinkish-red painted tin roofs.

The Bangladesh navy took the 1,804 Rohingya to the island in five ships, with the refugees sitting on wooden benches on deck, some clutching ducks, pigeons and chickens in bamboo baskets and wearing orange life vests and masks against the coronavirus.

Bangladesh says it has spent more than \$350 million of its own money to ready housing and other infrastructure to voluntarily move some 100,000 Rohingya to the island in an effort to ease overcrowding in camps near the Myanmar border, even though rights groups said many were be-

ing coerced or paid to move. The government denies the charges.

"Mashallah! Wonderful place," one man, a father of six, exclaimed. "We are so happy with the accommodation. The children are so excited to see the playground," he said, but added: "We just pray floods don't kill us."

"There's so much suffering and conflict in the camp," another man said, referring to his old refugee-camp home.

The government said earlier this month that the housing was built on concrete foundation which could withstand natural disasters, noting it withstood cyclone Amphan in May which killed more than 100 people in Bangladesh and eastern India.

A middle-aged man who reached Bhasan Char with his

wife and three children on Tuesday said his camp leader had convinced him that they were better off relocating than staying back in the dilapidated shelters on the mainland where one million of them live cheek by jowl.

The government says the relocation is voluntary but some refugees from the first group have spoken about being coerced to go. The human rights group Amnesty International also expressed concern.

"The island is completely safe," Foreign Minister Abdul Momen told Reuters in the capital, Dhaka.

"The Rohingya people who have shifted there are very happy with the arrangement. Some evil groups are spreading negative propaganda," he said.



Fashion designer Pierre Cardin at the inauguration of the Pierre Cardin Museum in Paris in 2014. AP file

the way a glass gives shape to the water poured into it."

Yet his men's ready-to-wear designs, introduced in 1960, were

decidedly more faithful to the body's outlines. Built on narrow shoulders, high armholes and a fitted waist, they were stream-

lined and somewhat severe, dispensing in some cases with traditional collars in favor of the simple banded Nehru, a namesake adaptation of the style worn by the Indian prime minister.

Those suits were slow to catch on in the United States — until the Beatles appeared in knockoff versions on the Ed Sullivan television show in 1966. Nehru-mania ensued.

Mr. Cardin had laid the foundations for a global empire by the late 1950s. At a time when France was fashion's uncontested epicenter, he was bringing his designs to Moscow, Tokyo and Beijing, doing more to erode international boundaries than any designer of the day.

He conceived of himself above all as a prolific ideas man, relishing his role as the overseer

of a realm that encompassed clothing accessories, furniture, household products and fragrances sold through some 800 licensees in more than 140 countries on five continents.

"I wash with my own soap," he once boasted. "I wear my own perfume, go to bed with my own sheets, have my own food products. I live on me."

Chocolates, pens, cigarettes, frying pans, alarm clocks and cassette tapes — all bore the Cardin logo, as did shoes, lingerie, blouses, neckwear, wallets, belts and, more recently, an Android tablet. By the mid-1980s, Mr. Cardin stood at the helm of a marketing organization and network of licensees paying him royalties of 5 to 12 percent. "I was born an artiste," he told *The Times* in 1987, "but I am a businessman."

Not content to preside over an omnipresent global brand, Mr. Cardin turned his rapacious attention to theaters and motels, media and even restaurants, in 1981 buying Maxim's, once the world's most famous restaurant, a landmark of the belle époque on the Rue Royale in Paris.

He neither boasted of his protean ambitions nor apologized for them. "I don't play cards, I don't smoke, I don't drink, I don't like sports," he told Ms. Bender. "I just work. It's marvelous. It amuses me."

Unlike many designers today, whose businesses are operated by global conglomerates, Mr. Cardin had no partners. "I'm the financier, the banker and the creator," he said. "I've always done what I wanted because I've never had a boss." NYT

## Pierre Cardin, designer to the famous and merchant to masses, dies at 98

RUTH LA FERLA NEW YORK, DECEMBER 29

PIERRE CARDIN, the visionary designer and licensing pioneer who invented the business of fashion as it is conducted today, has died in France. He was 98.

His death was confirmed on Tuesday by the French Academy of Fine Arts. He died at the American Hospital in Neuilly-sur-Seine, just outside Paris, his family said, according to Agence France-Presse.

"Fashion is not enough," Mr. Cardin once told Eugenia Sheppard, the American newspaper columnist and fashion critic. "I don't want to be just a designer."

He never was just that. He clothed the famous — artists, po-

litical luminaries, tastemakers and members of the haute bourgeoisie — but he was also a merchant to the masses with an international brand, his name affixed to an outpouring of products, none too exalted or too humble to escape his avid eye.

There were bubble dresses and bath towels, aviator jumpsuits and automobiles, fragrances and ashtroys, even pickle jars. Planting his flag on the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré in Paris, he proceeded to turn the country's fashion establishment on its head, reproducing fashions for mass, ready-to-wear consumption.

In a career of more than three-quarters of a century, Mr. Cardin remained a futurist. "He had this wonderful embrace of technology and was in love with the notion of progress," said

Andrew Bolton, the head curator at the Costume Institute of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

In 1958, Mr. Cardin put models in crash helmets matched with tiny skirts and colored stockings. He dressed men, and women, in spacesuits. In 1969, NASA commissioned him to create an interpretation of a spacesuit, a signal inspiration in his later work. "The dresses I prefer," he said at the time, "are those I invent for a life that does not yet exist."

Mr. Cardin drew inspiration from everywhere, be it the pagodas he visited in China, Op Art painting or automotive design.

"I'm always inspired by something outside, not by the body itself," he told *The New York Times* in 1985. Clothing, he said, was meant "to give the body its shape,



New Delhi





TATAS' HOLDING IN JV TO RISE TO 83.67%, AIRASIA GROUP'S TO GO DOWN TO 16.33%

# Tata Sons to buy 32.67% stake in AirAsia India for \$37.66 million

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

IN A move that is being pegged as the first step in consolidation of Tata Group's aviation portfolio, Tata Sons will purchase 32.67 per cent stake in AirAsia India from Malaysian AirAsia Group Bhd, taking its holding in the joint-venture airline up to 83.67 per cent. In a filing to the Malaysian stock exchanges, the AirAsia Group said that the deal, which is worth \$37.66 million, will see its share in the Indian budget airline go down to 16.33 per cent.

As of date, AirAsia held a 49 per cent stake in AirAsia India, while Tata Sons held 51 per cent. In ad-

dition to this, Tata Sons also owns 51 per cent stake in full-service airline Vistara, the rest of which it is owned by Singapore Airlines. Tata Sons also placed an expression of interest in the ongoing disinvestment process of Air India. In June, AirAsia had approached the Tata Group to sell its stake, as mandated by the terms of the joint-venture, according to which Tata Sons has the first right to buy out the stake. The Malaysian company, led by Tony Fernandes, had stopped funding the Indian venture following the Covid-19-led slump in aviation businesses. In November, AirAsia said it was reviewing its India and Japan businesses.

Elaborating on the rationale of selling a significant part of its stake

## AIRASIA APPROACHED TATA GROUP IN JUNE

■ In June, AirAsia had approached the Tata group to sell its stake, as mandated by the terms of the joint-venture, according to which Tata Sons has the first right to buy out the stake.

in AirAsia India to Tata Sons, the Malaysian firm said in the stock-exchange filing. "Since the start of the pandemic, the aviation industry has been one of the hardest hit industries. Airlines around the world

have cancelled flights and grounded planes and AirAsia India is no exception. Due to this, the directors expect further capital requirements for AirAsia India. As India is a non-core market for AirAsia (being a non-ASEAN country), the company will continue to regularly re-assess its business strategies and dispose of non-core investments".

"This transaction will reduce cash burn of the company in the short term and allow AirAsia to concentrate on recovery of its key ASEAN markets in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines in the long run," it added. The airline group exited its Japan business earlier this year. Tata Sons did not offer a com-

ment on the development.

The deal values AirAsia India at \$115.27 million. For the month of November, the airline had 6.6 per cent market share in India's domestic air traffic, while the country's largest airline IndiGo had 53.9 per cent share. AirAsia India's revenues fell 69 per cent in the September-quarter. While its losses for the June-quarter weren't disclosed, in the January-March period for 2020, its losses deepened to Rs 332 crore, from Rs 15 crore a year ago.

Pointing out that the India venture has been a loss-making one, AirAsia said: "The share of losses over the years have resulted in the carrying value of the investment at the date of transaction to be nil."

## 'States' borrowing 43.5% more in first 9 months of this fiscal'

At Rs 5,55,900 crore, states have snapped up 43.5 per cent more debt in the first nine months of the fiscal, as per Icra



₹3,87,400 cr borrowed in the first nine months of FY20  
₹95,400 cr Fall in redemptions during the first three quarters from ₹1,06,800 cr of FY20  
64.1% rise in net issuance

during the first three quarters of FY21 to Rs 4,60,400 crore from Rs 2,80,600 crore in FY20

Over 65% of these Rs 5.55 lakh crore borrowing have been lapped up by just five top borrowing states with Maharashtra borrowing Rs 39,500 crore more, Karnataka Rs 25,900 crore more, Tamil Nadu Rs 16,600 crore more, Andhra an additional Rs 15,300 crore and Telangana drawing down Rs 13,400 crore more during these months

Source: Icra/PTI

## AviationMin asks airlines, airports to prepare for vaccine transportation

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

AS THE rollout of Covid-19 vaccine nears, the Civil Aviation Ministry has sounded out airlines, airports and ground handlers to start preparing for the transportation with a special focus on temperature regulation, Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said Tuesday, adding that the exact guidelines to be followed by these stakeholders will be issued closer to the date of transportation.

"All the main stakeholders — airports, airlines and ground handlers — have been alerted and asked to draw their plans. The exact SOPs will be formulated with the Ministry of Health and Department of Pharmaceuticals when we know the exact requirements of the vaccine — what precautions have to be taken, how it has to be transported and what other measures are required. That has to be factored in and it will be done near



Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. via @HardeepSPuri

to the date of transportation and details SOPs will be laid down," Kharola said.

At the same event, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said that India expects to begin administering the Covid-19 vaccine in January and by July, it expects administering the vaccine to 30 crore beneficiaries.

Meanwhile, Puri added he expects that the temporary suspension on the UK-India flights, which has been in place since 11.59pm December 22, could be "slightly extended".

## Deadline for AI physical bids closes

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

THE FINAL deadline for submission of physical bids for Air India disinvestment closed Tuesday with US-based Interups withdrawing from the race by not submitting a physical bid, sources said. Apart from Interups, Tata Sons and a consortium of Air India's employees had submitted an expression of interest.

Next, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management and the transaction advisor for the disinvestment process will inform the qualified interested bidders on January 5, after which the process to place financial bids will begin. The government this year kicked off process to divest 100 per cent stake in Air India.

## RBI says write-offs helped banks lower bad loans

Warns of sharp deterioration in asset quality

GEORGE MATHEW  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 29

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday said commercial banks managed to lower their bad loans, or non-performing assets (NPAs), largely driven by loan write-offs and warned that the asset quality of the banking system may deteriorate sharply in the coming months due to the uncertainty induced by Covid pandemic.

Commercial banks in India managed to bring down their NPAs to 75 per cent of advances as of September 2020 from 8.2 per cent in March 2020 and 9.1 per cent in March last year. Banks wrote off a record Rs 237,876 crore in fiscal 2019-20, enabling the banks to show lower NPAs, the RBI said in its 'Report on trend and progress of banking in India 2019-20'. The central bank has warned that the modest NPA ratio of 7.5 per cent at end-September 2020 "veils the strong undercurrent of slippage". The accretion to NPAs as per the Reserve Bank's Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC) norms would have been higher in the absence of the



The Reserve Bank of India. File

asset quality standstill provided as a Covid-19 relief measure. The RBI had allowed six months moratorium on loan repayments due to the Covid impact. "Given the uncertainty induced by Covid and its real economic impact, the asset quality of the banking system may deteriorate sharply, going forward," the RBI report said.

In absolute terms, gross NPAs declined to Rs 899,803 crore in March 2020 from Rs 936,474 crore in March 2019. "NPAs older than four years require 100 per cent provisioning and, therefore, banks may prefer to write them off. In addition, banks voluntarily write-off NPAs in order to clean up their balance sheets, avail tax benefits and optimise the use of capital," the RBI said. "At the same time, borrowers of written-off loans remain liable for repayment," it said. PSU banks wrote off loans worth Rs 178,305 crore in 2019-20 while private banks had written off Rs 53,949 crore, the RBI report said. Banking

sources said very little is known about the identity of the borrowers and the amount written off in the case of individual borrowers. While banks claim that the recovery measures continue even after loans are written off, sources said not more than 15-20 per cent is recovered and the write-off figures every year are rising, much faster than recoveries and recapitalisation. What's disturbing banking observers is that banks made additions of Rs 378,228 crore to NPAs in March. On the other hand, reduction in NPAs was much lower at Rs 155,905 crore during the year.

The central bank's report has warned that an increase in the restructured advances ratio to 0.43 per cent at end-September 2020 from 0.36 in March 2020 may be "indicative of incipient stress".

The RBI said the rapid credit growth during 2005-12, coupled with absence of strong credit appraisal and monitoring standards and wilful defaults are responsible for sizeable asset impairments in subsequent years. "Large borrowal accounts (exposure of Rs 5 crore and above) constituted 79.8 per cent of NPAs and 53.7 per cent of total loans at end September 2020," it said, adding: "The share of special mention accounts (SMA-0) saw a sharp rise in September 2020".

Full report on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Jio towers vandalised in Punjab: Calls likely to face congestion

off or been disconnected by protesting groups as of Tuesday.

**How does this impact Jio services in the state?**

With power supply to Jio's towers being disconnected, the immediate impact is likely to be felt on calls and internet data speed in the region. On an average, a mobile cell phone tower can provide connectivity to users up to 75 km away. However, for the mobile signal to be strong enough, multiple tower sites are installed in a region so that the maximum distance between a cell

site and a mobile phone is kept limited between 25-35 km. Jio has around 14 million subscribers in the state. With about 1,800 of these towers being vandalised, the load of the rest of subscribers of the company is likely to shift on to the other towers in the vicinity of that tower. This, in turn, may impact the quality of calls and the internet data speed in the region. The impact is also likely to be felt on services of other providers since calls landing on and originating from Jio's networks may face congestion due to lesser number of cell sites. Apart from voice calls, the low number of cell sites is likely to hit internet speeds.

## CBI chargesheets Parekh Aluminex

KHUSHBOONARAYAN  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 29

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Tuesday filed a chargesheet against Mumbai-based listed firm Parekh Aluminex Ltd and 23 others including its directors and chartered accountant for allegedly causing a loss of over Rs 297 crore to Indian Overseas Bank.

Parekh Aluminex has come under the scanner of multiple

probe agencies such as the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Mumbai police, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for defaulting on loans of about Rs 2,500 crore to a consortium of 22 banks including State Bank of India (Rs 255 crore), IDBI Bank (Rs 40 crore), Dena Bank (Rs 183 crore), and Corporation Bank (Rs 60 crore). The CBI chargesheet has alleged that the firm has siphoned money by "submitting fake & forged purchase invoices/letters of credit (LCs). The company, the CBI

has alleged, obtained loans against "false and fabricated balance sheets with inflated sales". As per the chargesheet, the directors of Parekh Aluminex allegedly "floated" shell companies to circulate the loan proceeds "under the guise of LC transactions without doing any actual business". "The company also submitted the alleged false bills and received the LC proceeds and diverted the proceeds to real estate business. The huge amounts were allegedly diverted to various realtors," said CBI.

### BRIEFLY

#### 15th tranche of electoral bonds

New Delhi: The government on Tuesday approved the 15th tranche of electoral bonds which will be open for sale between January 1 and January 10. State Bank of India is the only authorised bank to issue the bonds. PTI

#### Mobility card for Airport line

Mumbai: Delhi Metro Airport Express Line will accept common mobility card. ENS

#### 737 MAX back in US skies

Miami: American Airlines brought back the Boeing 737 MAX to skies on Tuesday. AP

#### Sebi fines NDTV ₹5 cr

New Delhi: Sebi slapped a Rs 5 crore penalty on NDTV for failure to disclose price-sensitive information about VCPL loan agreements. The company said it will appeal against the ruling. PTI

## Former DEA Secretary Chakraborty likely to be HDFC Bank chairman

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

ATANU CHAKRABORTY, former Economic Affairs Secretary, is likely to be the next chairman of HDFC Bank. According to sources close to the development, the bank has written to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recommending the name of Chakraborty.

Once approved by RBI, Chakraborty — a 1985 batch IAS officer of the Gujarat Cadre — may take over as the part-time chairman of HDFC Bank in January. The tenure of its current part-time chairperson Shyamala Gopinath will end on January 1.

While HDFC Bank declined to comment, Chakraborty, told *The Indian Express* said, "I do not wish to comment on this matter as it is a communication between two different entities, the bank and RBI. I would like to say that I have not thought about it and as of now there is no job on my mind."

While Chakraborty retired as the Economic Affairs Secretary in April, the office memorandum of Department of Personnel and Training states that any Group A



Former Economic Affairs Secretary Atanu Chakraborty

retired official is required to seek the government's approval if he takes a commercial employment within one year of retirement.

When asked about the same he said, "I haven't thought about any job as of now but there are certain standard rules for civil servants and I would follow them."

Earlier, on Monday, the bank informed the stock exchanges that "the Board of Directors of HDFC Bank Ltd ("the Bank") at its meeting held today, has recommended the appointment of the Part-Time Chairperson of the Bank and has submitted its recommendation to the Reserve Bank of India for approval under Section 35B of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949."

## JSHL to merge with Jindal Stainless to form 'India's largest stainless steel co'

ENSECONOMICBUREAU  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

JINDAL STAINLESS (Hisar) Ltd (JSHL) on Tuesday said its board has approved the company's merger into the country's largest stainless steel maker Jindal Stainless Ltd (JSL).

Having a total melting capacity of 0.8 million tonne per annum (MTPA), Hisar-based JSHL is the largest speciality stainless steel producer in India with a diversified value-added product portfolio. In a BSE filing, the company said its "board has considered and approved...amalgamation of JSHL (the amalgamating company) into and with Jindal Stainless Ltd".

In a joint statement, the companies claimed the merger will create a mega stainless steel entity that will be among the top-10 stainless steel companies in the world and the largest stainless steel company in India. As per the proposed structure, the mobility business of JSL Lifestyle Ltd, a subsidiary of JSHL, would be merged into JSL. WITH PTI

**VISVESVARAYA JALA NIGAM LIMITED**  
(A Government of Karnataka Enterprises)  
Office of the Executive Engineer, VJNL,  
UBP Division No. 3, Ajjampur-577 547  
Ph No-08261-245686 E-mail id-eeubp3.1@gmail.com  
CIN No: U41000KA2016SG097260

**NO:EE/VJNL/UBP/D-03/Ajjampur/PB-1/Tender notificatn/2020-21/791 dated: 29-12-2020**

**SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (TWO-COVER SYSTEM) (THROUGH "e-Procurement" ONLY)**

**Sl. No. 1. Name of work :** Providing 11KV power supply to 11 no zonal pumping stations coming under Package 2 of Tarikere Lift Irrigation Scheme. (I No: VJNL/2020-21/EL/2020-21/WORK/ INDENT 1552) **App. amount put to tender (Rs. In Lakhs) :** 1686.10 **EMD (Rs. In Lakh) :** 16.87 **Category of the Agency :** KPTCL super grade license contractors and KPWD Class I contractor **Time Limit. :** 06 Months (Including monsoon)

Further details and information about electronic tendering can be had from <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in/e-procurement>

**Calendar of Events**

**Sl.No. 1.** The contractor can access to the e-tender document, i.e. the tender schedules, bid documents and other documents, in the web site <http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> on payment of transaction fee (nonrefundable) from : 04.01.2021, after 11.30 hours **Sl.No. 2.** Last date & time for tender queries/clarifications : 15.01.2021 upto 17.00 hours **Sl.No. 3.** Pre bid meeting will be held at o/o the Chief Engineer, VJNL, UBP Zone, Chitradurga. : 18.01.2021 at 11.30 hours **Sl.No. 4.** The last date for submission of completed tender documents (Cover-1 & cover-2) through e-portal. : 25.01.2021 upto 16.00 hours **Sl.No. 5.** Date & time of opening of Technical Bid (Cover -1) by Executive Engineer, V.J.N.L., UBP, Division No.3, Ajjampur. : 27.01.2020 at 11.00 hours

**Sd/- Executive Engineer, VJNL, UBP Division No.3, Ajjampur.**

**SBI**  
IT-Partner Relationships & BNCC Department, State Bank of India, Global IT Centre, Sector-11, CBD Belapur, Navi Mumbai - 400 614.  
**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**

State Bank of India has issued a Request for EOI for Empanelment of Vendors for Supply and Installation of Entry Level Servers, Desktops, Laptops, Printers and Scanners. Please refer 'Procurement News' at Bank's website, <https://bank.sbi> or <https://www.sbi.co.in>

Places: Navi Mumbai  
Date: 30.12.2020

Sd/-  
Deputy General Manager (IT-PR & BNCC)

**Office of the Additional Director General of Police Communication, Logistics And Modernization**  
No. 1, M.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560 001.  
Phone : +91-80-22864626, Email: spwireless@ksp.gov.in

**TENDER NOTIFICATION**  
(Through e-procurement Portal)

Tender No: 04/MDN/STS/W/DIGITAL-UHF/2020-21 Date: 22/12/2020

Additional Director General of Police, Communication, Logistics & Modernization, Bengaluru invited tender for **Design, Supply, Commissioning and Maintenance of Digital UHF Radio Communication Network for the Bangalore City through e-procurement portal.** Estimated Bid value: Rs. 1465.70 Lakhs. Pre-bid meeting on 12/01/2021 at 11.30 Hrs. **The Last date and time for tender submission 21/01/2021, 16.00 Hrs.** Further details can be obtained by visiting e-procurement portal <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. For more information, please contact the above office.

Sd/-  
**The Additional Director General of Police**  
Communication, Logistics And Modernization

DIPR/DDU/SSC/2193/2020-21

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

Wear Mask 6 Feet Follow Physical Distancing Maintain Hand Hygiene







# All square at the G

India keep shadows of doubt at bay to get the job done in second Test; level series 1-1

SANDIP G  
DECEMBER 29

PULLING NATHAN Lyon for a single, off a fumble, Ajinkya Rahane completed one of India's most memorable moments in Test cricket. The celebrations were bizarrely understated, there were no hugs or high-fives, no leaping or punching in the air. India made the Melbourne victory look utterly humdrum.

The scorecard would agree—what was the fourth-day fuss all about. The visitors bagged the four remaining Australian wickets for 67 runs and then eclipsed the target of 70 in 15.5 overs, trading just two wickets in the process. Easy as a Sunday evening stroll, you would think, but there were times in the game when it seemed more a stagger and stutter than a stroll. Maybe, the anxiety was merely an illusion of the mind, subconsciously spun after what had transpired in Adelaide nine days ago.

This is not the Australia of the old. But still, they would channel the spirit of the Old Australia. After all, 70 is almost 36 doubled. After all, the Indian batting line-up has cracks and crevices. And Australia's bowlers are capable of producing magic. And the strip could crack up and consume the visitors. That's what Australia could conjure, that's what Australia has conjured in the past. Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc bounding into the ground with the quiet menace of professional assassins, Tim Paine screaming words of encouragement, so ferociously that he seemed to be readying for an ACCA Dacca audition.

The doubt-ridden mind can make everything look tenser and harder than it actually is. So Mayank Agarwal seemed to sweat even before he had faced a ball, Shubman Gill looked lost and nervous. To aggravate the worst fears, India lost Agarwal and Cheteshwar Pujara in the space of seven balls. Agarwal strove to drive with his hands away from his body to a Starc delivery that slanted across him. It was a standard left-arm seamer's delivery. But the stroke was all nerves and uncertainty. So was Pujara, pushing with hard hands at a Cummins length-ball on the fourth-stump trajectory and thick-edging to gully. At 2/16, the contest ceased to be one-sided. Australian fielders turned on their volume; their bowlers turned on their agro and the crowd joined in the chorus, making all sorts of blasé references to the 36ers.

Cummins flung a short ball at Rahane. The Indian skipper pulled it emphatically for a boundary, suggesting he was blow-trading mood. An angered Cummins banged in another short ball that struck his lower abdomen. The message from Cummins was clear: they would fight till the last drop of the blood. The response from Rahane was clearer: he would out-fight them.



Ajinkya Rahane's (left) inspirational leadership provided India the template for the resounding 8-wicket win over Australia. AP

**SCG TO HOST THIRD TEST**  
Cricket Australia has decided to retain Sydney as the venue for the third Test against India, ending speculation that the game could move to Melbourne because of stringent COVID-19 border restrictions that would have affected the players' movement for the fourth match in Brisbane. The third Test is to be held from January 7. PTI

Unlike during his epic first innings knock, he was disinclined to churn an innings out. Rather, he would just play all his strokes, even it those entail risks. This was a supreme understanding of the situation. The target not a daunting one, a few boundaries could all but win the game for his team. So he and Gill launched a watchful assault, without embracing outright risk. They attempted nothing silly or outrageous, maintained their poise, but ruthlessly punished even remotely loose balls. A smidgeon of room sufficed for Gill to back cut Starc for an airborne boundary. In the same over, he slapped him for another four. If India's first innings was built brick by brick, this one was dropping slabs, composed boundary by boundary.

Cummins, though, kept persisting. He

tried to set Rahane up by pushing him back with short balls before slipping in off-cutters to trap on the crease. It almost worked but for a chunky inside edge. But it did not deter Rahane from leaning into a drive for three runs in the same over. Starc and Cummins made way for Josh Hazlewood and Nathan Lyon, but Rahane and Gill did not alter their approach and steered India past the finish line with judicious but assertive batting.

In the end, the fears looked utterly misplaced. Just as it was in the first hour of the day, when Cameron Green and Cummins raised faint comeback hopes with unprecedented resistance. Again, fears seemed hollow. Green is playing his second Test, Cummins is at best a handy than an influential batsman. Both seemed to pile than peel away the runs.

Yet, India are uncannily accustomed to seeing lower-order batsmen snatch the game away from them. There were some sweaty signs too—like edges evading fielders and stumps, marginal decisions going the batsman's way. It could be (mis)construed that taking Jasprit Bumrah off the attack after three was a sign of restlessness. So was a review Ashwin persuaded Rahane to take. And the deeper the partnership progressed the sounder the batting seemed.

Then in the fifth ball of the 16th over India bowled in the morning, they finally dislodged Cummins, a fiendish Bumrah short-ball doing the trick. India heaved a sigh of relief. But Green was still batting

## SCORECARD

AUSTRALIA vs INDIA

2ND TEST, MCG

Toss: Australia, chose to bat

AUSTRALIA 1ST INNINGS 195  
INDIA 1ST INNINGS 326  
AUSTRALIA 2ND INNINGS 200

M Wade lbw Jadeja 40 (137b, 3x4)  
J Burns c Pant b Yadav 4 (10b)  
M Labuschagne c Rahane b Ashwin 28 (49b, 1x4)  
S Smith b Bumrah 8 (30b)  
T Head c Agarwal b Siraj 17 (46b)  
C Green c Jadeja b Siraj 45 (146b, 5x4)  
T Paine c Pant b Jadeja 1 (9b)  
P Cummins c Agarwal b Bumrah 22 (103b, 1x4)  
M Starc not out 14 (56b)  
N Lyon c Pant b Siraj 3 (15b)  
J Hazlewood b Ashwin 10 (21b)

Extras (nb 3, lb 5) 8

FoW: 1-4 (Joe Burns, 3.1 ov), 2-42 (Marnus Labuschagne, 17.5 ov), 3-71 (Steven Smith, 32.2 ov), 4-98 (Matthew Wade, 43.6 ov), 5-98 (Travis Head, 46.1 ov), 6-99 (Tim Paine, 47.4 ov), 7-156 (Pat Cummins, 82.5 ov), 8-177 (Cameron Green, 90.6 ov), 9-185 (Nathan Lyon, 96.4 ov), 10-200 (Josh Hazlewood, 103.1 ov)  
Bowling: J Bumrah 27-6-54-2, U Yadav 3.3-0-5-1, M Siraj 21.3-4-37-3, R Ashwin 37.1-6-71-2, R Jadeja 14-5-28-2

INDIA 2ND INNINGS 70/2  
M Agarwal c Paine b Starc 5 (15b)  
S Gill not out 35 (36b, 7x4)  
C Pujara c Green b Cummins 3 (4b)  
A Rahane not out 27 (40b, 3x4)

FoW: 1-16 (Mayank Agarwal, 4.2 ov), 2-19 (Cheteshwar Pujara, 5.1 ov)

Bowling: M Starc 4-0-20-1, P Cummins 5-0-22-1, J Hazlewood 3-1-14-0, N Lyon 2.5-0-5-0, M Labuschagne 1-0-9-0

India win by 8 wickets.

## A match in moments

A comeback of such proportions as seen over the last four days in Melbourne can't be attributed to one reason. There were several instances during India's victory when different individuals in the team took it upon themselves to make a difference



Rahane brought Ashwin in the 11th over of the first innings. AP

### Rahane brings on Ashwin early

THE GAME-defining moment came in the 11th over of the first innings with Ajinkya Rahane's move and Ravichandran Ashwin's stirring response. It showed Rahane had nailed two things right: The reading of the conditions and his respect for Ashwin's skills. For a team that has bungled on reading the pitch in the past (hark back to Lord's 2018 when rain meant the toss and team-announcement was pushed to Day 2 and they still went with two spinners), this was refreshing. The faith in Ashwin was also no less significant. The off-spinner might be the joint fastest to 350 Test wickets but by his own admission, he has felt "hurt" with questions over his overseas performances. Rahane's moves cracked both puzzles in a swoop.

### Ashwin's response

Ashwin, of course, was more than ready to have a go. Speculation over his commitment in England in 2018 had really hurt him. "I am a proper street dog. If you push me down, shoot me, kill me with a knife, stab me, I will still wake up for a fight," he had told Cricbuzz earlier this year. He is a man with wide interests beyond the game who in the recent past, seems to have reinvented himself as a brand in the Tamil-speaking world with his YouTube shows.

Above everything else, though, he is a spinner who takes great pride in his art; he had meticulously prepared for this series, from chalking out plans for individual batsmen to the amount of over-spin needed on his deliveries. He stubbed out Australia's counter-attacking plans by taking out Matthew Wade before delivering the sucker punch by dismissing Steve Smith. From then on, Australia were

on the back foot.

### Jadeja rises to the challenge

Sanjay Manjrekar had called him a 'bits-and-pieces cricketer'. That was during the World Cup in England last year. Coming into the Melbourne Test, Ravindra Jadeja had a long-form batting average of 53.57 over the last two-and-a-half years. The Indian team management knew his quality as a batsman and included him as Virat Kohli's replacement. And if there was any doubt about Jadeja's ability to handle the short ball in Australia, the left-hander quelled it at the stroke of tea on the second day. Mitchell Starc made one rear off a length and Jadeja, on his toes, dropped it down almost at his feet. It was a fascinating piece of cricket; something any top-order batsman would have been proud of. Jadeja's 57 and his 121-run partnership with Rahane took the game away from the hosts.

### Pant, beyond the numbers

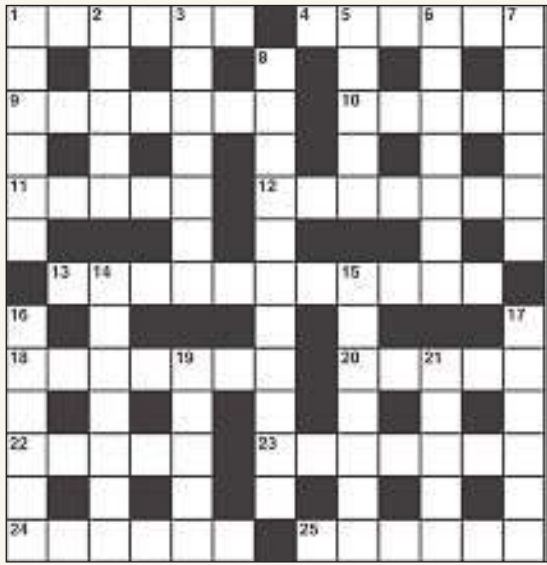
On the second day, with India on 116/4 and the game delicately poised, former Australia fast bowler Merv Hughes was asked on the ABC Grandstand commentary about which team had the edge at that point. "Australia are one wicket away from a commanding position, India are 25 minutes away from a commanding position," Hughes replied. The game indeed started to change in the next half an hour, after the drinks break to be precise.

Rishabh Pant took on Australia's best bowler on the day, Pat Cummins, collecting back-to-back twos and a couple of fours. It wrested the initiative for India. At the post-match press conference, the India head coach Ravi Shastri spoke about the value of Pant's cameo, going beyond the arid numbers — 29 off 40 balls. Behind the stumps, Pant was a livewire, belting out advice to the bowlers and occasionally getting under the skin of Aussie batsmen, especially Wade. ENS



Rishabh Pant was a livewire behind the stumps. AP

## CROSSWORD 4315



### ACROSS

- Industrial outgoing (6)
- All the actors or just the star (6)
- The impressions they give aren't upright (7)
- One who has no place in a ship (5)
- Something lifted from a carol at Christmas (5)
- More than master the subject? (7)
- Flexible binder used extensively in offices (7,4)
- Reliable way to stop bleeding (7)
- A Caledonian title of course (5)
- Shudder at some of the cab horses (5)
- Any evil simply expressed (7)
- Women have many odd ideas! (6)
- A lodge in state of disrepair and ancient (3-3)

### DOWN

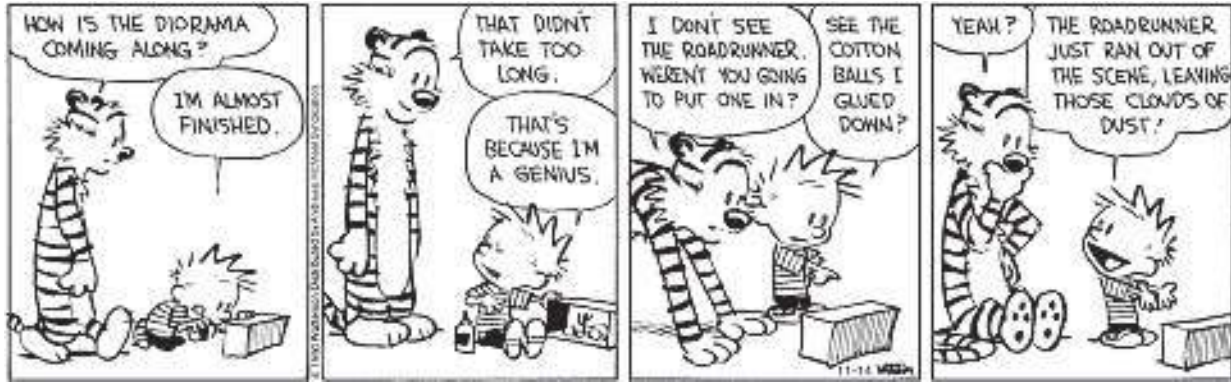
- The only word that is an anagram of itself (6)
- Cook a joint of meat, using the right oven (5)
- They can't go straight on board (7)
- Behave awkwardly when you get the bill put up (3,2)
- Possibly trained to go in for part exchange (5,2)
- The meal's about gone (6)
- Perhaps nothing is as surprising (11)
- Lead on? (7)
- What the loser gets is punishment (7)
- A ship taking trouble in attack (6)
- Kept going - or didn't? (6)
- Outstanding feature about the King of Norway? (5)
- It is sung in church, I believe (5)

Solutions Crossword 4314: Across: : 1 Rotator, 5 Capri, 8 Silent protest, 9 Satyr, 10 Evening, 11 Spoils, 12 Easier, 15 Used car, 17 Tiara, 19 Prepossessing, 20 Rifle, 21 Sternum. Down: 1 Roses, 2 Talk to oneself, 3 Tendril, 4 Ripped, 5 Close, 6 Precipitation, 7 Integer, 11 Scupper, 13 Artiste, 14 Crises, 16 Choke, 18 Algum.

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



## CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## JUMBLED WORDS

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

If you want your life to be more rewarding, you have to change the \_\_\_\_\_ — Oprah (3,3,5)

NPAIO



ADEHY



BLNTU



AELRKW



SOLUTION: PIANO, BLUNT, LIFTED, WALKER  
Answer: "If you want your life to be more rewarding, you have to change the way you think." — Oprah

## SUDOKU 4338

### Difficulty Level 1s

#### Instructions

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

### Difficulty Level

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



## SOLUTION SUDOKU 4337



## DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

### ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

This is a day for diplomacy, for sharing your feelings, plans and any good fortune with partners. This doesn't just mean spreading your net to include close friends, but also paying attention to people, perhaps at work, who could do with some emotional support.

### TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

'Keep busy and stay active' should be your motto over the next two days. The Moon's angle to your sign is one of those which may not bring drama, but can push you step by step to a new and much more successful state of being. You might even hear something that makes you sit up and take notice of an old friend.

### GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You may go through the day with a spring in your step, young at heart and confident that it is indeed possible to shrug off most cares and woes. It might be difficult to alter the attitudes of a lifetime, but you really should give it your best shot.

### CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

It's time to consider exactly what to do about putting a deep-seated ambition into practice. There's no need for action just yet, but it will do you good to sort your ideas out and check the facts. And then you need to reassure a loved one who is feeling especially insecure.

### LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

It's decision time, but the choices you'll make will probably be quite unimportant. You can therefore afford to take it easy, just as long, that is, as your communication skills are functioning on top form. What I mean is, you need to keep family members informed of your movements.

### VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

You should pay very careful attention to the financial situation. On a purely mundane level it's a fine day for picking up bargains, but what could be more significant is what other people decide about your monetary future — and that may be out of your hands.

### LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

The Moon is now aligned with your sign, so you can finally afford to dictate the pace. Your actions will be determined by your rapidly changing moods, so other people may be bewildered or perplexed when you alter your ideas. Perhaps they should be more flexible.

### SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

You have learned a lot more about self-preservation lately, probably due to Saturn's slow transit through your chart. A momentary lack of confidence will be overcome with renewed effort and determination. And if you do face insurmountable obstacles, it might be time to pause for breath.

### SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

You will finally convince other people that you do need their help and support. At work you may concentrate on the long-term picture, and don't let trivial details obscure your vision. And you should get on with practical improvements at home — after a momentary lapse.

### CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Your main bone of contention relates to career or professional interests, but with the Moon so active you can probably make a success out of playing the diplomat. Realise that it is less important to push your own interests than to get other people to agree.

### AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Long-distance developments seem to be the most important, and it's a suitable moment to get in touch with family members overseas. The legal situation may also need some attention, so check up on your rights. But that also means you have to be aware of your responsibilities.

### PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Nobody seems to be able to lighten your burden at the moment. With Mars so active, only you can take the necessary steps to secure an independent future, and that means not relying excessively on partners for emotional support. Stand on your own two feet and your confidence will climb sharply.



## 20 SPORT

2020 THE LOST YEAR

Away from the bio-bubbles put in place by those with deep pockets, sport had its lockdown tales of angst, uncertainty and apprehension. THE INDIAN EXPRESS talks to those who missed out on their break-out year or had to delay their retirement.

## ‘Olympics postponement a jolt, but Saurabh will bounce back’

*In rampaging form when 2020 started, Olympic postponement posed a speed bump to shooters Apurvi Chandela and Saurabh Chaudhary aiming for Tokyo glory. But nothing insurmountable for the monkish duo, believe coaches*

MIHIR VASAVDA  
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 29

ON MARCH 24, moments after the news broke that the Tokyo Olympics had been postponed, Saurabh Chaudhary disappeared into the makeshift shooting range inside his home and did not step out for hours. Chaudhary barely speaks (“he utters 24 words in 24 hours,” his coach Amit Sheoran jokes) and never displays any kind of emotions. But in that minute, something inside him snapped. “*Bada jhatka laga* (It was a big blow),” Sheoran says.

In a normal, non-Covid world, the 18-year-old would have had his sight set on the Olympic podium exactly four months after the Games were rescheduled. July 24, 2020, had all the makings of potentially being a landmark day in India’s Olympic history.

After an embarrassing two-medal haul at the Rio Games, an unprecedented seven Indians would have been in medal contention in four events on the opening day in Tokyo. All usual indicators to determine success – form guide, fitness and preparation – pointed favourably towards the Indian archers, shooters and the sole weightlifter in contention, Mirabai Chanu.

The focus, though, was firmly on Chaudhary and rifle shooter Apurvi Chandela. Both of them had been in scarcely-believable form through 2018 and 2019, and were primed to achieve bigger things in 2020.

Chandela won seven World Cup medals, including two individual and one mixed team gold, in 2018 and 2019. She set a 10m air rifle world record, climbed to the top of the world rankings



Apurvi Chandela and Saurabh Chaudhary have been in sensational form and were poised to achieve bigger things in 2020. *File*



in her pet event and was shooting scores in qualifying that would comfortably take her into an Olympic final.

Chaudhary, on the other hand, has hardly put a foot wrong since he arrived on the world shooting scene in 2018, when he became the youngest Indian shooter to win an Asian Games gold medal in 10m air pistol. Like Chandela, he, too, dominated the 2019 season by winning two World Cup golds, set a world record and topped the ranking chart. Both, Chandela and Chaudhary, have also impressed in the mixed team events, which will debut in Tokyo, with partners Deepak Kumar and Manu Bhaker respectively. “From that perspective,” national pistol coach Samaresh Jung says, “we can say this year was an opportunity lost because of the kind of form they were in. But you can also say they got more time to prepare and get even better. Earlier, time was just flying. Now they have got a break and some rest.”

Jung also underlines the anomalies of shoot-

ing. “Sometimes, everything that happens at the range defies logic. You may dominate an entire Olympic cycle and nail every training session but still, that would not translate to a medal,” he says. To drive home his point, Jung cites the examples of Germany rifle shooter Sonja Pfeilschifter, Serbian great Rajmond Debevec and India’s Vijay Kumar.

Pfeilschifter, 49, medalled at every World Championship between 1994 and 2010, including three gold medals (one in 1994, two in 1998). She held several world records, won six World Cup gold medals and ruled the European Championships. “But she has been to five Olympics and could not win one medal,” Jung says. “Debevec won a medal at the Olympics at his fourth attempt. But then, there have been people like Vijay as well. He was nowhere on the world scene, goes to his first Olympics (in 2012) and gets a silver medal.” Chandela understands this peculiarity too well, having finished 34th

overall at the Rio Games. The ‘failure,’ she has admitted, helped her mature and pushed by world-class shooters at home like current world number 1 Elavenil Valarivan and fellow Tokyo medal hopeful Anjum Moudgil, Chandela is now the leader of a world-beating Indian rifle team.

Chandela’s coach Rakesh Manpat says they have used this period to fine-tune her technique. During the lockdown, Manpat monitored Chandela’s practice from Bengaluru by placing a simulator on the barrel of her rifle, which transmitted all the data from the training sessions.

Chaudhary, who dominated 2019 along with teammate Abhishek Verma, is a better shooter now compared to the start of 2020, his coach attests. “He was living like a prisoner inside his shooting range at home for the majority of this year. Even his family members maintained a distance from him to make sure he did not get sick. So the only thing he has done is practise,” Sheoran says. “His average scores have improved by a couple of points. He now shoots 588 routinely, the kind of score that automatically makes him a medal contender.”

The question, though, is if the status quo will remain the same when the shooters return to competitive mode at the selection trials, which begin in New Delhi on January 5. “Nobody could predict that the Olympics would get postponed. Nobody can predict what will happen in the next six months,” says Manpat. Chaudhary’s coach Sheoran, though, is not shy of making a prediction. “Saurabh’s mindset is like a yogi, he is quick to overcome disappointment and doesn’t focus on material goals. And because of this, I am confident he will bounce back in 2021 and remain a medal hope like he was this year.”

## Why India’s MCG victory is the most significant ‘away win’ yet

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY  
KOLKATA, DECEMBER 29

GIVEN THE backdrop and the odds that the Indian team faced coming into the second Test in Melbourne, this has to be India’s finest Test victory ever. The humiliation of 36/9 at Adelaide, Virat Kohli on paternity leave, injury to Mohammad Shami before the game and Umesh Yadav during the Test — there was way too much going against India.

Never ever has an Indian tour party been pushed in a corner like this or written off. But in a dramatic turnaround, India didn’t just bounce back to win the Test and level the series, they gave the fans a lot to look forward to in the final week of the year. Rahane’s captaincy, stunning debuts by pacer Mohammad Siraj and opener Shubham Gill being the positives of this historic Test. Read highlights of the Test

## What was the backdrop?

The backdrop posed serious challenges. The majority of the players in the team left home in Australia to enter into the bio-bubble of their respective Indian Premier League (IPL) franchises. This has been an abnormal year that saw Covid-19 ravage lives and livelihoods. From the IPL bio-bubble the Indian cricketers moved to the Indian team bio-bubble, served their quarantine in Australia without a single breach and then took to the field to play a high-intensity series. For over four months now, the players have been on the road, under Covid-safety restrictions.

## What were the odds?

Coming into the second Test, the odds were heavily stacked against the Indian team. They were carrying the ghost of the 36 all out in Adelaide — India’s lowest-ever Test total. The team’s regular captain, also the best batsman, Virat Kohli, decided to return home on paternity leave. The team’s gun bowler Mohammed Shami was ruled out of the series due to an arm fracture. India were already missing Rohit Sharma and Ishant Sharma. On the third day of the second Test, Umesh Yadav left the field after sustaining a calf injury, reducing the side to four fit bowlers. India also had the baggage of being clean swept in the two-Test series in New Zealand earlier this year. At the MCG, they stared

at the possibility of finishing 2020 without a single Test win.

## Does this win have competitors?

Quite a few. The win in the second Test against the West Indies at Port of Spain in March 1971 that secured India’s first-ever Test series triumph in the Caribbean. The victory at the Oval in the third Test against England in August 1971, which gave India their first-ever Test series success in England. The glorious run chase in the third Test against the West Indies at Port of Spain in April 1976 that saw India score a then world record 406/4 in the fourth innings to pull off an improbable win. The victory in the third Test against Australia at the MCG in February 1981, where India bundled out a batting line-up boasting of Greg Chappell, Doug Walters, Kim Hughes and Allan Border for 83 in the fourth innings to square the series. The wins in the first and the third Test against Pakistan at Multan and Rawalpindi respectively in 2004. Bouncing back from a defeat at Perth to win the third Test at Melbourne in December 2018, which would eventually take India to their first-ever Test series win Down Under.

## Why is this ‘away win’ unique?

The previous wins were achieved with full-strength sides. Here, to start with, India were severely depleted. Then, to get blown away for 36. It wasn’t easy. Sunil Gavaskar in his book *Sunny Days* documented how India’s tour of England in 1974 had descended into chaos after the visitors were bowled out for 42 at Lord’s. Rahane’s team embraced redemption instead.

## How significant was Rahane’s contribution?

As a captain, from bowling changes to field placements, the stand-in skipper was always ahead of the game. As a batsman, Rahane’s century in the first innings was the difference between the two sides. “I believe that this hundred is going to be one of the most important hundreds in the history of Indian cricket,” Gavaskar told Seven Network, before adding: “Important because it’s showing character, sending a message to the opposition that after being dismissed for 36 in the previous game, to come back in this manner, this Indian team is not going to just lie down and be walked all over.”

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