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SUNDAY STORY

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CRYPTO CASH

What could be the way forward

GOVT & POLITICS



JUDGES MUST BE DISCREET ABOUT WHAT THEY SAY IN COURT: KOVIND

PAGE 8

OMICRON VARIANT: AVIATION MINISTRY MONITORING SITUATION

PM seeks review of overseas travel, states tighten checks, Delhi wants flights stopped

Mumbai orders quarantine; Karnataka to trace, test arrivals since Nov 12 from South Africa and two other countries

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M
 NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

IN THE light of growing concerns regarding the new Covid variant first detected in South Africa, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked officials to review the lifting of international travel restrictions. A day earlier, the Ministry of Civil Aviation announced the resumption of international scheduled commercial flights from December 15,

after a 21-month gap. The PM held a meeting Saturday morning with top Health Ministry officials, where he was briefed on the new variant Omicron and its characteristics, its impact on other countries, and its implications for India. In a statement, the PMO said Modi highlighted the need to monitor all international arrivals, with focus on countries identified as 'at risk'. "The PM spoke about the need to be proactive in light of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE AFRICAN COUNTRIES SEEING TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

Countries	First Dose Coverage	Second Dose Coverage
Botswana	37	20
South Africa	28	24
Zimbabwe	25	18
Mozambique	19	11
Namibia	14	11
Congo	8.8	2.3
Eswatini	22	21
Lesotho	27	27
Malawi	5.6	3

Source: Ourworldindata. Figures in %



INSIDE

DDMA TO MEET MONDAY: SISODIA

MORE COUNTRIES STOP FLIGHTS

PAGES 5, 16

EXPLAINED

Flights restarting Dec 15

THE CIVIL Aviation Ministry is reviewing the decision regarding reopening of international travel, scheduled for December 15, after a 21-month gap. A decision would be taken based on how the situation evolves and in consultation with the ministries of Health, Home and External Affairs.

Farmers defer march to House, Tomar asks them to return home

SKM presses for MSP guarantee; Govt says relief, withdrawal of cases up to states

HARIKISHAN SHARMA & AMIL BHATNAGAR
 NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE SAMYUKT Kisan Morcha, spearheading the year-long protest by farmers at the gates of Delhi against the three new agriculture laws, said Saturday that it was suspending its march to Parliament following the Prime Minister's announcement that the laws will be repealed in the winter session of the House starting Monday.

Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, meanwhile, urged farmers to return to their homes, saying there was no point in continuing the agitation



Farmer leaders at Singhu border on Saturday. Amit Mehra

following the announcement of the decision to repeal the farm laws. He said the farmers' CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

RELATED REPORT
 PAGE 8

House starts tomorrow, TMC to stay away from Opp meet called by Cong

MANOJ CG
 NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

IN THE first signs of strain in ties with the Congress, the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress, which is trying to gain a national footprint, indicated Saturday that it was not keen on coordinating its moves in Parliament with the Congress.

The TMC is unlikely to attend a meeting of Opposition floor leaders called by Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Opposition



in Rajya Sabha, on Monday. Although not comfortable with the TMC's expansion drive CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday. PTI

VIPs hired 'fake suits' gang to grab prime Bengaluru properties: CID probe

JOHNSON TA
 BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 27

AN ALLEGED gang which obtained "fake decrees" from small-causes courts to illegally grab properties — by forging documents and creating a fictitious rental dispute between a "fake owner" and a "fake tenant" — was also hired by politically connected persons to grab some prime properties in Bengaluru, according to a probe by the state CID.

The evictions racket with as many 118 cases, allegedly involving the same set of lawyers and fake litigants, was unearthed last year following the intervention of the Karnataka High Court in a case filed by Shah Harilal Bhikabhai and Company, a private firm against whom an eviction order was obtained by putting up fake tenants and owners for a north Bengaluru property in a local court.

The High Court ordered an CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

UP Dalit family murder: Two cops suspended as Opp mounts attack

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

WITH THE Opposition mounting pressure on the Yogi Adityanath government over the murder of four members of a Dalit family in Prayagraj, of whom a minor may have been gangraped, police have suspended two of its personnel who allegedly were forcing the family to compromise with the accused over a land deal.

The accused include several

upper caste men, including Akash Singh, Babli Singh, Amit Singh, Ravi, Manish, Abhay, Raja, Rancho, Kuldeep, Kanha Thakur and Ashok.

The administration also scrambled to contain the damage from charges that the family had been attacked earlier and was not provided help despite an FIR, with the promise of security and an arms licence to their relatives.

The bodies of the four — two children and their parents — were found Thursday morning at their house. A case was lodged

under IPC Sections for gangrape and murder, as well as under the POCSO Act and SC/ST Act, against 11, of whom eight have been arrested.

Police are investigating whether the daughter was sexually assaulted, as her clothes were dishevelled.

In a complaint, a family member named in-charge of the police station that the Dalit family had approached for protection, Ram Keval Patel, and Constable Sushil Kumar Singh. CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



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HYDERABAD'S 200-YR-OLD BRITISH RESIDENCY TO REOPEN

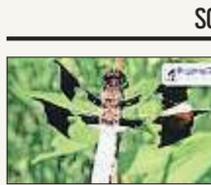
Built between 1803 and 1808, this building was not only the seat of the East India Company's resident in the Nizam's court but also a power center that at times overshadowed the authority of successive monarchs.

EXPRESS AUDIO

NFHS, TMC expands base, Covid travel rules

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Discussing the highlights of the National Family Health Survey, why 12 Congress MLAs in Meghalaya have joined the TMC, and new restrictions for international travellers in India.



SCIENCE

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EXPLAINED

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FROM PAGE ONE

House starts tomorrow, TMC to stay away from Opp meet called by Cong

that has seen it poaching its leaders — from Assam to Goa, Meghalaya to Bihar — the Congress decided to not let the unease come in the way of Opposition unity in Parliament to take on the BJP government.

But sources in the TMC said the Congress, which is battling splits and internal dissensions in many states, is not in a position to lead and coordinate Opposition efforts in Parliament.

They said the ties of the Congress with its electoral allies like the DMK, RJD, Left parties, JMM and even the Shiv Sena, with whom it shares power in Maharashtra, should be viewed differently from its ties with the TMC, against whom it fought Assembly elections just months ago.

"The Congress is in a mess. In Meghalaya, it has split, in Goa all but four of its MLAs remain, there were high profile dissensions in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh... a party which is in such a situation... what are they going to discuss with us... what are they going to coordinate," a senior TMC leader said.

Asked about Opposition unity, another TMC leader said "where was Opposition unity when they fought against us with the Left just 5-6 months ago... we were fighting our biggest battle against the BJP, where were they".

The Congress declined any immediate comment on the TMC call to skip the meeting called by Kharge.

Reached for comment, Derek O'Brien, leader of TMC in Rajya Sabha, said: "The is-

sues in this session are self-selective. Be it repeal of the three farm laws, promulgation of ordinances to ensure that directors of the ED and CBI could have longer tenures, making a mockery of federalism, extending the jurisdiction of the BSF, fresh revelations in the Pegasus snooping row, price rise... everybody is on the same page as far as these issues go."

Another TMC leader recalled that the Congress had stayed away when Mamata Banerjee led a march along with leaders of the Shiv Sena, AAP and the National Conference to the Rashtrapati Bhavan in November 2016 against the Centre's demonetisation move. "Where was the Congress then? Where was Opposition unity?" the leader said.

On Friday, the Congress asserted that it was the central pillar of the Opposition and had always discharged its responsibility as the main Opposition party.

Addressing a press conference, Anand Sharma, Congress deputy leader in Rajya Sabha, said: "We have long experience, both in governance and now for the last seven years and more in Opposition. We have a constitutional duty, which we recognise, we are conscious of that as the main Opposition party of this country; there are expectations of the people that we will take up issues which concern our citizens."

Farmers defer march to House, Tomar asks them to return home

remaining demands too had been fulfilled since the Prime Minister had announced that a committee would be constituted to discuss crop diversification, zero-budget farming, and making the MSP system more transparent and effective.

He said the committee, which will also have representatives from farmers, will hold deliberations. The government, Tomar said, will propose repeal of the farm laws on the very first day of the winter session of Parliament.

On November 19, the Prime Minister announced the government's intention to repeal the three farm laws — Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act, 2020.

The farm unions, on the other hand, have pointed to their other demands, saying unless these too are fulfilled, their agitation will continue.

These demands include legal guarantee of MSP, withdrawal of cases registered against farmers and compensation to those who died during the agitation.

The SKM said it had written a letter to the Prime Minister, demanding MSP legal guarantee.

"Minimum Support Price based on the comprehensive cost of production (C2+50%) should be made a legal entitlement of all farmers for all agricultural produce, so that every farmer of the country can be guaranteed at least the MSP announced by the government for their entire crop. (The Committee

PM seeks review of plans to ease travel curbs, Delhi says stop flights

the new variant... He also asked officials to review plans for easing of international travel restrictions," the statement said, adding that he stressed on precautions like masking and social distancing.

A senior official in the Aviation Ministry said while a review regarding international travel was on, no decision had been taken so far. "We are monitoring how the situation evolves and will take a decision in consultation with the ministries of Health, Home and External Affairs," the official said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Saturday urged the PM to stop flights from countries where the new variant has been reported, as states announced checks for travellers coming from abroad.

In a tweet, Kejriwal sought a ban on the flights from countries with Omicron, saying the country had "recovered" from the pandemic with "great difficulty". Delhi was hit badly in the second wave.

Gujarat said that in line with a directive sent by the Centre, passengers from countries categorised as 'at risk' by the Union Health Ministry will have to undergo Covid-19 test upon arrival in the state if they are not fully vaccinated. "Those who are fully vaccinated will also be screened and allowed to proceed if they do not show any symptoms of the infection," state Additional Chief Secretary (Health) Manoj Aggarwal said.

Tamil Nadu announced that four Health Department officials had been deployed to monitor precautionary measures at the international airports in Chennai, Coimbatore, Madurai and Tiruchirappalli. Overseas passengers undergo RT-PCR tests at the Chennai airport, the state said, adding that from October 21

date, 55,090 people had been tested, of whom three were Covid positive.

Karnataka said international arrivals originating from South Africa, Botswana and Hong Kong will undergo mandatory RT-PCR test and be allowed to leave the airport only if negative. The international travellers who arrived in Bengaluru between November 12 and 27 from these countries will also be tracked and tested, and those who test positive will be placed under institutional isolation in a hospital for 10 days.

Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar said all passengers coming from South Africa to the city would be quarantined, and their samples sent for genome sequencing. She said they might impose similar restrictions for passengers from other affected countries.

The Aviation Ministry Friday unveiled plans for the resumption of scheduled international flights to India in a calibrated manner, with staggered reopening for countries considered 'at-risk'. These include Europe, including the UK, in addition to South Africa, Brazil, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel.

At the Saturday meeting, Modi was given an overview of the genome sequencing efforts regarding the virus, and he talked about broad-basing the same. "He directed that intensive containment and active surveillance should continue in clusters reporting higher cases, and the required technical support be provided to states which are reporting higher cases," the PMO said.

Health Ministry officials were directed to work closely with state governments to

ensure proper awareness.

Modi also underlined the need to increase second dose coverage in the country, and ensure this was done on schedule. While 83% of the target population has received its first dose in the country, those fully vaccinated are almost half of that, at 46%.

Preliminary tests indicate Omicron, or the B.1.1.529 variant, has multiple mutations — 30 in the region that encodes the spike protein, which is responsible for the virus's entry into human cells. Some of the mutations are associated with higher transmissibility and immune evasion.

The WHO characterised it as a 'variant of concern' on Friday, which effectively means that Omicron has so far shown one or more changes from the existing variants: increase in transmissibility; increase in virulence of change in clinical disease presentation; and decrease in the effectiveness of diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics.

The WHO has asked countries to undertake four specific steps regarding Omicron: enhance surveillance and genome sequencing efforts; submit complete genome sequences to the publicly available database; report clusters associated with Omicron; and improve the understanding regarding the potential impact of Omicron on Covid-19 severity, diagnostics and effectiveness in public health measures. With 8,318 cases in the past 24 hours and an active caseload of 1.07 lakh, India has been seeing a consistent fall in its Covid count. The weekly positivity rate has been less than 1% for the last 13 days, and is currently at 0.88%.

— WITH ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU, AND ENS AND PTI INPUTS

formed under your Chairpersonship had made this recommendation to the then Prime Minister in 2011 and your government had also announced this in the Parliament," the SKM said in its letter dated November 21.

The protesters, the SKM said, will be staying at the Delhi border till there is a legal guarantee for MSP. A meeting will be held on December 4 to review government action, farmer unions said.

"When we announced the plan (to march to Parliament), the repeal had not been announced. They have assured us that the laws will be repealed in Parliament. We will wait for now. We have suspended and postponed the march. We have written to the PM about MSP, rehabilitation, compensation and withdrawal of pending cases, and a response is awaited," BKU leader Darshan Pal said.

Leaders of the SKM urged the government to initiate discussions with farmer unions.

On the demand for withdrawal of cases registered against farmers, Tomar said: "As far as cases registered during the protest are concerned, these come under the jurisdiction of state governments and they will take a decision on the basis of the severity of the case concerned. The issue of compensation too comes under state governments. State governments will decide on the issue of compensation as per their policy."

He said the farmer organisations had demanded that stubble burning by farmers be decriminalised and the Centre had accepted it.

VIPs hired 'fake suits' gang to grab prime Bengaluru properties: CID probe

in-depth probe into the evictions racket and the state government handed the investigation to the state CID earlier this year.

So far, the CID has filed 60 FIRs over the evictions racket. It has found that some of the 118 cases, filed in the small-causes court to obtain fake decrees, involved "VIPs" who hired the "fake suits" operatives to grab disputed prime properties.

The CID is yet to file FIRs in cases involving "VIPs" but case documents in at least one 2018 case involving a former MP associated with both the Congress and BJP has been seized in connection with the probe.

"The entire record of this case is seized and preserved as per the orders of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka," states an October 7 order of a small-causes court in a "fake decree" case identified by the CID as

involving the alleged gang after their services were hired. The former MP is linked to as many as four cases identified as being part of the "fake decrees" racket.

"The CID is yet to file FIRs in cases involving politicians and VIPs who used the gang to claim prime properties. The preliminary probe has revealed the involvement of VIPs. The CID is currently pursuing cases where evictions have been attempted or executed by the gang itself. The probe is being conducted in a step-by-step manner," said sources familiar with the investigations.

Investigators estimate that properties worth several hundreds of crores were grabbed by VIPs and others by using the services of the alleged gang.

"A large number of properties targeted by the gang at the behest of VIPs are located in east Bengaluru in places like Krishnarajapuram, Benson Town, Banaswadi. The properties targeted in these areas measured up to 20,000 square feet when the property price was around Rs 5000 per sq ft. The gang was paid around Rs 70 lakh for facilitating a fake decree," police sources said.

The modus operandi of the alleged gang was to create a fake rental agreement — for a targeted property — between a fake owner and a fake tenant and to file a case in the small-causes court for eviction of the "ten-

ant". The court would then be informed that the litigants had reached a compromise and that the "tenant" had agreed to leave the property. This was done to obtain a court decree directing the "tenant" to leave the property as agreed. Using the "fake decree", the alleged gang would then seek police support and evict whoever was in possession of the targeted property.

It is alleged that this racket began in 2013 with disputed properties being targeted at the behest of those cut off from property rights. The alleged gang later moved to obtaining "fake decrees" for anyone hiring them, sources said.

Properties belonging to the Bengaluru city corporation have also been targeted by the alleged gang. An official of the BBMP filed an FIR on September 4 about an attempt to grab a property in central Bengaluru through the gang. The CID has taken up this case for investigation with 60 other cases.

The High Court continues to monitor investigations into the "fake decrees" racket and the CID presented a probe update to the court in a sealed cover on November 16. The High Court has directed the CID to "complete the investigation expeditiously" and to submit a status report.

UP Dalit family murder: Two cops suspended as Opp mounts attack

The relative said the two put pressure on the family to compromise and police helped the accused.

Patel and the constable have been suspended, a police officer said.

On Friday, AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra visited the family. The Samajwadi Party, BSP and AAP attacked the Adityanath government Saturday over the incident. While the SP called it "anti-Dalit", Mayawati claimed that a BSP delegation led by Babulal Bhanwra had visited the spot after the incident, and found that "dabangs (musclemen) in Prayagraj are terrorising people".

AAP said it would hold protests across all the districts of UP Sunday, and called the incident a result of the state government's "negligence and a police-criminals nexus". "This is bigger than the Hathras case," AAP leader Sanjay Singh said, adding that the BJP government was driven by "casteist hatred".

Prayagraj DIG Sarvashresth Tripathi said, "Eight people out of the 11 named have been arrested. The remaining two are in Mumbai, and teams have been deployed to trace and arrest them. One accused is admitted in a hospital and is not able to walk. We will question him as well. We will probe the case from all possible angles."

Tripathi said the family's demand for security had been accepted and that as soon as they apply, the process of granting them an arms licence would be completed.

"The district administration has also announced compensation for the family," he said.

The family members have said the victims had filed a complaint with police a couple of months ago naming the accused as part of a "land mafia" and said they had threatened to kill them. No action was reportedly taken on the FIR.

"It seems that the murders were committed over a land dispute," a police officer said.

Malik alleges unidentified men carrying out recce on him

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27



Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik

MAHARASHTRA CABINET minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik claimed that there is a conspiracy to implicate him in a false case and said that he has evidence that some unidentified individuals were following him and carrying out surveillance of his family members.

Malik said that he will approach the Mumbai Police Commissioner in this regard soon and will also write a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

"People are trying to frame me the way they framed Anil Deshmukh. I will soon approach Mumbai Police Commissioner in this regard," Maharashtra Cabinet Minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik said.

Malik claimed that his house was under surveillance and recently two peo-

ple were caught close to his house when they were clicking pictures. Malik claimed that these two individuals had been trailing him and his family members for the past few days.

He went on to add that he will write to Home Minister Amit Shah to draw attention towards officers of central agencies, who are allegedly using private agents to register complaints about email.

On Friday, Malik posted photos of two men in a hatchback, who he claimed had been doing a recce outside his home. One of the men in the car was seen holding a digital camera.

Research institute in Uttarakhand shut over Covid cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DEHRADUN, NOVEMBER 27

THE FOREST Research Institute (FRI) was closed for visitors on Saturday as a precautionary measure after the old hostel of the Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA) was declared a micro containment zone amid a Covid-19 outbreak.

The IGNFA old hostel was turned into the micro containment zone on Thursday after 11 out of a total of 48 Indian Forest Service (IFS) officers from the Academy tested positive for coronavirus on their return from a mid-career training programme in Lucknow, and were kept in isolation at the hostel.

The hostel is located on the FRI campus. The FRI shall remain closed for tourists or visitors till December 5 as a precautionary measure, an FRI official said.

Gulberg massacre: HC suspends life term of three more convicts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, NOVEMBER 26

THE GUJARAT High Court, in an order dated November 25, suspended the life sentence awarded by a trial court to three remaining convicts of the 2002 Gulberg massacre and released them on bail as their appeals against the sentence remain pending before the Gujarat HC.

With this, all 11 convicts who were sentenced to life imprisonment in the case, stand released on bail pending their appeals.

The three convicts — Yogendrasinh alias Lalo Shekhvat, Bharat Telli Bhalodiya and Krishnakumar Kalal — had moved applications before the High Court seeking suspension of sentence and release on bail pending final decision on their appeal, in 2020 and 2021.

A total of 24 people were convicted by the sessions court in June 2016, including 11 who

were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Advocate Kshitij Amin, representing the three convicts, primarily submitted that the role alleged to have been played by Shekhvat and Bhalodiya are "less grievous" in comparison with the role alleged to have been played by other convicts — Lakhansinh alias Lakhiyo Bhuriyo Lalubha Chudasama and Dinesh Prabhudas Sharma — and almost similar role played by another accused-convict Bharat Laxmansinh God Rajput.

Since the High Court had already suspended the sentence of Chudasama, Sharma and Rajput and have enlarged them on bail pending their appeals, the present accused-convict applicants too must thus be released on bail and their sentences suspended pending appeals, Amin argued.

In the case of Kalal, it was submitted that his role in the crime was almost as grievous or "similar" as the other co-accused who stand released on bail after suspension of their sentence pending appeals.

AMID NEW COVID VARIANT CONCERNS

Better prepared than second wave, DDMA meeting on Monday: Sisodia

SUKRITABARUAH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

WITH THE WHO designating B.1.1.529 as a "variant of concern", Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia Saturday told *The Indian Express* that the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) will meet on Monday "to discuss what needs to be done".

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, he said: "We have to be on high alert regarding the new variant and the DDMA will be meeting on Monday to discuss what needs to be done. We cannot take things for granted, we have learnt many lessons from the past. We hope we are in a better position to deal with any possible surge. Certainly, in terms of management and infrastructure, we are in a much better position than before the second wave."

The variant was announced by scientists in South Africa Thursday, and was detected in two more countries, Israel and Belgium. Germany, Botswana,



In November, Delhi has seen 946 cases so far. Archive

Hong Kong and the UK are the other countries where the variant has been found.

Asked whether there should be deliberation on putting a pause on campaign activities by all parties across poll-bound states, Sisodia said: "I think saving people's lives should be the first priority no matter what."

ILBS head Dr S K Sarin, who has worked closely with the Delhi government on Covid response and preparedness, has urged caution "for at least the next six months, till June 2022".

His remarks came on a day CM Arvind Kejriwal urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to stop flights from countries where the new variant has been detected.

"We know very little, I can only say that this has been declared as VOC, our concern for vigilance must be genuine, especially with regard to travelers from countries which are exposed. As a policy, there should at least be quarantine and isolation for them upon arrival. And we should implement our own self-lockdown — meaning keep-

ing our masks on and being extremely vigilant — for at least the next six months, till June 2022, till the variant of concern hopefully dies down," said Dr Sarin.

At the peak of the most recent wave, scenes of crowded hospital corridors and patients desperate to get admission had become common, particularly at large government hospitals.

At the time, Lok Nayak Hospital was the largest centre for Covid treatment. According to medical director Dr Suresh Kumar, preparedness for an escalation in the Covid situation has been an ongoing process. "After the second wave, we have been continuously working to prepare ICU beds and oxygen supply, so in that sense we are ready. People need to be more vigilant and careful with Covid-appropriate behaviour and not become lax with wearing masks," he said.

The hospital also has a genome sequencing lab, which is crucial for detecting new variants. "Given that the positivity in Delhi has been so low, the num-

ber of samples we have been getting for genome sequencing has consequently also been low. We have not received any fresh directions on this," he said.

In November (till the 27th), Delhi has had a total of 946 new cases and five deaths. There are currently 290 active cases, with 138 admitted to hospitals.

According to Dr Jugal Kishore, head of Community Medicine at Safdarjung Hospital, the capital is in a relatively safe position.

"Delhi already has a very high infection rate, the chances of a new variant being effective is low... Surveillance is the most important thing. We said a long time back that surveillance is required so that new variants can be identified, because if the virus continues, it can change any time and surveillance is the best method to detect this early. Sequencing also needs to follow the history of whether the person is vaccinated or not and what effect the vaccine might be having against or on the virus," he said.

Gang running oxygen cylinder scam busted

New Delhi: Delhi Police Saturday said they arrested nine persons and busted a gang that allegedly cheated close to 1,000 people on the pretext of selling them oxygen cylinders during the second Covid wave crisis. The gang managed to make more than Rs 1.5 crore in the last year, said police.

In May, a man approached police saying he was duped of Rs 25,000 after he called a number he found on social media to get an oxygen cylinder for his wife, who was suffering from Covid. His wife died during treatment.

Police said 3 accused were first arrested from Bihar and 6 more from West Bengal and Bihar.

DCP (Cyber) K P S Malhotra said the gang is divided into 6 — the mastermind; 'tele callers' who pose as vendors and cheat people; 'account handlers' who circulate the cheated money; 'account providers' who procure bank accounts from rural areas; and SIM card providers who buy multiple SIMs on fake IDs. The last part comprises account holders, mostly people from a poor financial background who don't know much about the scam. They give their details to earn some money, he said. **ENS**

PUBLIC NOTICE

District Ghazabad: The 30-day-long strike going on in Shiram Telelink, a company located in Plot No. 46/4/1, Site-V, Industrial Area, Sahibabad, Ghazabad-201010, Uttar Pradesh finally ended after mutual consent of the company's owner Mr. Sanjay Kumar Verma and union president Mr. Hari Om Sharma. For your information, let us tell you that this strike was going on since 25 October 2021 for the wage hike, which finally ended on 23 November 2021. Due to this strike, the work in the company came to a complete standstill and the company also suffered a lot. After the strike is over, all the employees have returned to their work and there is an atmosphere of enthusiasm in the company. Place: Shiram Telelink Plot no. 46/4/1, Site-V, Industrial Area, Sahibabad, Ghazabad-201010 Uttar Pradesh. Date: 28/11/2021

At Nuh, Khattar appeals to residents to get vaccinated

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
FEROZEPUR JHIRKA, NUH,
NOVEMBER 27

HARYANA CHIEF Minister Manohar Lal Khattar Saturday appealed to the people of Nuh to get vaccinated as soon as possible, stating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had recently expressed concern about the slow

pace of vaccination in the district, which has the lowest vaccination rate in the state.

He was speaking at the Haryana Pragati rally at Mahun Chopra village in Ferozpur Jhirka in Nuh. "In Haryana, overall, the vaccination rate is 90%. But, in Nuh it is very low. Recently, the PM had expressed concern and spoken to the DC here... *PM ne chinta jatai thi...* about the low rate

of vaccination here and how people spread rumours and misinformation about vaccines. If Covid spreads again in a populous area like this, the loss would be catastrophic. I want to reiterate that vaccination is for the safety of everyone. It is imperative that everyone is vaccinated to prevent a potential third wave. Even if a third wave arrives, if people are vaccinated, the antibodies will act

as a shield," he said, adding that in the past few days the administration has worked hard to boost the pace of vaccinations. The first dose coverage is now over 50% and 47 villages have been fully vaccinated, he said.

On the farm laws and his meeting with the PM on Friday, he said, "The PM had announced that the laws will be repealed and a committee will be formed to

discuss MSP. Some people have misquoted me on this. I had said that on this topic, I did not have any conversation with the PM..."

Referring to the namaz row in Gurgaon, where some right-wing groups and locals have been protesting against namaz in public places, the CM said it was a local issue and the administration was talking to all the parties to resolve it.



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Message from DDG (A), Dr Gireesh Tripathi



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New Delhi

8 EXPRESS NETWORK

Congress calls for House condolence resolution on deaths of farmers amid stir

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

WITH THE government set to introduce the bill to repeal the three contentious farm laws in Parliament, Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Saturday demanded that the House pass a condolence resolution for the farmers who lost their lives during the year-long agitation.

The government is expected to introduce the bill on the opening day of the winter session on Monday.

On Saturday, Chowdhury wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla conveying his demand for a resolution. "I would sincerely request you that as a mark of respect towards our annadats (farmers), the House may unanimously pass a condolence resolution for the farmers who lost their lives during the farmer agitation. The passing of the resolution in the House will convey our gratitude for the sacrifice that our farmer brethren have given to the nation," he wrote.

Farmer unions and Opposition leaders say hundreds of cultivators have died during the agitation, which reached Delhi's borders in November 2020. Farmers from across states were protesting against the three agriculture laws that the govern-

We are not answerable to another party: Moitra on Nadda's salvo in Goa

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, NOVEMBER 27

TRINAMOL CONGRESS MP and Goa in-charge Mahua Moitra Saturday responded to BJP president J P Nadda's criticism of the TMC saying they were not answerable to another party.

Nadda had said Thursday that new parties had come knocking on Goa's doors ahead of Assembly elections slated for February 2022. "Somebody should ask them what they have done in West Bengal? Today, West Bengal is number one in human trafficking, in crimes against women, absence of law and order and crime rate," he had claimed.

Addressing a press conference in Panaji Saturday, Moitra said: "How do I care?... He is the national president of another party. They had the chance in Bengal, they were there morning and evening making accusations. What happened? I wish him all the best... why should we answer to what another party's president says?"

She said TMC would contest

Send Bill for replacing NEET to President, TN CM urges Governor

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, NOVEMBER 27

CHIEF MINISTER M K Stalin on Saturday urged Governor R N Ravi to send the Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill, 2021 - which aims to change the state's eligibility criteria for admission into undergraduate medical courses - for President Ram Nath Kovind's assent immediately.

The bill, passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly in September, allows for admissions into undergraduate courses in medicine, dentistry, Indian medicine and homeopathy on the basis of Class 12 marks, instead of the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET). The legislation, which aims to restore the admission criteria that the state had before the introduction of NEET, also provides for 75% horizontal reservation for the students of government schools.

It was to be sent for the assent from President Kovind.

A statement from the state



Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

ment said were necessary to reform the industry.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an address to the nation on November 19, announced that the three farm laws will be repealed as his government was unable to explain their benefits to the farmers.

During the Budget Session of Parliament in February this year, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi had surprised everyone by asking Opposition members to stand up to observe two-minute silence as a tribute to the farmers who died during the agitation.

His move then had not go down well with the Speaker. Three BJP members later moved a breach of privilege notice against Gandhi's move, saying that asking members to observe silence without the permission of the Chair was contempt of the House.

In a separate letter to the Speaker, Chowdhury on Saturday also urged the Speaker to initiate the process of appointment of Deputy Speaker - a post that has been lying vacant since the constitution of the 17th Lok Sabha in 2019.



TMC Goa in-charge Mahua Moitra in Panaji, Saturday.

all 40 seats in Goa without any alliance.

She also claimed Chief Minister Pramod Sawant was a "puppet" controlled by BJP's general secretary (organisation) Satish Dhond. "There is no Mukhya Mantri in Goa. There is a Maha Mantri... He is Satish Dhond. The BJP should answer how Mr Dhond, who is not even a minister, is entering government meetings"

Goa BJP chief Sadanand Tanavade dismissed the remark. "Does she (Moitra) even know Satish Dhond? Somebody tutors her and she just says what she is told," he said.



M K Stalin

for Presidential assent considering the impact on medical admissions in the state.

The legislation was introduced in the backdrop of a series of suicides by medical aspirants who could not clear NEET.

The bill was an outcome of recommendations from a government appointed committee led by Justice A K Rajan - a retired judge of the Madras High Court - to look into the impact of NEET in the state. The key question to be analysed was whether the NEET is an equitable method for selection of students.

The state's main contention is that NEET, a common entrance exam, puts at a disadvantage students from rural areas and those from lower economic groups and backward classes.

Need to take everyone on growth path: Govt on farm laws repeal

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

EVEN THOUGH "only a group of farmers are protesting" against the farm laws, the government "has tried to sensitise the farmers" and "explain the merits" but as India "celebrates the 75th Year of Independence - 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the need of the hour is to take everyone together on the path of inclusive growth and development", explains government as its reasons behind the repeal of the farm laws in the Bill that is to be tabled in Parliament on Monday.

In the Farm Laws Repeal Act, 2021, circulated on Saturday evening, the government says the three laws -- the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020, the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act -- were enacted as a part of the Government's endeavour to improve the condition of farmers including small and marginal farmers.

"These enactments were made for the overall socio-economic development of the farmers and rural sector after extensive consultations with various stakeholders following the felt need and demand of the farmers' organisations, suggestions and recommendations of the experts, professionals, agricultural economists, expert committees over the years," says the statement on the objectives and reasons for the Bill.

UP election a fight between forces for and against India, says Yogis

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

CHIEF MINISTER Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said the electoral fight in the upcoming UP Assembly polls would be between pro-India and anti-India forces.

Addressing BJP booth chiefs in Janapur district, he claimed that every Indian was disrespected by the comparison drawn by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav between Vallabhbhai Patel with Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

"It is natural that the 2022 elections in UP have become a centre of attraction in the country and the world... All the anti-BJP and anti-India people are uniting. And on the other hand, under the guidance and leadership of Prime



SP chief Akhilesh Yadav addresses a public meeting in Sandila, UP, Saturday. Twitter

BJP supporters mowed down farmers, party trying to instill fear: Akhilesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

SAMAJWADI PARTY president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday hit out at the ruling BJP, accusing it of trying to instill fear among people and alleging that its supporters mowed down farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri last month.

Eight people, including four

States yet to avail of Centre's Good Samaritan scheme

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE CENTRE'S Good Samaritan scheme, meant to encourage and felicitate those helping road accident victims, has received a tepid response from the states more than a month since its launch.

The Road Transport and Highways Ministry announced this scheme so that taking a road crash victim to hospital is not just hassle-free but there is also the incentive of a reward and recognition.

Historically, Indians are reluctant in taking victims to hospital because of associated legal

EXPLAINED The justification for the repeal

The government justifies repeal of the contentious farm laws as a move to show its willingness to be inclusive. In its statement on objects and reasons, it tries to justify the laws by listing their benefits and advantages. With elections to several states, including the politically crucial Uttar Pradesh, due next year, the government seems to be hoping that this move would help stop the farm agitation, which had triggered reactions in several parts of the country. The explanation also reflects the government's optimism that the move would lead to a positive response in the upcoming polls.

prove the condition of farmers including small and marginal farmers.

It says although various Governments during the last three decades have tried to initiate such reforms, but, they were "not in comprehensive way".

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in an address to the nation, announced that the three laws, which triggered protests among the farmers in Punjab, Haryana and parts of UP, would be withdrawn.

"Even though only a group of farmers are protesting against these laws, the Government has tried hard to sensitise the farmers

on the importance of the Farm Laws and explain the merits through several meetings and other forum," it says, adding: "Without taking away the existing mechanisms available to farmers, new avenues were provided for trade of their produce. Besides, farmers were free to select the avenues of their choice where they can get more price for their produce without any compulsion. However, the operation of the aforesaid farm laws has been stayed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. During the Covid period, the farmers have worked hard to increase production and fulfil the needs of the nation." The statement also lists the several interventions to support farmers, including small and marginal farmers by providing quality seeds, credit, insurance, procurement and market support.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar has announced the Bill to repeal the acts will be brought in on the first day of the winter session. The session begins on November 29 and is scheduled to conclude on December 23.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath visits a temple in Balrampur district on Saturday. PTI

Minister Narendra Modi, every worker works to protect self-respect and pride of India. The whole fight has been divided into two parts - anti-nationals and pro-India," said the CM. Defence Minister Rajnath



UP CM Yogi Adityanath visits a temple in Balrampur district on Saturday. PTI

on the importance of the Farm Laws and explain the merits through several meetings and other forum," it says, adding: "Without taking away the existing mechanisms available to farmers, new avenues were provided for trade of their produce. Besides, farmers were free to select the avenues of their choice where they can get more price for their produce without any compulsion. However, the operation of the aforesaid farm laws has been stayed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. During the Covid period, the farmers have worked hard to increase production and fulfil the needs of the nation." The statement also lists the several interventions to support farmers, including small and marginal farmers by providing quality seeds, credit, insurance, procurement and market support.

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RSS-affiliated farmers' union seeks rollback of import duty cuts

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

BHARATIYA KISAN Sangh, the RSS-affiliated farmers' union, has accused the government of easing imports at a time when farmers have an opportunity to sell produce at a good price.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the group demanded a long term import-export policy for agricultural produce and asked the government to roll back the import duty cuts.

The outfit said it had submitted a memorandum on this to Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal.

"Maize is not bought at the minimum support price (MSP) in any state. And when the time comes for the market itself to offer the price, then prices are controlled by easing imports. Maize is a good alternative to soybean meal as poultry fodder. But by easing import of soybean meal, the government is annoying maize farmers," said the statement, quoting from the memorandum.

The communique, signed by BKS General Secretary Badri Narayan Chaudhary, also said soybean meal is derived from genetically modified crops which could "threaten the non-GM tag that India enjoys in the international market".

Odisha govt should rethink University Amendment Act: Education minister

AISHWARYA MOHANTY
BHUBANESWAR, NOVEMBER 27

UNION MINISTER of Education Dharmendra Pradhan on Saturday urged the state government to rethink the contentious Odisha Universities (Amendment) Act, 2020, which was passed in the Assembly in November last year.

The amended Act brings the appointment to important academic and administrative posts in state universities, including the re-

process involving the accident. "Any individual who has saved the life of a victim of a fatal accident involving a motor vehicle by administering immediate assistance and rushing to hospital within the golden hour of the accident to provide medical treatment would be eligible for the award. An individual Good Samaritan can be awarded maximum five times in a year," the ministry said. Golden hour is the critical one hour period from the accident.

To popularise the scheme, states have to publicise it adequately. It is meant to penetrate to the district level where the local administration is supposed

to keep a record of the Good Samaritans and enter their details in a Central website on a monthly basis.

"The point of the scheme is not the money but the awareness among the people that taking an accident victim to hospital is encouraged in order to save a life," said a senior ministry official. "We are in talks with states, but nothing has happened so far."

India witnesses around 5 lakh road accidents and 1.5 lakh deaths from them every year. As per several government assessments and independent studies, a large number of deaths occur because the victims did not get medical help within the golden hour.



President Ram Nath Kovind with CJ Justice N V Ramana and Law Minister Kiren Rijju in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

Judges must be discreet about what they say in court: Kovind

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

CALLING UPON judges "to exercise utmost discretion in what they say in courtrooms", President Ram Nath Kovind Saturday quoted the saying by an American judge that "history teaches that the independence of the judiciary is jeopardised when courts become embroiled in the passions of the day, and assume primary responsibility in choosing between competing political, economic and social pressures."

Kovind also touched upon what Chief Justice of India N V Ramana said at the Constitution Day event on Friday, regarding "attacks on the judiciary... particularly (in) social media". The President said: "It pains me no end... to note that of late there have been cases of some disparaging remarks against the judiciary made on social media platforms."

In his address at the valedictory session of the Constitution Day celebrations at the Vigyan Bhavan here, organised by the Supreme Court, Kovind said: "In Indian tradition, judges are imagined as a model of rectitude and detachment more akin to sthitpragya (steady wisdom)... We have a rich history of legions of such judges known for remarks full of sagacity and conduct beyond reproach, which have become the hallmark for the future generations."

Stressing that "there is no doubt that you have set for yourself a high bar", the President said: "Hence, it is also incumbent upon judges to exercise utmost discretion in what they say in courtrooms. Indiscreet remarks, even if made with a good intention, give space for dubious interpretations to run down the judiciary."

Going on to quote what Justice Frankfurter of the US Supreme Court said in the 1951 case Dennis versus United States, he said: "Courts are not representative bodies. They are not designed to be a good reflex of a democratic society. Their essential quality is detachment, founded on independence. History teaches us that the independence of the judiciary is jeopardised when courts be-

Odisha govt should rethink University Amendment Act: Education minister

Dharmendra Pradhan

From the administrative point of view, you can implement a unitary system to keep a check on how the state government's education budget is being spent, what disciplines must be taught... but for academic excellence, it is necessary that Universities are given their freedom," Pradhan said while delivering the keynote address on the 79th Foundation Day of Utkal University in Bhubaneswar. "The NEP is preparing a bigger launching pad for academic excellence. Keeping this in mind, Odisha government should rethink its decision."

The legislation altered the committee's composition for the selection of VCs of universities, and said that the teachers' recruitments will be done by the Odisha Public Service Commission. Selection to these posts were previously done by the universities.

'BEIJING JANATA PARTY': KHARGE ATTACKS BJP ON CHINA INCURSION

New Delhi: Congress Saturday stepped up its attack on the government over the reported Chinese incursions with Rajya Sabha Opposition Leader Mallikarjun Kharge calling the BJP "Beijing Janata Party".

Kharge took a dig at some BJP leaders for sharing an image of Beijing Airport and passing it off as the model for Jewar airport. "In Arunachal Pradesh, BJP govt let's China to build villages. In Uttar Pradesh, BJP govt shows Chinese airport as its own. In Ladakh, BJP govt... cedes our territory to Chinese. BJP has transformed into Beijing Janata Party!," Kharge tweeted. **ENS**

EMERGENCE OF OMICRON VARIANT

Only 11% fully jabbed in Africa, inequity in focus

AMITABH SINHA
PUNE, NOVEMBER 27

A LITTLE more than a quarter of health workers in Africa have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19 till now. That is roughly the coverage of first doses in the entire population of South Africa as well.

The emergence of Omicron variant of SARS-CoV2, first reported from South Africa earlier this week, has brought spotlight on inequalities in accessing vaccines. While the developed world struck advance deals with manufacturers to secure billions of doses even before the vaccines were approved, poorer countries have been dependent primarily on inadequate and erratic supplies from Covax facility set up by the World Health Organization and some other international agencies. Nowhere is the inequality starker than in Africa. Just about 11 per cent of the population has had at least one dose of the vaccine, and only 7.2 per cent is fully vaccinated, according to Our World In Data.

Europe and North America, on the other hand, have got more than 50 per cent of their population fully vaccinated, while the first dose coverage is over 60 per cent. In Asia, close to 50 per cent people are fully vaccinated now.

A recent report from WHO said less than 10 per cent nations in Africa — or just about five countries — are likely to achieve their year-end target of vaccinating 40 per cent of their populations. Most African countries missed a

EXPLAINED
E. Dependence on Covax

MOST OF Africa has been almost entirely dependent on supplies from Covax, or vaccine diplomacy from countries like China, India and Russia. Covax facility, in turn, is dependent on contributions, either in form of doses or money to buy them, from other countries. So far, Covax facility has delivered 537 million doses in over 100 countries, of which 330 million has gone to Africa.

September target to vaccinate at least 10 per cent of their populations. A total of 227 million doses have been administered in Africa. That is less than 20 per cent of doses administered in India. Over 900 million doses have been administered in Europe, and more than 450 million in the US.

"We have enough vaccines that, if they were distributed appropriately, can protect those who are most at risk for severe disease and our frontline workers," Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead for Covid-19 at WHO, was recently quoted as saying.

"Too many vaccines are going wasted and too many vaccines are not being used most appropriately... frankly this inappropriate use... is prolonging the pandemic," she said.

VACCINATION COVERAGE CONTINENT-WISE		
Continents	First Dose Coverage (% of population)	Second Dose Coverage (% of population)
Africa	11	7.2
Asia	62	48
Europe	62	58
North America	64	54
South America	72	56

Source: Ourworldindata

Karnataka tightens curbs as more Covid clusters appear

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 27

STUDENTS ARRIVING from Kerala and Maharashtra will mandatorily need a negative RT-PCR report, the Karnataka government decided on Saturday at an emergency meeting with experts. The meeting came in the wake of four clusters of Covid-19 infections reported from four educational institutions in the state over the past week.

Saturday's meeting was convened by Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai with members of the state technical advisory committee and state officials after outbreaks were reported from a Bengaluru city school, a nursing college in rural Bengaluru, a nursing college in Mysuru, and a medical college in the Dharwad.

In addition to a mandatory negative RT-PCR report from students arriving from Kerala and Maharashtra, "those students

who have come from Kerala 16 days ago must undergo a fresh RT-PCR test. This will apply especially to nursing students and those at hostels... At all hostels, a second RT-PCR test must be done seven days from arrival," Karnataka Revenue Minister R Ashok said. He said there will be a strict vigil in the border regions of Kerala and Maharashtra.

The state has written to the Centre seeking booster doses for frontline workers and a decision is expected soon, he added.

A total of 281 students and faculty at the SDM College of Medical Sciences in Dharwad tested positive for Covid over the past two days. Another 48 nursing students in Mysuru tested positive, and in Bengaluru rural, 12 nursing students from Kerala at the Spurthy College of Nursing were diagnosed.

On Thursday, 33 students, all minors, and a staff member at a private boarding school too tested positive for the viral illness.

Two SA citizens in Bengaluru test positive for Delta variant

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 27

TWO CITIZENS of South Africa who arrived in Bengaluru tested positive for Covid-19, briefly sparking concerns over the new Omicron variant detected in that country before a genome sequencing test found that they had the Delta variant.

The development, however, prompted CM Basavaraj Bommai to call a high-level meeting on Saturday. Bommai said authorities would intensify screening of international passengers at the airports and make the RT-PCR test compulsory for those arriving from Kerala and Maharashtra. K Srinivas, the Deputy Commissioner of Bengaluru Rural district under which Kempegowda International Airport falls, said: "Two South African nationals who arrived to Bengaluru on 11 and 20 November respectively were tested positive for Covid-19 and were traced living in Bengaluru. They have been isolated and are under treatment. We have found them to have the Delta variant. About 84 people arrived in Bengaluru in November from 10 high-risk countries and 94 of them came from South Africa.

Only vaccinated people can use public transport in Maharashtra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

THE MAHARASHTRA government on Saturday issued fresh Covid restrictions, which mandated that only fully vaccinated citizens would be allowed to access public transport in the state.

The new guidelines also said that all domestic travellers entering the state should either be fully vaccinated or carry an RT-PCR test report valid for 72 hours. "...the State Government is now considering to open up economic, social, entertainment and cultural activities with fewer restrictions especially for fully vaccinated persons," the order signed by Maharashtra Chief Secretary Sitaram Kunte said.

The order said that all people connected with "the organisation of any programme, event or show" should be fully vaccinated.

All visitors to malls, gatherings and such places should also be fully vaccinated, it said. All public transport shall be used only by fully vaccinated people, adding the Universal Pass created by the state government or the CoWin Certificate with a valid photo ID proof will be sufficient, the order said.

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY ELECTION

Kejriwal non-committal on AAP's CM pick

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
MOHALI, NOVEMBER 27

DELHI CHIEF Minister Arvind Kejriwal was non-committal on naming Bhagwant Mann as the chief ministerial face for Punjab Assembly elections at a public meeting in Mohali on Saturday and, in a snub to those demanding he be made the CM face, said that the priority of the workers should be to ensure that Punjab is saved and not to make someone minister or MLA.

Kejriwal made the comments when faced with vocifer-



Arvind Kejriwal

ous demands from the party supporters who interrupted his comments by raising slogans in favour of Mann.

The public meeting being held by Kejriwal in Mohali was attended by state president and Sangrur MP Bhagwant Mann, state in-charge Jarnail Singh, Leader of Opposition Harpal

Tripura CM asks police to review anti-terror cases

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, NOVEMBER 27

OVER THREE weeks after Tripura booked 102 social media users under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for sharing content online over the alleged vandalism in October along with alleged fake news and rumour mongering, Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has instructed Director General of Police V S Yadav to review the cases and submit a report.

DGP Yadav has further directed the Crime Branch, which is now investigating these cases.

A senior official of the Chief Minister's Office told *The Indian Express*, "There was a conspiracy to disturb law and order in Tripura few days back by posting fake photos and videos of arson in mosques on social media. In order to bring the situation under control and maintain communal harmony, Tripura Police filed cases against 102 people including some journalists and lawyers."

Requesting anonymity, the official said police will take action against everyone who deliberately tried to disturb communal harmony, and cases will be dropped if there isn't enough evidence.

On November 3, Tripura Police served notices to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, asking them to block accounts of 102 users who allegedly posted content that "have potential to flare



Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb

up communal tension". The accused included 68 Twitter users.

An investigation of these Twitter handles by *The Indian Express* revealed they included nine journalists, seven political workers, five students, two activists, and seven profiles were affiliated to different religious organisations. The content on a majority of these suggested they were critical of the government. After serving the notice to Twitter, Tripura Police said 47 Twitter posts and one YouTube post were removed. As on November 17, 44 of 68 Twitter profiles were still available while 24 were pulled down or suspended by Twitter.

Police also said that at least one post by Indian American Muslim (IAM) Council had links with a terrorist outfit of Pakistan and was allegedly supporting Taliban and lobbying with foreign organisations against India in connivance with Pakistan's spy agency.

"There are at least 14 links which have originated from outside India revealing that the conspiracy hatched outside India as well for promoting hatred between religious groups and creating disturbances", the statement said. They later sent a list of 94 tweets accused of similar charges.

2 weapons used in Bikru ambush seized in MP

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 27

OVER A year after the Bikru incident in which eight policemen, including Deputy Superintendent of Police rank officer, were killed during an attempt to arrest gangster Vikas Dubey in July last year, the Kanpur Police on Saturday claimed that two weapons allegedly used in the shootout by assailants have been seized in Madhya Pradesh.

Police said the two weapons — a semi-automatic rifle and a 12 bore rifle — were seized from Madhya Police and belonged to prime accused Vikas Dubey, who was later gunned down in an encounter in Kanpur.

The Madhya Pradesh police recovered the weapons from two local criminals, who claimed to have purchased them a few months ago, police added.

Two days ago, a team of the Kanpur Police went to Bind in Madhya Pradesh and brought the semi-automatic rifle after completing legal formalities. "We will soon bring the other weapon, too. The weapons will be sent to a forensic laboratory for ballistic examination," said station house officer, Choubeypur police station, K M Rai. The incident dates back to July 3 last year, when a police team came under heavy gunfire near Dubey's residence at Bikru. Eight policemen died in the ambush. Of the 21 people named in the FIR, the police gunned down six accused, including Dubey, in alleged encounters over the weeks.



National Conference leader Omar Abdullah meets family of Amir Magray, who was killed during the Hyderabad encounter, in Ramban district of J&K. PTI

'Will continue fight for Art 370'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, NOVEMBER 27

FORMER JAMMU and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah on Saturday reiterated his party's resolve to continue fighting for restoration of Article 370, stating that "today our bad luck is that we have to fight even for getting back the body of an innocent person".

Omar, who visited the family of Amir Magray at Thatharka, later addressed a public meeting in Gool and said that he had gone to Srinagar to work since he could not find a job here. Even today, he added, Amir's father lives under police protection since he had

fought against militancy. Amir, along with a Pakistani militant, was among four people, including a doctor and the owner of the building, who were killed by police in an encounter in Handwara last week. While bodies of the building owner and the doctor were exhumed in Handwara and handed over to their families following protests, Amir's body remained buried there, as police called him an associate of the slain Pakistani militant.

"Today, a father, who had fought against militancy and the gun in the past, asks for the body of his son so that he can give him a burial as per rites," Omar said. He also asked whether August 2019, when special status to the erstwhile state was withdrawn, "was

thrust upon us that Amir Magray, a youth from Gool, gets buried in Handwara and no one knows where his grave is".

Pointing out that today if his father wants to offer *fatiha* on his grave, he will perhaps be unable to trace it, Omar, without naming anyone, asked, "Where are our leaders who keep on talking about Jammu? Is Gool not a part of Jammu?"

Stating that a "strange situation" has arisen after August 2019, Omar said he does not understand which direction the present rulers are taking J&K, or what their intentions are. He asked the Centre what it has done for the people of J&K after August 2019 regarding employment, new development works, etc.

Elephant deaths: Five TN officials 'detained' in Kerala, say cops

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COIMBATORE, NOVEMBER 27

FIVE FOREST officials from Tamil Nadu, who had gone to Palakkad to enquire about the speed of the train that nowed down three elephants, near Ettimadai on the outskirts of Coimbatore on November 26, were reportedly detained at Palakkad railway station on Saturday, police said.

The loco pilot and co pilot, both from Kerala, were questioned about the incident earlier. The forest personnel from Tamil Nadu, who went to Palakkad railway station, were reportedly detained by railway police there. Hearing about this, some political outfits staged a protest.

After protests, CM says will act against Old Goa construction

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, NOVEMBER 27

GOA CHIEF Minister Pramod Sawant on Saturday said his government will act on the allegedly illegal structure in Old Goa that has sparked protests. Activists and residents demanding the demolition of the structure in the Old Goa heritage precinct, meanwhile, continued their fast on its fourth day on Saturday.

He said that the permissions for the construction of the bungalow — built on the land that was partly bought by Manish Munot, husband of BJP spokesperson Shaina NC and party by Survarna Lotlikar, wife of former Goa Forward Party (GFP) treasurer Suraj Lotlikar — was granted prior to the term of his government.



Activists say the bungalow construction is illegal.

"From what I have understood he had obtained a construction license and permission at the time. ... But now since everyone is protesting against it, our government will act on it," Sawant said.

Sawant said that the government will take action as per the law and since the matter is pend-

ing in Supreme Court in an SLP filed, the government will also have to factor in the legal bearing of its action. Sawant also pointed a finger at a "former minister" who had "sinned". GFP President Vijai Sardesai, meanwhile, wrote to Deputy Chief Minister and TCP minister Chandrakant Kavlekar that the permissions were granted in 2016 before he was made TCP minister and the construction took place in 2019 after he was dropped from the BJP government.

In a jibe at Sardesai, former deputy CM and TCP minister, Sawant said: "... it is a private plot, a third party has purchased it, a person who was close to a political party... There is no need to burden me with this sin. Those who have sinned have been seen in photos and videos,"

Cargo ships collide in Gulf of Kutch, no casualties

AVINASH NAIR
AHMEDABAD, NOVEMBER 27

TWO FOREIGN cargo ships collided in the busy shipping lanes of the Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat Friday night, official sources said. No casualties were reported in the accident that happened between the coast of Okha in Devbhumi Dwarka and Mandvi in Kutch.

The accident occurred between MV Atlantic Grace — a 50,000-DWT oil/chemical tanker sailing under the flag of Hong Kong — and a 19,000-DWT bulk carrier MV Aviator sailing under the flag of Marshall Islands. While MV Atlantic Grace was headed to Fujairah (the UAE) from Kandla, MV Aviator was headed to Kandla port.



There was no reported oil spill. ANI

"Until now, there has been no report of any casualties in the accident. No oil slick has been reported so far," said a government official. Indian Coast Guard ships, including a pollution control vessel, are on stand-by and are monitoring the situation.

UP, BIHAR NUMBERS ENCOURAGING

8.7 per cent point rise in contraception use in 5 yrs: NFHS data

ESHAROY
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

INCREASED USE of contraception across the country has been a major contributing factor in preventing unwanted pregnancies, and in turn the decrease in India's Total Fertility Rate to below replacement level, NFHS-5 data show.

In five years between NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-20), use of modern contraceptives for family planning has increased from 47.8 per cent to 56.5 per cent, data show.

While 30 of 36 states/UTs have shown an increase in contraceptive use, experts point out that improvement in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar's numbers have been particularly encouraging, given their

large populations. In Bihar, Modern Contraceptive Prevalence Rate has almost doubled: from 23.3% in NFHS-4 to 44.4% in NFHS-5.

"The decrease in fertility is the function of three main factors: use of contraception, increase in age of marriage, and abortions," Dr Niranjan Saggurti, director, Population Council of India, said. "In Bihar, age of marriage continues to remain low, with 43% girls married under the age of 18 in NFHS4, which decreased marginally to 41% under the age of 18 in NFHS-5. But what has been successful is increase in modern contraceptive use. This points to push in family planning schemes by the state government. But what is most significant in Bihar's case is the increase in education, which

has translated into increased use of contraception and increased family planning."

Saggurti points out that for UP, the good news has been that the age of marriage has increased. Twenty-one per cent women under the age of 18 were married, NFHS-4 had found, which has decreased by 5 percentage points in five years — 16 per cent girls under 18 were married in UP, the recent survey reported.

"UP has also shown a very good balanced contraception method mix, with a shift from sterilisation to reversible contraception," Saggurti said.

In its contraception mix, 40% is now sterilisation and 60% is use of reversible contraceptive methods. In UP, contraception use has increased from 31.7 per cent in

2015-16 to 44.5 per cent in 2019-20. UP has also shown a marginal decrease in female sterilisation of 0.4 per cent. The date show Bihar (21%), Goa (35.3%), Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (24%), Nagaland (24%) and Arunachal Pradesh (20.6%) have reported the highest increase in contraception use in NFHS-5 over NFHS-4. Rajasthan has also shown a significant increase in contraception use of 9 per cent.

Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Haryana and Goa have 10 per cent or more contraception use.

Punjab and Ladakh have reported the highest decrease, while Meghalaya (22.5%) and Manipur

(18.2%) have registered the lowest contraception use in the country.

"Data show women want smaller families. While the use of contraception has increased, indicating improving success of India's family planning programme, women would have even less pregnancies if they had increased access to contraception and increased agency to make decisions," Alok Vajpeyi, head of Knowledge Management at the Population Foundation of India, said.

Prof K. James, director, International Institute for Population Sciences, the Health Ministry's partner organisation that carried out the survey, said if TFR correction occurs in four states — Bihar, UP, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan — it will

put India on a definite course correction for population control.

"One of the most important contributing factors for decreasing TFR is the use of modern contraceptive methods," James said. "Despite the fact that age of marriage of women has not increased significantly in the country, with some states having as much as 30-40 per cent women marrying under the age of 18, family planning programmes are showing results. Once countries attained 60 per cent contraceptive use, they reach replacement levels.

"Family planning has been the most enhanced programme... because of continuing concerns of over-population. But what these results have shown is that it can be achieved with increased contraception..."

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY-e-TENDER NOTICE
Tender No: 47/2021-22/KWA/PHC/D2/TVM JMM 2021-22:- Providing FHTC's & connected works and pipe line extensions in various wards of Venganoor Grama Panchayath (Phase-3). EMD: ₹200000/- . Tender fee: ₹10000/- . Last Date for submitting Tender: 22.12.2021, 03:00 pm. Phone : 0471-2322303.
Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in
KWA-JB-GL-6-595-2021-22

उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग
हस्ताक्षरित
विज्ञापन संख्या: 110(1)/16/सी.जे. जे.डी.-19/गोपन-1/2019-20 दिनांक: 26 नवम्बर, 2021
विज्ञापन
एतद्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि माओ उच्चतम न्यायालय में योजित एम्प्लॉयमेंट (सी) 11400 अंक 2020 एन जलसंधी सिविल अपील संख्या (एन) 2403/2021 में दिने गये निर्णय दिनांक 07.09.2021 के अनुसार मंत्रालय में उच्चतम न्यायालय सेवा सिविल जज (जूनियर टिचीवन) मुख्य भर्ती-2019 के अंतर्गत अन्व पिछडा वर्ग के लिए आवेदनित रहे गए 01 फरवरी के सप्तिमा प्रथम दिनांक 26 नवम्बर, 2021 को घोषित कर दिया गया है। चयन परिणाम आयोग की वेबसाइट www.ukpsc.gov.in पर प्रकाशित कर दिया गया है।
(एम्प्लॉयमेंट सेवा) प्रो सचिव

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
चतुर्थ वृत्त, लोक निर्माण विभाग, रुद्रपुर, (उधम सिंह नगर)
Phone/Fax: 05944-240921, E-mail: sepwdusn@gmail.com
दिनांक : 26.11.2021

राष्ट्रीय प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक निविदा (e-tendering)
महामहिम राज्यपाल महोदय, उत्तराखण्ड की ओर से अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, चतुर्थ वृत्त, लो0नि0वि0 रुद्रपुर (उधम सिंह नगर) द्वारा निम्नलिखित कार्यों हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग द्वारा टेंडर-बिड सिस्टम द्वारा के अन्तर्गत निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित सभी सूचनायें वेबसाइट <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> पर दिनांक 04.12.2021 से उपलब्ध होंगी।

क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	घरोर घनराशि (लाख में)	निविदा प्रपत्र की मूल्य (रु. में)	निविदा की वैधता (दिवस)	कार्य पूर्ण करने का समय (माह में)	टेकेदार की श्रेणी
1	माओ मुख्यमंत्री घोषणा सं0 311/2021 के अंतर्गत विधानसभा क्षेत्र गदरपुर में भजुवा नगला से बांसखेडी होते हुए बरिया बरहेनी मार्ग तक मार्ग का पुनः निर्माण एवं डामरीकरण का कार्य।	3.07	5000.00 + 18% GST	120 दिन	09 माह	केन्द्र/राज्य सरकार के विभाग/उपक्रम में मार्ग हेतु श्रेणी की एवं उच्चतर में पंजीकृत

नोट- उपरोक्त कार्य की निविदा स्वीकृति की प्रत्याशा में आमंत्रित की गयी है। अधीक्षण अभियन्ता

BIHAR SCHOOL EXAMINATION BOARD
CORRIGENDUM TO TENDER NOTICE NO. - PR 205/2021
With reference to Tender Notice No. - PR 205/2021 issued in various Newspapers on 17th November 2021 for "Providing Housekeeping services to Bihar School Examination Board, Patna", changes have been made in Eligibility Criteria, Scope of Work & Technical Bid Document. The updated Tender Document may be referred over e-procurement website <https://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in>.
Secretary

UNIVERSITY OF RAJASTHAN, JAIPUR
Tel. No. : 0141-2706813 Fax : 0141-2709582
email ID : www.registrarur@yahoo.com
No. Degree Bid/Exam. VI-B/2021/3348 Dated : 27.11.2021

E-BID NOTICE
E-Bids are invited from REPUTED SUPPLIERS upto 04.12.2021 till 12.00 noon for **MANUFACTURING OF GOLD MEDALS FOR EXAMINATION 2020 ON F.O.R. BASIS** Details may be seen in the Bidding Document on our website www.uniraj.ac.in, <http://sppr.raaj.ac.in> Bid form may be seen and downloaded from website eproc.raajasthan.gov.in This Bid shall be processed through e-procurement portal of Govt. of Rajasthan, UBN: URA2122GS0B0011
Registrar

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ
No.- Tender Notice No: -NCRPU_W_CNB_01_2021 Date : 25.11.2021
TENDER NOTICE
Dy. CST/CTC/NCRPU/Tundla, N. C. Railway, for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

Description of work	Repair & Renovation of SSE/SIG/PU/Store/ Jharkarkati at Kanpur
E-Tender No.	NCRPU_W_CNB_01_2021 Dtd. - 25.11.2021
Approx Cost (Rs)	Rs. 45,48,460 (Rs. Forty Five Lakh Forty Eight Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Only)
Earnest Money (Rs)	0.00
Cost of Tender Form	0.00
Date of closing Tender	17/12/2021 at 12:00 hrs
Date of completion/period from issue acceptanc e letter	09 Months
Validity of Tender	45 Days

Note - (1) The complete information along with Tender document of above E-Works Tender will be available on Website on www.ireps.gov.in up to 12:00 Hrs. on the due date of Tender opening. (2) Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders. For this purpose Venders are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Class III Digital signature certificate issued by CCA under IT Act 2000. (3) Rates entered into financial rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form / letter held if attached by Tenderer shall be straight way ignored & shall not be considered. (4) Documents being attached should be signed by the Tenderer on its body. (5) For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps.gov.in.
1236/21 (SP)
North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @CPRONCR

कार्यालय कार्यपालन अभियन्ता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड, कबीरधाम (छ.ग.)
निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना
ऑनलाईन निविदाएं "प्रपत्र-ए" में प्रतिशत दर पर नीचे उल्लिखित कार्य के लिये DWSM, KABIRDHAM की ओर से कार्यपालन अभियन्ता एवं सदस्य सचिव DWSM द्वारा एकीकृत पंजीवन व्यवस्था ई-जिस्ट्रेशन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।
कार्य का विवरण:- कबीरधाम जिले के बोडला एवं स. लोहारा विकासखण्ड में स्वीकृत रेट्रोफिटिंग नल जल प्रदाय योजनांतर्गत पेयजल प्रदाय एवं इत्यादि कार्य।

निविदा सूचना क्रमांक/दिनांक	निविदा क्रमांक	बोनाना का नाम एवं विकासखण्ड	अनुमानित लागत (रुपै लाख में)
141/Dt. 22.11.2021	87246	विकासखंड बोडला के ग्राम नेरुवा खुद में रेट्रोफिटिंग नल जल प्रदाय पेयजल प्रदाय एवं इत्यादि कार्य।	166.35
142/Dt. 22.11.2021	87247	विकासखंड बोडला के ग्राम में रेट्रोफिटिंग पोडो नल जल प्रदाय पेयजल प्रदाय एवं इत्यादि कार्य।	237.66
143/Dt. 22.11.2021	87248	विकासखंड बोडला के ग्राम खैरना कल में रेट्रोफिटिंग नल जल प्रदाय पेयजल प्रदाय इत्यादि कार्य।	126.84
144/Dt. 22.11.2021	87318	विकासखंड स. लोहारा के ग्राम पवननारा में रेट्रोफिटिंग नल जल प्रदाय पेयजल प्रदाय इत्यादि कार्य।	91.27

उपरोक्त निर्माण कार्यों की निविदा को सामान्य शर्तें, धरोहर शर्तें, विस्तृत निविदा विज्ञापन, निविदा दस्तावेज व अन्य जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> में दिनांक 22-11-2021 से देखी जा सकती है।
निविदा डाउनलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि:-14.12.2021
हस्ता/-
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
लोक स्वास्थ्य यांत्रिकी खण्ड
कबीरधाम (छ.ग.)
65409

Tripura man kills 5, including daughters, cop

DEBRAJ DEB
AGARTALA, NOVEMBER 27

A TRIPURA man wielding an iron rod went on a late night rampage Friday, killing his brother, two minor daughters, a passer-by and finally a policeman who tried to restrain him, the police said. One of his daughters was an infant of just one year.

Pradip Debroy, 40, a resident of Khowai district, was overpowered after a police team

turned up and took him into custody. The authorities booked him at Khowai police station and produced him before a local court on Saturday.

The police are unsure why Debroy went on a spree. "He didn't have any history of psychological problems, nor did he have any disturbance till 8 pm last evening or so. He even visited a medicine shop. We are investigating the issue", one officer said.

A senior Tripura Police official said Debroy, who resides in

Ramchandraghat area, around 50 km from Agartala, went into "an uncontrolled fit of aggression" at around 11.30 pm on Friday and killed his minor daughters — one-year-old Aditi and seven-year-old Mandira — with an iron rod.

He allegedly assaulted his wife, injuring her. She managed to flee the residence.

"After his brother Amalash Debroy approached Pradip and asked him to open the door, the latter attacked him as well with the iron rod and killed

him on the spot. Pradip then also attacked and killed Krishna Das — a passer-by who was travelling in an auto-rickshaw. Krishna's son, Karmavir, suffered injuries," said this officer's skull.

Mallick, suffering from blood loss, was sheltered in a local house and later rushed to Khowai district hospital. He, along with the two other injured persons — Debroy's wife and Das's son — were referred to the Govind Ballabh Pant Hospital at Agartala as they were in critical condition.

The police officer died during treatment. The other two are being treated and their condition is stable, said the police.

Aircel-Maxis: Summons for Chidambaram, Karti, others

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

A DELHI Court Saturday issued summons to former Union minister P Chidambaram, his son Karti Chidambaram and others on December 20 after taking cognisance of the Central Bureau of Investigation and Enforcement Directorate chargesheets in the Aircel-Maxis case.

CBI and ED had alleged that the Congress leader, as finance minister during the United Progressive Alliance regime, granted approval to the deal beyond his capacity — benefiting certain persons — and received kickbacks.

The case had been revived around two years ago after a judge had adjourned the matter sine die, noting that both agencies were seeking adjournment and not addressing arguments on point of cognisance.

All the accused mentioned in the CBI and ED chargesheets have to appear before the court on December 20. Special Judge MK Nagpal noted that there was sufficient evidence to summon Chidambaram and the other accused persons in the corruption and money-laundering cases by CBI and ED, respectively.

On the CBI chargesheet, in which 18 persons have been chargesheeted including Chidambaram, the court observed that it appears that the former minister who was at the time the finance minister had granted FIPB approval to M/S GCSHL for US\$ 800 million in furtherance of a "well hatched criminal conspiracy between all the accused persons".

The court said that the grant of approval was done "intentionally and fraudulently being fully aware that it was not within the competence" of Chidambaram to approve the proposal as the inflow of FDI through this proposal was of around Rs 3,560 crore whereas he was competent to grant approval in such a case only upto Rs 600 crore.

"Senior Counsels and Prosecutor appearing for CBI had made this court to travel through various documents and statements of witnesses recorded during the course of investigation, which prima facie substantiate the above allegations and show that in furtherance of the above conspiracy," court said.

DIRECTOR, PRINTING AND STATIONERY U.P. PRAYAGRAJ
Tender Notice
On behalf of Honorable Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Director, Printing and Stationery U.P. Prayagraj has invited/published Bid on GeM Portal for the purchase of following Raw Materials for the use of Government Presses from the manufactures or their authorized dealers.

S. No.	Description	Gem Bid No. & Date	Bid End Date/Time
1.	P.S. Plate Aluminum (Technova Brand)	GEM/2021/B/1701869 24.11.2021	09.12.2021 17.00
2.	PP Strep Roll (10.5mm, 11mm, 12mm)	GEM/2021/B/1701807 24.11.2021	09.12.2021 17.00
3.	Indian Hessian Cloth & Country Jute Twine	GEM/2021/B/1697851 24.11.2021	09.12.2021 17.00

Director
Printing and Stationery, U.P.
Prayagraj
UPID No. 170227 DATE 26.11.2021
www.upgov.nic.in

DM kept from entering police station for 1 hour

Jammu: Rajouri District Magistrate R K Shavan was purportedly not allowed to enter a local police station for nearly one-and-a-half hours on Saturday, after which he left without going inside and conducting any inspection. While neither Shavan nor senior police officers in the district were available for comment, sources said Shavan was accompanied by the additional deputy commissioner and assistant commissioner for revenue. When they reached the police station around 7:10 pm, they found the gates closed. No one opened the gates for more than an hour as the district magistrate and other officers waited in their vehicles outside the police station. Eventually, the Rajouri ASP was informed, and he reached the spot and opened the gate, sources said. But the DM left, reportedly saying that it had been too late. ENS

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER JKPCCLTD, Mech. UNIT
ADJACENT TO EDI OPPOSITE SRTC YARD PAMPORE
Fax No: 01933-222273, Email:- dgmmechsrinagar@JKPCCLTD.com
M/S Dogra & Dogra Enterprises B-897, Avantika Sec-1, Rohini, Delhi
Notice-Last & Final

Sub-Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Fire fighting System at new block L.D. Hospital Srinagar
Ref: 1. Letter of intent no: P/AGMK/21/203-05 dated: 14/09/2021
2. Manager Sub Unit-I letter no's:

I. Mech/SU/1/166-67 dt: 08/10/2021,	II. Mech/su/1/197-99 dt: 30-10-2021,
III. Mech/SU/1/213-15 dt: 09-11-2021	IV. Mech/SU/1/224-26 dt: 17-11-2021.
V. Mech/SU/1/228-30 dt: 22-11-2021	

Dear Sir,
● Whereas the work of Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Fire fighting System at new block L.D. Hospital Srinagar was allotted to you vide Letter of intent no: P/AGMK/21/203-05 dated: 14/09/2021.
● Whereas the job was supposed to be completed within 2 months (60 days) reckoned after 3 days from the date of issuance of Letter of intent and stands expired on 15/11/2021.
● Whereas you have only supplied and laid 150mm dia. M.S. underground piping and rest of the equipments and items has not even been supplied by you.
● Whereas series of communications has been made by the Mechanical Sub Unit-I vide above referred references to deliver the rest of material and mobilize your men and machinery for early completion of project. But no action has been taken by you in the matter so far.
● Whereas, you have failed to resume the work for its early completion till date which seems that you are not interested in executing the balance work of the said project.
● Whereas, a meaningless communications were received by this vide No: Nil dt: 20/11/2021 & No: Nil dt: 22/11/2021 through mail.
As such final notice is served to you with the directions to deliver the material and mobilize your men and machinery within two days positively from the date of publication of this notice and start the work for early completion of project after drawing proper agreement with corporation failing which we shall be forced to recommend your case for termination of contract, imposition of penalty and forfeiture of performance Guarantee as per terms & conditions of SBD, without any further notice and may also recommend for blacklisting of your firm in JKPCCLTD which may be noted.

Yours Sincerely,
Deputy General Manager,
Mech Unit, JKPCCLTD. Srinagar
DIPK-NB-5430/21

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR
e-Procurement No. 3129 / Dated: 20.11.2021

Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur on behalf of Odisha State Rural Roads Agency invites Percentage (%) bids through e-Procurement from eligible class of experienced bidders for construction of roads and CD works including maintenance for 5 years of rural roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana PMGSY-III, Batch-I.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Description
1	Name of work	Construction of road and CD works including five year maintenance under PMGSY-III, Batch-I Package no. OR-03-245
2	Class of Contractor.	"A" and "B" Class
3	No. of packages.	1 No. of Package
4	Estimated cost	Approx. 206.24 Lakh (Information in DTCN will be Final)
5	Bid submission fee.	Rs. 10,000/- (Non-Refundable) per set of package
6	Mode of submission of tender.	Only through online in website: www.pmsgstenders.gov.in .

Summary of key dates are provided below:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	Last date & time for seeking clarification	Last date & time of submission of Original documents	Date & Time of opening of tender	Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural, Works Circle, Sambalpur	PMGSY-Online-RWCSBP-27/2021-22	29.11.2021 From 11:00 A.M. To 05:00 P.M.	14.12.2021 Up to 5.00 P.M.	08.12.2021 Up to 5.00 P.M.	17.12.2021 By 5.00 P.M.	15.12.2021 At 11:00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

*Special conditions 1- EPF registration is mandatory before draw of agreement. 2- Rate quoted by the contractor shall be excluding GST. 3. Original Bid Security declaration form, Bid submission fee and original affidavits should be submitted at the O/o Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur Or O/o Executive Engineer/ Superintending Engineer of Concern Rural Works Division.
*Details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.pmsgstenders.gov.in
*Subsequent modification/ corrigendum/ Addendum if required shall be appeared in the website only.
Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer
Rural, Works Circle, Sambalpur
OIPR-25091/11/0032/2122

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, DEHRADUN
Government of India, Ministry of Finance, Deptt. of Financial Services
2nd Floor, Paras Tower, Mazra, Saharanpur Road, Dehradun, UK-248171
BEFORE THE RECOVERY OFFICER-II, DRT, DEHRADUN

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE Date 12.10.2021
Public at large is hereby informed that under mentioned property will be sold by E-auction sale on 10.01.2022 in the under mentioned case for recovery of amount outstanding on 'AS IS WHERE IS BASIS' & prospective bidders may apply for auction till 05.01.2022 up to 4.00 P.M.

Title of the Case & R.C. No.	Amount Recoverable
Canara Bank Vs M/s Shaurya International and Others RC No. 211/2019	Rs. 22,15,111.30 plus interest, @ 12.00% p.a simple rate on reducing balance & other charges as per R.C. Drawn in

Date of Auction: 10.01.2022 Last Date for Bids: 05.01.2022 upto 04.00 P.M.

Lot No.	Reserve Price	EMD amount	Bid Increase amount	Time of Auction
I	Rs. 93.02 Lacs	Rs. 9.30 Lacs	Rs. 50000/-	11:00 A.M. to 01:00 P.M.

(With each extension of 5 minutes duration every time if a bid is placed in the last 5 minutes of the closing time or such extended time of auction.)

DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTIES TO BE SOLD:
All that land and building bearing Kharsa No. 436, situated at Nala Patri Village Roshanpur Dorli, Tehsil Sardhana, Meerut adjoining 315.34 Sq. Mtr., Bounded and Batted as under: East- House of other, West- Factory of Shri Gaurav Alahawat & Sh. Anuj, North - Road 15 ft wide (Nala Patri), South - Plot of other and Road

TERMS & CONDITIONS: 1. The auction will be conducted by way of online e-auctioning through M/s Canbank Computer Service Provider through their website/portal <https://www.indianbankseaction.com>
2. The EMD shall be paid through Online in the Canara Bank, in "Authorised Officer Account Account No. 8305295000001, IFSC Code: CNRB0002163 or by way of pay order/demand draft payable at Dehradun in the name of Recovery Officer-II, DRT, Dehradun, latest by 05.01.2022 by 4.00 P.M. The EMD received thereafter shall not be considered.
3. Scanned copy of identity should contain the address for future communication (such as Voter I. Card/Driving License/ Passport) and copy of PAN Card which should be uploaded at the aforesaid Website and submitted to Recovery Officer-II, DRT, Dehradun.
4. The property is being sold strictly on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS".
5. Prospective bidders are required to obtain user ID/ password, which is mandatory, for bidding in above e-auction from M/s Canbank Computer Services Provider well in advance or many contact on helpline No 08023469661, 9480691777, 8880531165, 9832952602, E-mail: eauction@ccsli.co.in
6. Prospective qualified bidders may avail online training on E-Auction from M/s Canbank Computer Services Provider
7. Bidders are advised to go through the website <https://www.indianbankseaction.com>, for detailed terms and conditions for auction sale before submitting their bids and taking part in the E-Auction sale proceedings and or contact <Help Line No. Mentioned at the website>
8. The bidder shall improve offer in multiple of Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees Fifty thousand only).
9. In case bids are placed in last 5 minutes of the closing time of the auction, the closing time automatically gets extended to 5 more Minutes.
10. The Recovery Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or bids or to postpone or cancel the sale without assigning any reasons.
11. Sale in favour of Highest Bidder is subject to confirmation by Recovery Officer, DRT, Dehradun.
12. The Bank DRT will not be responsible for any network problem.
13. For any further information regarding the above property you can contact the undersigned or to Sh. Kapil Pawan Pant, Chief Manager, Canara Bank, SP Road Branch, Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
Recovery Officer-II, DRT, Dehradun

UJVN LIMITED
H.O.: "UJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006,
Telephones:- 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135- 2763508,
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

E-Tender Notice Dt: 27.11.2021
पृ.सं. 905

Office of the Executive Engineer (Maint.), Chibro Power Station, invites online bids from interested parties.
E-Tender No: CH(Maint.)-23/2021-22 Replacement of Sill plate of Roller track guide of DT Gate of Unit#4 at Chibro
Estimated cost: ₹ 44,00,000/- GST extra
Date of availability of bid document on website: 29.11.2021, 11:30 hrs.
Last date for submission of bid on website: 20.12.2021, 12:00 hrs.
For fuller & further details, kindly visit e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity" (Executive Engineer, Maint., Chibro)

Government of Rajasthan
Department of Medical, Health and Family Welfare
(I.E.C.), Jaipur
Telephone No: 0141-2222817, Email: directoriec-rj@nic.in
I.E.C./STORE/2021-22/451 Date: 25.11.2021
NIB No. I.E.C./STORE/2021-22/245 Dated 07-08-2021
EXTENSION FOR INVITATION OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL RFP THROUGH E-BIDS

With above referred bid, all the prospective bidders are hereby informed that the department has extended the last date of bid submission for RFP upto 2.00 PM on 12.01.2022. For detail information visit SPPP, EPROC and department's website. UNB No: MHS2122SLOB1844.
Sd/-
(Meghraj Singh Ratnoo)
Director (IEC),
Medical and Health Department
Rajasthan, Jaipur
DIPRC/11922/2021

Corrigendum
Reference to The Tender notice Published in this news paper on 27/11/2021 vide Superintending Engineer 7th Circle Public Work Department Gopeshwar letter No. 6854/77 Yata-7/2021 Dated 23.11.2021, the following correction in here by made. Following correction may be noted:

S. No.	Description	As Existing in news paper	As Corrected
1	In Column 06, Cost of Tender Document	500+ GST 18%	5000+ GST 18%

---Sd Publication Department

कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, कोरबा (छत्तीसगढ़)
ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट निविदा सूचना
क्र.28/निर्माण/2021 दिनांक 24.11.2021
एकीकृत पंजीवन प्रणाली अंतर्गत सखम श्रेणी में पंजीकृत टेकेदारों से निम्नलिखित निर्माण कार्य हेतु (Online) ऑनलाईन निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है:-

क्र.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत (रु. लाख में)	निविदा डालने की अंतिम तिथि
1	नगर पालिक निगम कोरबा क्षेत्रांतर्गत अशोक चारिका का उन्नयन एवं विकास कार्य (द्वितीय निविदा) (खनिज न्यास मद)	953.77	10.12.2021 (T.No. 87517)

उपरोक्त कार्यों की निविदा को जानकारी ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट वेब पोर्टल <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> से डाउनलोड की जा सकती है, साथ ही निगम के वेब साइट www.korbamunicipal.in एवं www.korba.urbanecg.gov.in पर भी देखी जा सकती है।
* स्वच्छ भारत निर्माण में योगदान दें।।
हस्ता/-
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
नगर पालिक निगम
कोरबा (छत्तीसगढ़)
38874

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BOLANGIR
e-Procurement Notice

1. Name of the Work : Construction of Bridge under Biju Setu Yojana for the year 2021-22
2. No. of work : 10 (Ten) bridge works.
3. Time for completion : 9 calendar months.
4. Approximate estimated cost : Rs. 156.21 lakhs to Rs 252.80 lakhs varies from
5. Mode of Submission of tender : Tender should be submitted online in www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of opening of Tender	Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, R.W. Circle, Bolangir	BLGR-Online-15/2021-22	29.11.2021 At 11:00 A.M.	14.12.2021 upto 5.00 P.M.	13.12.2021 upto 1.00 P.M.	15.12.2021 at 11:00 A.M.	The date will be intimated to the technically qualified bidders later on

● Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
● Any Corrigendum/ Addendum will be displayed in the above e tender website only.
Sd/- D.K Seth
Chief Construction Engineer,
R.W.Circle, Bolangir
OIPR-25118/11/0020/2122

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No.: EL-MWS-GKP-2021-22-13
Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer, Mechanical Workshop, N.E. Railway, Gorakhpur for & on behalf of President of India invites "OPEN" E-Tender through online (e-tendering) for the following work: Tender No. & Description of work: EL-MWS-GKP-2021-22-13, Overhauling of Traction Motor 700 HP BHEL (4801) 8XType -40 Nos. 1400 HP BHEL (4303) Make-40 Nos. and 1400 HP (C1005) CGL Make-16Nos. Traction Motors of MEMU rake in Mechanical Workshop, Gorakhpur Approx. Value: ₹ 4,70,82,422.50/-
Completion Period from the date of issue of acceptance letter: 24 Months. Note: * E-tender online will be submitted upto 11:00 Hrs. on dated 18.12.2021. * For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railway IREPS official website www.ireps.gov.in
By: Chief Electrical Engg. (WS) CPREL-69 Gorakhpur
About any passenger enquiry complain SMS on Mobile No. 09749185855
"DO NOT TRAVEL WITH UNAVAILABLE ARTICLE IN TRAIN"

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY
NIT No.: JBP-TRD-Tender-2021-03-R
Tender Notice
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRD/Jabalpur of West Central Railway for & on behalf of President of India invites on line tender from the experienced/ reputed contractor who fulfill the tender conditions for the works as per details given below. 1. Name of work: Comprehensive AMC of 8 wheeler IS Nos i.e. 81937 (SHR), 18002 (KHB), 18004 (SGAM), 18011(NU), 1

ADVERTORIAL

CAT 2021

LOOKING BEYOND THE EXAM

An initiative by **RED**
Read. Engage. Deliver.

Management education matters most in a post-pandemic world

With the increased awareness of how business and economic activity impact our planet and societies, corporates are increasing their focus on social responsibility, environment, energy efficiency and sustainability. This needs new management modules

"Business is the only mechanism on the planet today powerful enough to produce the changes necessary." This quote from Paul Hawken's book, *The Ecology of Commerce*, best describes how business nurtures a spirit of enterprise and innovation that can solve the complex problems we find ourselves in. As organisations deal with today's challenges — the worldwide fickle economic climate, changing technology, ever increasing globalisation and so forth — managers play an important role in identifying critical issues and timely response. They deal with global economic and political uncertainties, changing workplaces, ethical issues, security threats and changing technology with agility and resilience.

Almost any role, professional or personal, involves "management." The requirements may vary from artists, scientists, engineers and other professionals. The new age management function involves working with a diverse set of people. These "project-based" teams that will come together for a specific task will then move on to being a part of other teams for other assignments. Collaborating, networking and working as a cohesive unit will be the success mantra in tackling



complexities. Teamwork and working with different groups will become the new normal and an approach to decision-making. Increasingly, the combination of specialist education and management knowledge will become vital.

Covid -19 has changed the way we work. It has made us pause and rethink about the skills required for future success. Business schools have realised the sense of urgency to adapt to the new normal and reinvent as business management students seek to upgrade their professional and leadership skills to align with the rapidly changing workplace. The demand for management education has been the highest in the past five years. According to the study conducted by the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC), of the 150 lakh people aged

between 20 and 34, who hold a graduate management education (GME) master's degree, 15.6% (23.4 lakh) are Indians. India is among the top 10 nations when it comes to students pursuing a management degree. India also has the second largest pool of management professionals in the world.

The pandemic has not only changed our work culture and brought about a need for renewed skill sets but at a fundamental level, realignment of curricula at the academic level. It is the "demand" necessitating readjustment of the "supply." It has sparked trends that are here to stay.

With the increased awareness of how business and economic activity impact our planet and societies, we are seeing corporates increasing their focus on social responsibility, environmental friendliness, energy efficiency and other sustainability related attributes. Sustainability and energy management disciplines are gaining traction from the stakeholders. In this VUCA world, businesses and policy makers face many new and different challenges and expectations. These include the issues of climate change, skill development, creation of a sustainable economy, corporate respon-

sibility and transparency, environmental stewardship and protection of human health. Management education is evolving continuously to find a strategic fit between the capabilities, skill set of the students to opportunities and challenges in the external business environment. This is a gamechanger I would recommend all aspirant management graduates to follow closely. The opportunities in these sustainable areas are immense and the pandemic has brought about this shift almost overnight. The number of corporates that reach out to us with talent and internship requests has increased manifold. Graduates are not waiting to embark on an entrepreneurial journey after working for someone else and are starting as early as the final year of graduation and hitting the ground running soon after. The point I am making for our young friends is to look at new opportunities in management.

The relevance of management education has grown post pandemic. Shaping businesses to be resilient in the wake of crises requires holistic thinking, strategic mindset and analytical perspective to steer through ambiguity. The career options under management education for young students are vast and exciting.

Dr Shruti Sharma
Assistant Professor, Department of Policy and Management Studies, TERI School of Advanced Studies

CONFLUENCE OF TECHNOLOGY AND VALUE SYSTEM AT AKGIM



Dr T R Pandey
Director, AKGIM

Ajay Kumar Garg Institute of Management, Ghaziabad, as a B-School, has created a holistic teaching-learning curriculum, embracing new developments with a thrust on responsible value system for the industry and society at large. This is bringing laurels to the institute in

terms of academic excellence and industry appreciation. Our students, appearing in the merit list of top 10 MBAs in AKTU, Uttar Pradesh, is one such example. Companies recognising the versatility of our students are giving priority to their final placements at AKGIM. Surveys of AICTE-CII for 2018,

2019 and 2020 have given consecutively platinum ratings to us on the basis of our contribution in industry-interface, which includes final placements and ROI of our MBA. We will continue to notch benchmarks until we emerge the most aspiring destination for MBA in the country.



IMS GHAZIABAD - REINVENTING MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Management education in India is being revolutionised on account of the rapid and drastic changes visible across the various constituents of the contemporary business environment. Consequently, the ever-demanding job market is on the lookout for managerial talent that is equipped with new-age acumen, capabilities and skills. The current wave of turmoil caused by the dual influences of technology disruption and the pandemic is necessitating an immediate overhaul in the design, content and delivery of management education across the globe.



Dr. Urvashi Makkar
Director, IMS Ghaziabad

IMS Ghaziabad has reinvented management education to reflect the latest ideas, thinking and practices in business. Our education ethos is strongly influenced by our mission of crafting global business leaders for the 21st century workplace. While our curriculum is deeply rooted in business fundamentals, equal importance is given to the development of business skills in students. We are committed towards creating a community which is vibrant and who can take responsibilities transcending all geographical boundaries.

With its internationally acclaimed faculty and teaching pedagogy, the institute follows a tripartite philosophy consisting of academic excellence, global collaborations, corporate readiness and employability skills. The curriculum is constantly updated to meet the dynamic needs of industry and academia with a strong focus on outcome oriented pedagogy based on the top ladders of Bloom's Taxonomy. Apart from curricular activities, IMS Ghaziabad offers corporate oriented Value Added Certification Programmes such as MS-Office by Microsoft Academy, Digital & Social Media Marketing, Yellow Belt Six Sigma, Financial Markets and Google Analytics by MSME, PREP, CMIE Prowess, SPSS, GHRDC and so on.

As a result of various holistic platforms provided to our students, we have been consistently achieving excellent 100 per cent placements of students in elite A-listed organisations of the stature of Deloitte, Mondelez, Dabur, Wipro and many more.

To boost research, entrepreneurship, innovation and quality in the system of education, we have collaborated with reputed national and international organisations. Our message to all the young aspirants is to be prepared for big changes, follow their curiosity, follow their passion and they will figure out a way. Your learnings at IMS will become valuable mantras for you and help you develop the power of anticipation, the power of visualisation, the power of dreaming big coupled with the rigour, resilience and agility to realise them.

ADVERTORIAL

Alchemist

An IIM Alumni Venture
ENABLING THOUGHT

(India's Only CAT Coaching Institute Offering Personalized Plan with Unlimited Classes)

Hey MBA Aspirants, The Common Admission Test (or CAT as it is called in popular parlance) has been around since 1984: a full 37 years with more than 5 million students taking the exam across these many years. The exam is the entrance to the most prestigious management colleges in India: the IIMs.

The CAT has evolved in these years but the substance of the exam has not changed. You are tested on reading, quantitative, logical reasoning and data interpretation skills in a multiple choice format.

Some of us must have surely wondered that why in this lovely world are we solving questions on Geometry to do an MBA or for that matter why do we have to read these God-forsaken passages and answer equally abstruse questions on them that nobody cares about. Isn't an MBA more about leadership, team-building or negotiations skills?

So today, let's understand why the CAT focuses on these skills.

1. These skills are essential for a manager

You want to do an MBA in human resource management and think that you do not need any Math. Sorry, to break your bubble! Whatever your designation, you will need to analyse numbers (or metrics as you would call them later) as your job. The next step is to communicate your analysis. So whether it is reasoning, data analysis, math or communication, the skills that are tested in the CAT will help you as a manager.

2. These skills can be tested effectively in a multiple choice format

Imagine going through the subjective answers of more than 2 lakh students in not just a limited time frame but in an objective way. Whew! It is evident that every subject can be tested with multiple choice questions but then most of them become a test of how well you remember facts. On the contrary, Reading and Math can be tested for conceptual and application with multiple choice questions in an objective manner and hence it is easy to conduct the exam for the masses that represent India.

3. These skills are a fair subset of what all of us are supposed to know

Unlike other post-graduate degrees, the MBA does not require any specific subject qualification during graduation. Any graduate can take the CAT and acquire a degree in management from the IIMs without any prior qualification in management. Hence skills tested should be skills that a graduate in Arts or a graduate in Architecture or a Chartered Accountant can possess. In that sense, the common skills that any of us are supposed to possess are high school Math; common reasoning and analytical skills; and reading comprehension and communication skills. Testing statistical skills though helpful for management would be unfair on some students.

Knowing the reasoning behind the structure reassures us that it is unlikely that the substance of the CAT will change in the long run. Best of luck to students taking CAT21.

— **Munira Lokhandwala**,
IIM-C Alumna, Serial 100%iler, Faculty at Alchemist

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Poverty index: UP, Bihar, MP districts lagging

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

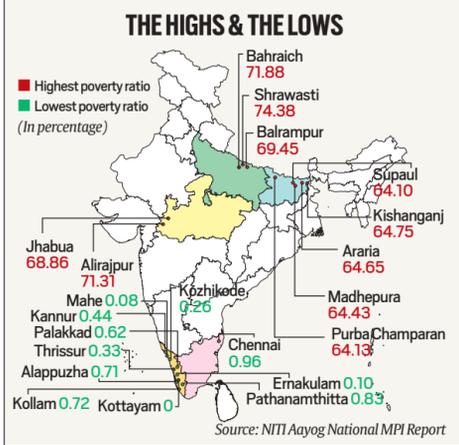
THREE DISTRICTS in Uttar Pradesh has nearly 70 per cent and above population who are multidimensionally poor, and Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh combined have the top 10 districts with highest poverty ratio among states, according to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report prepared by the NITI Aayog.

Kerala is a standout state with lowest percentage of population being multidimensionally poor at 0.71%, with nine out of its 14 districts having poverty ratio of less than 1%. Kottayam is an outlier district with not even a single poor person.

This is based on data analysed from the first ever MPI report, which puts the all-India poverty ratio at 25.01%. The MPI seeks to measure poverty across its multiple dimensions and in effect complements existing poverty statistics based on per capita consumption expenditure.

It has three equally weighted dimensions — health, education, and standard of living — which in turn are represented by 12 indicators such as nutrition, school attendance, years of schooling, drinking water, sanitation, housing, bank accounts, among others.

Among states, Bihar has the



highest proportion of people — at 51.91% of its population — who are multidimensionally poor. Eleven Bihar districts have poverty ratio above 60%, with highest rate of 64.75% in Kishanganj, followed by Araria (64.65%), Madhepura (64.43%), Purba Champaran (64.13), and Supaul (64.10%).

The lowest ratio was in Patna at 29.20%, followed by Bhojpur (40.50%), Siwan (40.55%), Rohtas (40.74%), and Munger (40.99%).

Three districts in Uttar Pradesh has poverty ratio of nearly 70% and more: Shrawasti (74.38%), Bahraich (71.88%), and Balrampur (69.45%). Lucknow has the lowest poverty ratio in

the state at 12.16%, followed by Kanpur Nagar (14.34%), Gautam Budh Nagar (17.08%), and Ghaziabad (17.47%). Other key districts in UP have variations in poverty ratios such as 40.79% for Unnao, 34.10% for Rai Bareilly, 35.33% for Mathura, and 33.59% for Agra. Overall poverty ratio in the state is 37.79%, according to the MPI report.

Nine out of Kerala's 14 districts had poverty ratio of less than 1%, with Kottayam's ratio at zero per cent, followed by Ernakulam (0.10%), Kozhikode (0.26%), and Thirissur (0.33%). The highest ratio in the state is in Wayanad district at 3.48 per cent. The overall poverty ratio

in Kerala is 0.71%. Union Territory of Puducherry has among the lowest multidimensional poverty in each of its four districts: Yanam at 5.18%, Karaikal at 3.13%, Puducherry at 1.30%, and Mahe at 0.08%. Overall poverty ratio in the UT is 1.72%.

Revamped poverty estimation

EXPERT GROUPS under Tendulkar (2009) and the Rangarajan committee (2014) undertook the exercise of estimating monetary poverty. The conventional method is to specify a minimum income to purchase goods and services to meet basic needs. It required defining a poverty line first,

which the Rangarajan committee estimated to be Rs 972 per month per person in rural areas and Rs 1,407 in urban areas, at 2011-12 prices. NITI Aayog says MPI will enable estimation of poverty across 12 indicators, capture deprivations and indicator-wise contribution to poverty.

This baseline report of the national MPI measure is based on the reference period of 2015-16 of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), and provides analysis of the headcount ratio and intensity of multidimensional poverty at the national, state/UT, and district levels. The MPI uses the globally accepted methodology developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

Three districts in Madhya Pradesh has poverty ratio above

60 per cent: Barwani (61.60%, Jhabua (68.86%), and Alirajpur (71.31%). Districts with lowest poverty ratio in the state include Indore (10.86%), Bhopal (12.91%), and Jabalpur (19.50%).

In Maharashtra, Nandurbar has the highest poverty ratio at 52.12%, followed by Dhule (33.23%), Jalna at 29.41%, Hingoli at 28.05%, and Nanded at 27.48%. Districts with lowest poverty in the state include Mumbai at 3.59%, Mumbai Suburban at 4.65%, Pune at 5.29%, Nagpur at 6.72%, and Bhandara at 8.19%. Overall poverty ratio in Maharashtra is at 14.85%.

In West Bengal, Purulia district had the highest poverty ratio at 49.69%, followed by Uttar Dinajpur (42.84%), Malda (35.7%), South 24 Parganas (28.3%), and Birbhum (27.6%). Kolkata had the lowest poverty ratio in the state at 2.8%.

Matter of pride that Kerala has lowest poverty levels: Pinarayi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
NOVEMBER 27

CHIEF MINISTER Pinarayi Vijayan on Saturday said it was a matter of "pride" that Kerala was ranked the lowest in the NITI-Aayog's first ever multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) released this week.

The government think tank's Multi-dimensional Poverty (MPI) Index listed the state as the one with lowest poverty of 0.71 per cent across India, followed by Goa with 3.76 per cent, Sikkim with 3.82 per cent, Tamil Nadu with 4.89 per cent and Punjab with 5.59 per cent.

In a Facebook post on Saturday, Vijayan said: "It is a matter of pride that the activities done by the Government to ensure the welfare of the people despite several challenges including devastating floods (of 2018) and natural calamities, has laid the foundation for this achievement."

Opposition Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala said on Saturday the report recognises the efforts of the previous Congress-led UDF government, which was running the state in 2015-16.

Uniform Mass: Crisis in Kerala Catholic Church over directive

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
NOVEMBER 27

KERALA-BASED Syro-Malabar Catholic Church has plunged into a crisis over the implementation of a uniform method of offering Mass, the top procedure of worship in the Christian world.

Bishops and priests in several dioceses in Kerala and elsewhere in the country came out on Saturday against the directive of Church head Cardinal George Alencherry to implement the uniform Mass code from November 28.

For several decades, dioceses under the Syro-Malabar Church have been following different modes of celebrating Mass. While a section of priests offers Mass facing the people, another does so facing the altar. In certain other dioceses, the Church follows a mix of both. Bishops and priests have been divided over the conduct of Mass. As per the uniform mode of offering Mass, priests and bishops across the Church in all dioceses have to perform the ritual facing the altar throughout the service.

After several rounds of deliberations, in July this year, Pope Francis approved the uniform

mode of offering Mass and directed the Kerala Catholic Church to implement it at the earliest.

However, in a severe setback to Alencherry, who was mired in shady land dealings in the past, his subordinate and Ernakulam Archbishop Antony Kariyil issued a directive to priests and people of his diocese that status quo (facing the people) will continue as far as offering Mass. Kariyil also claimed that he had the Vatican's consent to issue such a directive.

The showdown between Alencherry and Kariyil reached a flashpoint after the former claimed there was no such directive from Rome to Kariyil. Subsequently, Kariyil released the letter from the Vatican, embarrassing Alencherry. In Thirissur, Archbishop Andrews Thazhath was ghaeroed by a section of priests and laity on Saturday evening demanding that the uniform mode not be implemented.

Church sources said the issue would trigger protests in many dioceses on Sunday where priests are not willing to follow the Church directive.

Earlier, there was a divide among the bishops in the Catholic Church over liturgical matters.

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E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

SALE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS CHARGED TO THE BANK UNDER THE SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002.

The undersigned as Authorized Officer of State Bank of India has taken over Symbolic Possession of the following property/ies u/s 13(4) of the SARFAESI Act. Public at large is informed that e-auction (under SARFAESI Act, 2002) of the charged property/ies in the below mentioned cases for realisation of Bank's dues will be held on "As is where is, As is what is and Whatever there is" Basis. The Auction will schedule on 30.12.2021. The other details of the Auction are as under:-

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower(s)	Amount of Demand (as per SARFAESI Notice)	Description of Property	Name of Mortgagee/Guarantor	Date of 13 (2) Date of 13 (4) under SARFAESI Act	Reserve Price
						(below Rs.) which the property will not be sold
						EMD
						Bid Increment Amount
1.	M/s Madni Textiles, Prop. - Md. Nasim Bakshi S/o Md. Naimuddin (Borrower)	₹ 31,64,933.98 (Thirty One Lac Sixty Four Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Three and Ninety Eight Paise Only) as on 31.05.2021 with further interest from 01.06.2021 plus other charges, costs etc.	1. Equitable Mortgage of all that Part and Parcel of landed property vide Sale Deed No. 130 dated 11/01/2016 stands in the name of Md. Nasim Bakshi, S/o Md. Naimuddin, property situated at Mauza - Risoud, P.S. & Anchal-Belaganj, Distt. - Gaya, Thana No. 428, Khata No. 49 Plot No. 112(N), Area - 23 Decimal, Bounded by: North- Nand Keshwar Choudhary, South- Pind, East- Ram Chandra Yadav, West- Lachhu Beldar.	Md. Nasim Bakshi, S/o Md. Naimuddin	07.06.2021	₹ 34,50,000.00
						₹ 3,45,000.00
2.	M/s Shivendras Traders (Prop. Sri. Chandra Prakash, S/o Shyam Kishore Yadav) (Borrower)	₹ 35,39,508.34 (Rupees Thirty Five Lacs Thirty Nine Thousand Five Hundred Eighty and Paise Thirty Four Only) as on 31.10.2020 with further interest from 01.11.2020 plus other charges, costs etc.	1. Equitable Mortgage of land & building in the name of Sri Chandra Prakash S/o Sri Shyam Kishore Yadav vide Sale deed no. 5029 dated 04.09.2014. Khata No.87, Plot No. 3364, Thana No. 177, Muaza- kamasi, Tazui No. 10100, Sadar Registry Office and Distt- Sheikhpura, Area-2½ Decimal, Bounded by: North- Uma Devi, South- Road, East- Rameshwar Mahato, West- Parmeshwar Pandey.	Sri Chandra Prakash S/o Sri Shyam Kishore Yadav	24.11.2020	₹ 40,99,000.00
						₹ 4,09,900.00
3.	M/s Smart City Center, Prop. - Shri. Shashi Kumar (Borrower)	₹ 40,96,500.13 (Rupees Forty Lacs Ninety Six Thousand Five Hundred and Paise Thirteen Only) as on 31.05.2021 with further interest from 01.06.2021 plus other charges, costs etc.	1. Equitable Mortgage of all that Part and Parcel of land and Building vide Sale Deed No. 4461 dated 17/03/2012 stands in the name of Sri Shashi Kumar, S/o Late Dwarika Prasad & Smt. Vinita Devi W/o Sri Shashi Kumar, property situated at Mohalla- Muri Hill, City-Gaya, P.S.- Kotwali, Distt.- Gaya, appertaining to Ward No.- 01 (O), Survey Ward No.-02, Present Ward No.- 11, Holding No.- 1/2 (O) 3/4 Wadhu 4/7 ka Ansh (N), Khata No.- 874 (N), Plot No.- 1679 (N), Municipal Plot No.- 8165, Area- 750 sq feet, Bounded by: North- Niz Lekhyakari, South- House of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Singh w Niz Lekhyakari, East- Niz Lekhyakari, West- Govt. Road (Muri Hill Road).	Sri Shashi Kumar, S/o Late Dwarika Prasad & Smt. Vinita Devi W/o Sri Shashi Kumar	11.06.2021	₹ 54,68,000.00
						₹ 5,46,800.00
4.	Awadhesh Kumar Mali (Borrower)	₹ 16,73,825.00 (Rupees Sixteen Lacs Seventy Three Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty Five Only) as on 09.08.2017 with further interest from 10.08.2017 plus other charges, costs etc.	1. Equitable Mortgage of all that Part and Parcel of land and Building vide Sale Deed No. 4298 dated 16/03/2012 stands in the name of Awadhesh Kumar Mali, S/o, Mahesh Bhagat, property situated at Mauza-Kukra, P.S.- Buniyadganj, Manpur, Distt.- Gaya, Thana No. 249, Ward No. 29/47, Khata No. 115 (O) & 1022 (N), Plot No. 276 (O) & 160 (N), Area-680 sq feet = 1.56 Decimal, Bounded by: North- Plot Haza or Shivcharan Sao, South- Hal Purchaser Shambhu Nath Verma, East- Seller, West- Proposed 12' feet Road after Rambindoo Sao Alias Mukhiya Ji.	Awadhesh Kumar Mali, S/o. Mahesh Bhagat	26.11.2019	₹ 10,07,100.00
						₹ 1,00,710.00
5.	Ravi Keshwar Prasad (Borrower)	₹ 17,80,965.00 (Rupees Seventeen Lacs Eighty Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Five Only) as on 29.03.2016 with further interest from 30.03.2016 plus other charges, costs etc.	1. Equitable Mortgage of all that Part and Parcel of land and Building vide Sale Deed No. 1703 dated 31/01/2013 stands in the name of Sri Ravi Keshwar Prasad, S/o. Late Ton Narayan Prasad, property situated at Mauza-Kukra, P.S.- Buniyadganj, Manpur, Distt.- Gaya, appertaining to Thana No. 249, Ward No. 29 / 47, Khata No. 115 (O) & 1022 (N), Plot No. 276 (O) & 160 (N), Area-680 sq feet., Bounded by: North- Shanti Devi, South-Mayawati, Devi W/o. Awadhesh Paswan, East- 12' feet Proposed Rasta, West- Shambhu Nath Verma & Others.	Sri Ravi Keshwar Prasad, S/o. Late Ton Narayan Prasad	26.11.2019	₹ 11,74,500.00
						₹ 1,17,450.00
6.	M/s Nageshwar Automobile Pvt Ltd (Borrower)	₹ 91,96,767.42 (Rupees Ninety One Lakh Ninety Six Thousand Seven Hundred Sixty Seven and Forty Two Paise Only) as on 30.11.2019 with further interest from 01.12.2019 plus other charges, costs etc.	1. Equitable Mortgage of all that part and parcel of landed property vide Sale Deed no. 810 dated 14.02.2006, Khata No.- 94, Plot no. 378, 346 Situated at Madapur, unta, Thana No.- 393, Total Area 9 purnak 2 bata 5 decimal in the name of Dr. Virendra Kumar Singh. Bounded by: North- Rasta & Unta School, South- Ishwari Yadav, East- Uday Shankar and Santosh Kumar Singh, West- Ishwari Yadav and Amrendra Kumar Singh.	Dr. Virendra Kumar Singh	02.12.2019	₹ 63,92,000.00
						₹ 6,39,200.00
e-Auction Terms And Condition						

ED opposes Deshmukh secy plea in money laundering case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, NOVEMBER 27

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday opposed and sought dismissal of a plea by former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh's private secretary Sanjeev Palande, seeking to quash money laundering and corruption case against him lodged by the Central agency.

Palande and Deshmukh's personal assistant Kundan Shinde were arrested by the ED in June after the agency conducted searches at the residence of Deshmukh in Nagpur.

The ED probe had claimed that Deshmukh, while in office as the home minister of Maharashtra, "received illegal gratification of approximately Rs 4.7 crore in cash from various orchestra bar owners" between December 2020 and February 2021 through now-dismissed Mumbai police officer Sachin Waze. According to the ED, Deshmukh's family "launched Rs 4.18 crore and showing it as received by the trust."

OMKARGOKHALE

Trial in a day: Convict in POCSO case gets life term

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, NOVEMBER 27

IN WHAT may be the fastest verdict by a POCSO court in the country, a court in Araria has completed the full trial in a case and delivered its verdict and punishment to the convict in one day, according to a press note issued by the directorate of prosecution under Bihar's Home Department.

On October 4 this year, the court of special judge (POSCO) Shashi Kant Rai conducted trial, recorded statements of witnesses, heard arguments and counter-arguments, convicted

Kashmiri traders beaten up, forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' in Ranchi: cops

Ranchi: A group of Kashmiri traders were allegedly attacked and forced to chant 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Pakistan murdabad' in Ranchi's Doranda on Saturday morning, about two weeks after a similar incident was reported in the area. Police said three suspects have been arrested and an FIR has been registered over the case. "We have formed a team to

the accused and pronounced quantum of sentence, the release said. The matter pertains to the rape of an eight-year-old girl on July 22. The FIR against the convict was lodged the next day. During the October 4 hearing, special judge Rai sentenced the convict to life in prison and ordered him to pay a fine of Rs 50,000. The court has also ordered a compensation of Rs 7 lakh be paid to the victim from the victim compensation fund.

"Bihar has now made a national record by conducting trial in a single day by giving life sentence to the convict till his last breath," the release said.

Infant abducted in Punjab traced to UP; handed over to parents

Commissioner of Police Gurbpreet Singh Bhullar said on November 19, Rupa Devi, who lives in a shanty, lodged a complaint that a man, wearing a mask, came to her saying he wanted to donate warm clothes. He asked her to walk with him and carry her infant to his wife who was sitting in a car parked near the road. The complainant alleged that the moment she reached the car, the woman snatched the infant and fled in the car. The police officer said they reached the house of one Rijak Pal Singh on the basis of registration plate of the car. Pal told them he had sold his car to Avdesh a few months ago. Bhullar said that on the basis of investigation, a police team traced the accused to UP and with the help of local police.

NDTV, The Week journalists get IPI award

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE INTERNATIONAL Press Institute (IPI) India on Saturday announced the Award for Excellence in Journalism for this year to Sreenivasan Jain and Mariyam Alavi NDTV and Lakshmi Subramanian and Bhanu Prakash Chandra of The Week, according to a media release issued by IPI.

Jain and Alavi won the award for a report on exposure of the untruthfulness of cases of forcible conversion registered against young men belonging to Muslim community who had married Hindu women in Uttar Pradesh in the name of 'love jihad', the release stated. In the print category, Subramanian and Chandra's report tracing Indians, especially women, trapped in refugee camps in the civil war-torn regions of Syria and Iraq was selected for the award, it stated.

These awards, along with those of last year, will be presented soon, the release said.

The Excellence in Journalism Award 2020 had been awarded to Ritika Chopra of The Indian Express for her exclusive reports on the working of the Election Commission during the 2019 Lok Sabha election which exposed the divide in the Commission and the unusual tardiness when it came to dealing with poll code violations.

The award ceremony could not be conducted due to restrictions on public functions necessitated due to Covid-19 conditions.

TEMPORARY CANCELLATION / REGULATION / DIVERSION / RE-SCHEDULING OF TRAINS

In order to strengthen the existing infrastructure and enhanced the safety standards, Railway has decided to undertake the Pre-interlocking and Non-interlocking work in connection with 4th line over Mathura-Palwal section of Agra Division. To execute this work, Railway will take suitable traffic blocks from 30.11.2021 to 05.12.2021. During this period the following trains will be temporarily be affected as under:-

CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS	
Train No. & Name	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
04419/04420 Mathura Jn. - Ghaziabad - Mathura Jn. EMU Special	04.12.2021 & 05.12.2021
04495/04496 Agra Cantt. - Palwal - Agra Cantt. Special	04.12.2021 & 05.12.2021

REGULATION OF TRAINS	
Train No. & Name	Time/Period of Regulation
12625 Thiruvananthapuram Central-New Delhi Superfast Kerala Express	Train will be Regulated for 115 minutes on 04.12.2021 and 135 minutes on 05.12.2021 in Agra Cantt. - Bhubeshwar station.
12617 Ernakulam Jn. - Hazrat Nizamuddin Mangla Superfast Exp.	Train will be Regulated for 113 minutes on 04.12.2021 and 120 minutes on 05.12.2021 in Agra Cantt. - Mathura Jn. station.
12903 Mumbai Central - Amritsar Jn. Golden Temple Superfast Express	Train will be Regulated for 70 minutes on 04.12.2021 and 85 minutes on 05.12.2021 at Mathura Jn. station.
20807 Visakhapatnam - Amritsar Jn. Superfast Express	Train will be Regulated for 75 minutes on 04.12.2021 and 80 minutes on 05.12.2021 in Agra Cantt. - Mathura Jn. station.
12431 Thiruvananthapuram Central-Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Exp.	Train will be Regulated for 140 minutes on 04.12.2021 and 05.12.2021 at Mathura Jn. station.

DIVERSION OF TRAIN		
Train No. & Name	Diverted Via	Date (from the Originating Station)
18477 Puri - Yog Nagri Rishikesh Daily Express	Agra Cantt., Mitawali, Khurja Jn., Hapur, Meerut City	03.12.2021

RESCHEDULING OF TRAIN	
Train No. & Name	Rescheduled of Train
12059 Kota Jn. - Hazrat Nizamuddin Jan Shatabdi Exp.	Train will be Rescheduled to depart from Kota Jn. at 08.45 hrs. instead of 06.15 hrs. (150 minutes late) on 05.12.2021.

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

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19, may please be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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employment went up;
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so you could prosper.

We fought natural calamities,
shoulder to shoulder;
reached aid to every corner,
gave relief to every farmer.

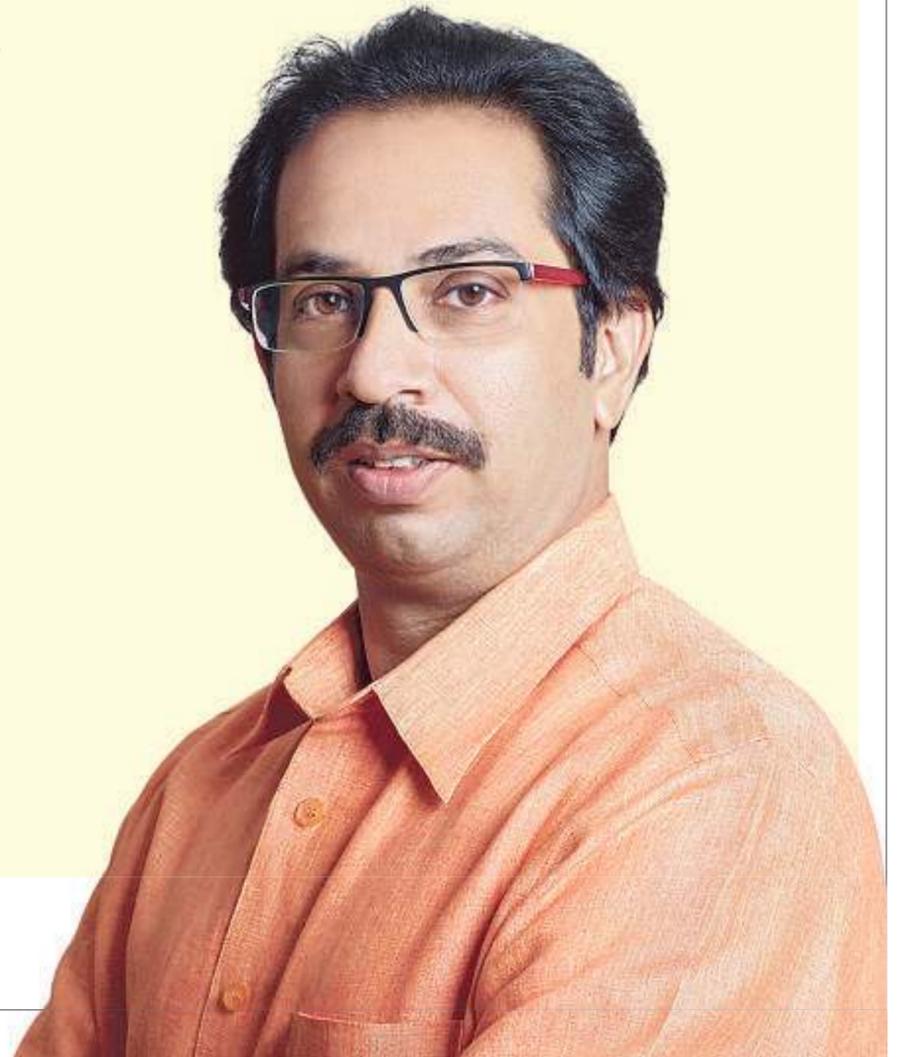
धन्यवाद

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and oxygen production,
we kept Corona at bay;
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night and day.

We protected trees and forests,
harnessed the energy of sun and air;
to put the global reputation of our state
right up there.

Roads will become wider,
trains and metro will make travel faster;
places and people will
connect to each other.

It is two years today,
we have taken this journey together;
with your blessings, we will continue
to take our state further, higher...



Uddhav Thackeray
Chief Minister

Ajit Pawar
Deputy Chief Minister

Balasaheb Thorat
Revenue Minister

ADITYA SINGH'S first serious foray into the world of cryptocurrencies happened over a failed payment. The owner of a recruitment firm that he runs with his brother, Singh says that sometime in 2015, one of their European clients wouldn't pay the commission and eventually stopped taking calls.

"When we finally got through to the client, he gave us an option to pay in Bitcoins. We had our doubts but since there was no other way to get our commission, we agreed. That's when we realised that there is a whole market around Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies," he says, refusing to reveal his investment or other personal details.

The deeper he dug, the more drawn he was to this decentralised financial system that existed beyond the control of governments and banks. "I also watched a lot of videos related to crypto currencies but they were mostly in English and I realised that discussion in Hindi about the fundamentals was missing in India," he says, adding that he soon began posting videos on YouTube.

The idea clicked. Aditya's YouTube channel, Crypto India, has 1.97 lakh subscribers now and he is routinely invited as an "expert" by news channels.

Singh's story mirrors that of others across India, many of them from Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns, mostly aspirational young investors excited by the opportunities of this newest financial frontier — from Kanha Mohanty, 24, an engineer in Jagatsinghpur, Odisha, whose investments in cryptocurrencies earned him Rs 30,000 over the last one year, to the unemployed Pankaj Chowdhury, 26, from Howrah, West Bengal, whose mantra is to "invest only as much as you can afford to lose".

In the absence of a regulatory framework or safety net, this interest in cryptocurrencies, mostly among first-time investors with little knowledge of either the products or the risks entailed, has caught the attention of policymakers. The government has decided to bring a Bill in the Winter Session starting Monday to prohibit "all private cryptocurrencies in India" with "certain exceptions".

Currently, while India does not recognise cryptocurrencies as legal tender, there is no ban on trading in cryptocurrencies.

A volatile investment

While there is not much clarity on the composition of The Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021, on November 24, the possibility of a ban on certain cryptos led to panic-selling, resulting in a correction of over 20 per cent across cryptocurrencies listed on Indian exchanges.

It's this volatility that marks cryptocurrencies. If stock prices are backed by the earnings and growth of a company, there is no such underlying factor for crypto prices, which are mostly driven by hype and demand.

Recently, investors lost millions of dollars as a new cryptocurrency inspired by *Squid Game*, the popular Netflix series, went on a roller-coaster ride. Its value plunged to nearly zero but within days, it was trading at \$38 a token on an exchange called Pancakeswap. After a couple of days, the token's value grew from \$628.33 to \$2,856.65, but five minutes later, it nosedived to \$0.0007.

While Bitcoin, the world's first cryptocurrency, was born out of the 2008 financial crisis, in India, it was around 2015-16 that the digital currency started to get noticed. In March 2020, the Supreme Court reversed the RBI's move to cut the money supply to crypto exchanges, resulting in an exponential increase in investment flows into crypto assets.

During the ICC T20 World Cup in October-November, cryptocurrencies virtually flooded drawing rooms.

Ranveer Singh's 'kuch toh badlega' campaign for crypto trading platform CoinSwitch Kuber, aired repeatedly during the World Cup matches, was among those aimed at millennials in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. His hardsell was hinged on the low-entry barrier for those looking to invest in crypto, and the ease of transaction on a platform that now lays claim to being India's largest crypto asset one.

CoinDCX, CoinSwitch Kuber's rival platform, roped in actor Ayushmann Khurrana. Multiple other smaller exchanges also joined the ad pitch. Reports pegged the collective ad spends by crypto players at a cumulative Rs 50 crore during the course of this World Cup.

The buzz had an unintended consequence: a flurry of meetings in policy circles, and regulators stepping in to temper the claims by exchanges.

On November 3, an umbrella grouping of 13 members who are part of the cryptocurrency ecosystem put out an advertisement that said, "Crores of Indians have invested over Rs 600,000 crore in crypto assets." Through the advertisement, the group — including the Internet and Mobile Association of India, Blockchain & Crypto Assets Council (BACC), crypto exchanges and others — said they are committed to complying with the BACC's self-regulatory code of conduct, and to ensuring secure access to crores of investors.

This declaration came on the back of alarm bells being raised at various levels — within the government, regulatory circles and leaders in the investment fraternity. So far, going by the initial reactions, they don't seem to be on the same page.

While the Prime Minister's meeting on November 13 on the way forward for the sector called for "progressive and forward-looking" steps, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has advised caution.

On November 16, speaking at the SBI Banking Conclave, he said the issue evokes "serious concerns on macro-economic and financial stability" and that he is "yet to see serious, well-informed discussion" on it.

The RBI has in the past indicated that it is "very much in the game", and getting ready to launch its own digital currency.

Capital market regulator SEBI, meanwhile, has reservations on regulating cryptocurrencies as a financial asset, while a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance, which met



CRYPTO CASH

The government's plan for a Bill to act against private cryptocurrencies has reopened the debate on the fast-moving, highly volatile sector, where policy has so far failed to catch up with technology. *The Sunday Express* meets a range of stakeholders — from investors to coin exchange players and the government — on what could be the way forward.

By GEORGE MATHEW, PRANAV MUKUL, SUNNY VERMA, HAMZA KHAN & SANDEEP SINGH

on November 15, favoured regulating cryptocurrency exchanges.

The way forward

It's this view — that digital currencies be regulated, instead of an outright ban — that is gradually gaining traction.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* at an Idea Exchange session, Nilesch Shah, MD Kotak Mahindra AMC and a part-time member of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, also favoured this.

"I am not qualified enough to say if crypto is a fraud or not... who knows, it may be the future and we are early entrants. So why not regulate and make people aware that this is high-risk, high-return? So that tomorrow, if

it goes out of hand, it does not jeopardise many investors," he said.

Ashish Singhal, founder & CEO of CoinSwitch Kuber and BACC co-chair, whose Ranveer Singh ads created a stir, says, "I believe that it (the ads) is one of the reasons why this has been taken up on urgency. But the crypto industry was booming even before the ads came out, so there is no point suppressing an industry... We have to come out of the shadows... How do we provide the right education to the user and ensure they understand the risk when they get into it... So definitely, guidelines and self-regulation organisations are needed to lay down what is allowed."

Avinash Shekhar, co-CEO of cryptocurrency exchange ZebPay agrees. "We are awaiting further details on the Bill... There have been many positive steps taken by the government to learn and understand crypto and its impact on all stakeholders — investors, exchanges, policymakers. So, we are looking forward to a crypto Bill that takes into consideration all the inputs from those discussions," he says.

Aditya Singh, the investor and YouTuber, isn't perturbed by reports of a ban. "I feel everyone is reading too much into the Bill. The Finance Minister has clearly said that we are not going to ban cryptocurrencies entirely. Crypto has opened so many options and has become even more relevant after Covid, when jobs have been shrinking. For some families, *yeh crypto bhagwan ka roop ban kar aa gaya hai* (it's a manifestation of God)," he says.

There are two ways. The first is to buy it from someone and the second is to mine new crypto coins. Buying it from someone usually happens in two ways — an exchange-facilitated transaction or a peer-to-peer transaction. For Indians, the simplest way to invest or trade in cryptocurrencies has been through one of the many exchanges and trading platforms operating in India. These include WazirX, CoinDCX, CoinSwitch Kuber, Zebpay, Bitbns, Giottus, etc.

To be able to trade or invest in cryptocurrencies using INR, users need to register on one of the exchanges by completing a KYC process. Then, a user buying crypto for the first time will need to load INR money in the wallet of their cryptocurrency exchange. The cryptocurrency wallet is identified by a unique address represented by a randomly generated combination of numbers and letters. There are two ways to load money into a cryptocurrency wallet — through net-banking or through an e-wallet.



"I am not qualified enough to say if crypto is a fraud or not... who knows, it may be the future and we are early entrants. So why not regulate and make people aware that it is high-risk, high-return?"

NILESH SHAH,
MD KOTAK MAHINDRA AMC, PART-TIME
MEMBER OF THE PM'S ECONOMIC
ADVISORY COUNCIL



"We're awaiting further details on the Bill... There have been many positive steps taken by the government to understand the impact of crypto on all stakeholders — investors, exchanges, policymakers."

AVINASH SHEKHAR,
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"There is no point suppressing an industry, we have to come out of the shadows... How do we provide the right education to the user and ensure they understand the risk when they get into it."

ASHISH SINGHAL,
CO-CHAIR OF BLOCKCHAIN & CRYPTO ASSETS
COUNCIL AND FOUNDER & CEO OF
COINSWITCH KUBER



"There are serious concerns on macro-economic and financial stability, there are deeper issues... I'm yet to see serious, well-informed discussion in the public space on these issues."

SHAKTIKANTA DAS,
RBI CHIEF, AT SBI BANKING CONCLAVE ON
NOVEMBER 16

MEET THE INVESTORS, WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

EXPLAINED

Digital currencies and how they work

PRANAV MUKUL & ANIL SASI

What is a cryptocurrency?

A cryptocurrency is a medium of exchange, such as the rupee or the US dollar, but is digital in format and uses encryption techniques to both control the creation of monetary units and to verify the exchange of money. Bitcoin is considered to be the world's best known cryptocurrency and is the largest in the world according to market capitalisation, followed by Ethereum.

In traditional financial deals, where two parties are using fiat money, a third-party organisation — usually a central bank — assures that the money is genuine and the transaction is recorded. With cryptocurrencies, a chain of private computers — a network — is constantly working towards authenticating the transactions by solving complex cryptographic puzzles. For solving the puzzles, these systems are rewarded with cryptocurrencies. This process is called mining.

At the backend of these transactions is a technology called 'blockchain'.

What is blockchain?

Satoshi Nakamoto — the person (or a group of people) who is said to have conceptualised an accounting system in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis — had mooted an idea where the transactions and the value of money would be recorded digitally on a publicly available and open ledger that contains all the transactions ever made, albeit in an anonymous and encrypted form. This ledger is called the blockchain.

Bitcoin and the thousands of cryptocurrencies are essentially codes recorded on a blockchain that gets longer and longer as more people use them.

There have been voices calling for stablecoins as an alternative to volatile cryptocurrencies. What are stablecoins?

Stablecoins are digital currencies that are backed by a fiat currency such as the US dollar, thus giving it an intrinsic value. From an investor point of view, stablecoins become easier to understand considering the underlying reserve asset. There is also a case being made by sovereign governments for stablecoins such as Tether, USD Coin and Diem (proposed by Facebook's parent company Meta) given that it could increase the reach of their fiat currencies in the digital ecosystem.

How are cryptocurrencies bought?

There are two ways. The first is to buy it from someone and the second is to mine new crypto coins. Buying it from someone usually happens in two ways — an exchange-facilitated transaction or a peer-to-peer transaction. For Indians, the simplest way to invest or trade in cryptocurrencies has been through one of the many exchanges and trading platforms operating in India. These include WazirX, CoinDCX, CoinSwitch Kuber, Zebpay, Bitbns, Giottus, etc.

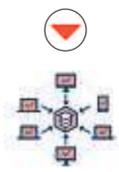
To be able to trade or invest in cryptocurrencies using INR, users need to register on one of the exchanges by completing a KYC process. Then, a user buying crypto for the first time will need to load INR money in the wallet of their cryptocurrency exchange. The cryptocurrency wallet is identified by a unique address represented by a randomly generated combination of numbers and letters. There are two ways to load money into a cryptocurrency wallet — through net-banking or through an e-wallet.

Here's where the first entry barrier arises.

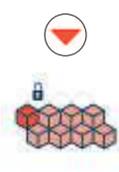
HOW BLOCKCHAIN WORKS



A transaction request is placed and a virtual 'block' representing that transaction is created



This block is circulated to all the nodes of a particular network, which verify this block for authenticity and uniqueness



Once verified, this block is added to a chain of existing blocks called a blockchain



The updated blockchain is distributed to the network, marking the transaction complete

EXPLAINED

Despite the Supreme Court order that quashed the RBI directive prohibiting banks from allowing their systems to be used for virtual currency transactions, several large banks don't offer their financial infrastructure for investment or trade in crypto.

Among the e-wallets that operate in the country, only MobiKwik is supported on platforms such as WazirX and CoinDCX. Once the transaction is through, the purchased cryptocurrency holding is reflected in the exchange's wallet.

How are they sold for INR?

The Indian exchanges allow sale of cryptocurrencies in exchange for INR as well but given that many of the smaller banks that support the transactions do not have the necessary digital infrastructure to handle the volumes of withdrawal and the volatility experienced by these virtual currencies, disruption in withdrawal services is a common occurrence.

The government plans to bring a Bill to prohibit "all private cryptocurrencies". What are private cryptocurrencies?

While there is no clarity yet on how private cryptocurrencies are defined, indications are that any digital currencies that are not issued by the State will be banned.

ACROSS
THE AISLE

PCHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in
Twitter: @Pchidambaram, IN

It is crystal clear that the Modi government fears only one thing — losing an election. Petrol and diesel prices were reduced within hours of the results of the by-elections to 30 Assembly seats, where the BJP won just seven. The sudden decision to withdraw the farm laws — taken by Mr Modi without Cabinet approval — was a clear indication that he feared massive losses in UP, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa and being blanked out in Punjab

THE RICH get big and the big get rich. Once they are big and rich, there is the clear and present danger that they will be unaccountable. John Sherman, a United States Senator (the first Antitrust Act, 1890, is commonly referred to as the Sherman Act) said, "If we will not endure a king as a political power, we should not endure a king over the production, transportation, and sale of any of the necessities of life." Standard Oil and AT & T were broken up in the US. China has cracked down on Alibaba, Tencent and Didi. Microsoft, Google and Facebook face the heat in many countries. Why? Because they have become too big, too rich and unaccountable.

Just as we will not endure a king as ruler, we ought not to endure a ruler who wants to be king. Many countries have term limits on their President or Prime Minister because he/she could acquire absolute power.

DEMOCRATIC & RICH

Mr Vladimir Putin has found a way to remain the real power whether as President or Prime Minister. Mr Xi Jinping has consolidated his power; abolished term limits and is all set to begin his third term next year. By any definition, both countries are not democracies. Nor have they broken into the ranks of the rich countries.

The top 10 richest countries of the

world by per capita income are: 1. Luxembourg, 2. Ireland, 3. Switzerland, 4. Norway, 5. United States, 6. Iceland, 7. Denmark, 8. Singapore, 9. Australia and 10. Qatar. Except Qatar, which is a monarchy, and Singapore, which is a qualified democracy, the other eight countries are full-fledged democracies. I cannot name the President or Prime Minister of any of the eight, except of the US and, with some effort, of Australia. The moral is that a country and its people can be rich and democratic, though led by quiet, reserved and faceless leaders. None of these leaders has, to my knowledge, been accused of hubris or arrogance.

SLIDE TO
UNACCOUNTABILITY

Democracy ill sits beside absolute power or disdain for Parliament and the media. There is no place for 'I know it all' or 'I am the saviour' rhetoric. These qualities are acquired when a political party becomes too big, too rich and unaccountable. The BJP claims to be the biggest party in the world and we know it is the richest in India. It has 300 seats in the Lok Sabha (out of 543) and 1,435 seats in the State Legislative Assemblies (out of 4,036). It is the ruling party in 17 states (out of 28). That makes it too big. The BJP is also too rich. According to the Association for Democratic Rights, in

2019-20, the BJP collected Rs 2,642 crore (out of Rs 3,377 crore for all parties) from unknown sources, including the infamous electoral bonds. In the last round of state elections in five states, the BJP spent Rs 252 crore; of that Rs 151 crore was spent in West Bengal alone!

In the last seven years, the BJP has become more unaccountable. It shuns debate in Parliament; passes Bills without scrutiny by parliamentary committees and, often, without a debate in the two Houses; the Prime Minister religiously avoids Parliament and the media; and the government has no hesitation in using the CBI, ED, Income Tax, NIA and now the NCB (Narcotics Control Bureau) against political opponents, social activists, journalists and students.

Despite being too big, too rich and unaccountable, the BJP has won a string of elections. Where it lost, it had no compunction in buying legislators and forming the government with the help of obliging governors. They have proudly given a name to the sordid exercise — Operation Lotus!

FEAR ONLY LOSING

The hubris and arrogance were in full display in the passing of the three farm laws and the obstinate defence of the laws. The laws were made through ordinances and converted into legislation without a debate in Parliament. Farmers

protested for 15 months, but the government did not yield. The invitation to farmers for talks was insincere and the talks were political theatre. The abuse and name-calling of the farmers and their supporters ('Khalistanis, anti-national') reached indecent limits. The police crackdown was brutal. The response to the Supreme Court was defiant. Throughout, the government was self-satisfied and smug — until the intelligence reports and survey results seeped into the high chambers.

It is crystal clear that the Modi government fears only one thing — losing an election. Petrol and diesel prices were reduced within hours of the results of the by-elections to 30 Assembly seats, where the BJP won just seven. The sudden decision to withdraw the farm laws — taken by Mr Modi without Cabinet approval — was a clear indication that he feared massive losses in UP, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa (where his party rules today) and being blanked out in Punjab. The contrived praise for the PM's 'statesmanship' by his ministers only exposed what a crowd of dumb cheerleaders they had become: Mr Modi was a statesman when he passed the law and Mr Modi was a bigger statesman when he repealed the law!

Democracy may yet survive in India as long as the BJP fears losing an election. Even better, an actual defeat in February 2022 may prod the BJP to shed some of its hubris and arrogance.

Fifth
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter: @tavleen_singh

We must
never forget
26/11

LAST WEEK, in a small sort of way, we commemorated the thirteenth anniversary of 26/11. Why we always have this remembrance only in a small sort of way instead of on the scale that the United States commemorates 9/11 has begun to puzzle me more and more. Let me explain why. After Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in 2014 and went to New York to attend the UN General Assembly's annual meeting, he made it a point to visit the 9/11 memorial. It is a sombre and moving experience, and since I happened to be present, I noticed that Modi looked both sombre and moved. So why in the past seven years that he has been Prime Minister has he not considered building a memorial to those who died in the worst terrorist act committed on Indian soil? This is a Prime Minister who sets great store by memorials, which makes this oversight more puzzling.

It is easy to understand why, when there was a Congress Prime Minister in Delhi, he preferred to forget what happened in the hope that everyone would forget the terrible mistakes made during the attack and after. If the mistakes made during the attack were bad, the mistakes made after it were worse. The attack on Mumbai was an act of war by Pakistan, and the Indian government did no more than whine at public forums that we had provided sufficient proof that those who planned and orchestrated the unspeakable horror we call 26/11 continued to move about freely in Pakistan and continued to remain unpunished.

This itself is proof that the Pakistani State was directly involved. What makes India's weak-kneed response more shameful is that it allowed Pakistan to take charge of the narrative. Pakistanis I met in the wake of 26/11 said they believed that it was Indian intelligence agencies who had planned the whole thing, or they boasted of how "all it took was 10 young Pakistanis to bring India to her knees". The government led by Manmohan Singh, and controlled by Sonia Gandhi, behaved disgracefully and had no reason to attend remembrance ceremonies or build a memorial. It is much harder to understand why Modi has done so little.

After the Pulwama attack, the Indian Air Force conducted a 'surgical strike' on terrorist camps in Pakistan, and many political analysts believe that it was this aggressive retaliation that won Modi a second term. But surely this is not all that the mighty Government of India is capable of? This kind of cowardly, undeclared war, disguised as jihadist terrorism, is likely to be the only kind that Pakistan will fight in its endless quest to weaken India, so should we not have a strategy by now that fights back using the same tactics? Jihadist killers continue to be sent into Kashmir with the help of the Pakistani army, and their numbers are likely to grow now that we have a gang of violently holy warriors ruling Afghanistan. What is India's strategy to stop this from happening? When incidents of jihadist violence decreased after the abrogation of Article 370, there was no shortage of kowtowing ministers who credited Modi with having stopped jihadist terrorism. Now that we are seeing a jihadist attack almost every other day, who should we blame?

As someone who spends many months of the year in Mumbai, it shames me to report that if Pakistan wanted to repeat what happened 13 years ago, it easily could. All that has changed since November 26, 2008, is that armed police commandos and armoured cars can be seen on patrol in those parts of the city where the attacks took place. But, they seem to have more training in protecting VIP politicians than in counter-terrorism. As for ordinary policemen, who are always the first responders in a terrorist attack, they would certainly be as unprepared as they were 13 years ago.

Since Modi became Prime Minister, what has changed is that his spokesmen and supporters have no compunction in using the word Pakistani as a term of abuse. They appear with relentless regularity on primetime TV shows to rant and rave against Pakistanis, Islam, and Muslims in general, but as that old cliché says, they sound exactly like empty vessels making a lot of noise. Instead of helping India's case, they end up wrecking it with their venom and childish hostility.

It is time that the Prime Minister took personal charge of evolving a new strategy to deal with Pakistan's covert, clandestine war with our own covert, clandestine war. If Hafiz Saeed and his gang of killers cannot be brought to justice in the courts of Pakistan, then India needs to show that it has the capability to deal with them as Israel deals with its enemies. Meanwhile, at an official level there is no harm in reviving dialogue with Pakistan, and this time making clear that we know what happened on 26/11 and we know what is happening in Kashmir.

Instead of the Prime Minister complaining at international forums about terrorism, he needs to show that India can and will deal with those who attack us. Only then will the shame of India having done nothing after the 26/11 attack be erased. A memorial to those who died for no reason is necessary because it will serve to remind everyone that India does not forget or forgive her enemies.

Invisibility of caste in
environmental studies

Dalitality

AMBIKA AIYADURAI &
PRASHANT INGOLE

WHEN WE discuss environmental issues in Indian academic spaces, there is reluctance on referencing caste. Environment as a formal subject is taught in most institutions. The field of Environmental Humanities started around 2000 and has been gaining momentum, but in India, it functions with the glaring omission of caste.

We raise two points. First, why is this so in environmental studies in general and Environmental Humanities, in particular. Second, what are the (im)possibilities of anti-caste Environmental Humanities in Indian academia?

Way back in 1997, the late Gail Omvedt had drawn our attention to the question 'Why Dalits dislike environmentalists?'. Preservation of resources, protection of species, setting up of protected areas and campaigns for environment often do not acknowledge the role of as well as impact of these initiatives on the marginalised, mainly Dalits. While there are new studies exploring the issues of caste in the context of the environment, for example Mukul Sharma's *Caste and Nature*, caste-related discussions are yet to be included in the formal pedagogy.

Why are the issues of Dalits and their relation with land, water and food seldom highlighted in environmental academic discussions? Is it because the dichotomy of mainstream and margin is subverted, where the "margins" are essentially the core component of the environment studies discipline. In the field of environmental humanities, the emphasis is on "interconnectedness", between humans, non-humans; nature, culture; and people, environment. This appears an antithesis to the Indian social system that is deeply and rigidly hierarchical, with unequal access to resources, along the gradient of caste.

The invisibility of caste in environmental studies is deliberate. In fact, some studies justify the caste system as a sustainable way reflecting "genuine cultural adjustment" to "shared" resources. One particular study by M Gadgil and K C Malhotra, 'Adaptive Significance of India's Caste System: An Ecological Perspective', claims that "resource partitioning" has

helped reduce competition over scarce natural resources, and created the right psychological environment.

Such studies thus legitimise the misappropriate distribution of resources without questioning the inbuilt structural mechanisms holding back Dalits.

Lack of representation of Dalits or tribals in these institutions is also a reason. It is our failure that anti-caste discourse, and literature and culture of the marginalised, are yet to become institutionalised in premier educational institutes. Inclusion of caste in the formal syllabus of environmental studies seems possible only at the individual faculty level. For example, at IIT Gandhinagar, where we are based, it is an important part of a formal course. We invite Dalit poets and researchers to discuss their work on environment with reference to caste, with a mandatory field trip.

One of the field sites is Ahmedabad's largest garbage dumping site at Pirana. Those who inhabit these highly degraded inhumane spaces are invariably Dalits, Muslims and the migrant poor. Caste and its connection to resource distribution is what Joel Lee has appropriately coined 'Environmental Casteism'.

While elite institutes may appear less enthusiastic to including caste, the power of individuals in making caste issues part of the formal environment curricula is possible. We strongly believe that an anti-caste approach and perspective from the margins will make this field more inclusive and diverse in terms of adding more critical reflections from a Phule-Ambedkarite point of view.

This will be an attempt to de-casteise and de-Brahmanise along the lines of Braj Ranjan Mani's argument of questioning Brahmanical pedagogy.

Prashant Ingole is a Postdoctoral Fellow and Ambika Aiyadurai an Assistant Professor at IIT Gandhinagar, and the author of *Tigers are Our Brothers: Anthropology of Wildlife Conservation* in Northeast India

Suraj Yengde, author of *Caste Matters*, curates the fortnightly 'Dalitality' column

life &
WORK

POONAM MUTTREJA



WHEN THE Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the findings of the fifth National Family Health Survey (NFHS), documenting government data on health and family welfare issues, there were a flurry of chest-thumping declarations. Many in the media reported that India's population had "stabilised" and some even claimed that it had begun "declining".

This is not entirely true. According to the findings, India's total fertility rate (TFR) — the average number of children born to a woman in the country over her lifetime — has slipped to 2.0. According to the United Nations, if women have on an average 2.1 children each over a sustained period of time, the population neither grows nor declines and thus stabilises. This means that for India's population to stabilise or decline, it would have to maintain a TFR equal to or less than 2.1 for a sustained period of decades.

Regardless, this drop in India's TFR, which stood at almost 6 in the 1950s, to its current levels is a significant feat. The credit for this achievement must go to the people of India, along with successive governments, especially the bureaucracy. This drop is a sign of changing aspirations, especially among women, who are seeing the wisdom of having fewer children.

Started as back as 1951, India's family planning programme is among the world's oldest. The earliest government communication campaigns sought to promote smaller families. But there was little progress as India continued to see rapid population growth.

In 1975, when the Indira Gandhi-led government declared Emergency, the desperation to control the population took a dark turn. A widespread mandatory sterilisation programme saw thousands of vasectomies, many of which were forced. These sterilisations became a major issue in the 1977 general elections, when Indira Gandhi was voted out, and India saw its first non-Congress government at the Centre.

This was the first time we saw strong evidence of a clear popular rejection of a coercive population-control policy.

For several decades after the Emergency, governments stayed away from family planning. In 1994, the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD), convened under the auspices of the United Nations, brought about a landmark shift in the way governments viewed population-related issues. At the ICPD, 179 governments, including

Population slowdown is
triumph of India's people

There is no better contraceptive pill than education. According to NFHS data, women who had no schooling had the highest TFR of 3.06. Abhinav Saha

India, recognised and committed to a rights-based approach to family planning, which held that if people's needs for family planning and reproductive healthcare are met, along with other basic health and education needs, then population stabilisation will be achieved naturally, not as a matter of control or coercion.

The ICPD inspired India's 2000 National Population Policy. But implementation only picked pace when the National Rural Health Mission, now part of the larger National Health Mission, was launched in 2005.

The 2000s saw a rekindled interest in population stabilisation, but the burden of family planning stayed with women, with female sterilisation being the most available method. The lack of emphasis on quality of care led to some egregious practices. In 2014, 16 women died in Bilaspur after they were sterilised at a government camp. As a member of a fact-finding team comprising several civil society organisations, led by the Population Foundation of India, I visited the site and conducted several interviews. We found that gross negligence and compromised quality of care had led to these deaths.

Our team's inquiry resulted in a report that became the basis for a landmark judgment by the Supreme Court in 2016 and transformed the way family planning services are provided in India. The order by a two-judge Bench headed by Justice Madan Lokur asked the government to put a stop to sterilisation camps and focus on providing tempo-

rary methods of contraception.

Increased reach of the media has changed women's aspirations, and their desire for greater control over their lives. Although NFHS data show that women desire to have less than two children, their inability to access family planning services has resulted in a high unmet need. However, increased focus on providing services in high-fertility districts may have helped improve knowledge and acceptance of family planning.

India's large young population — about 30 per cent is aged between 10 and 24 — is gearing for change. The government needs to play a pivotal role and invest in education, health and creating economic opportunities for young people. It needs to understand that there is no better contraceptive pill than education. Girls' education has a direct co-relation with a decrease in fertility. According to NFHS data, women who had no schooling had the highest TFR of 3.06, as compared to women with 12 or more years of education who had a TFR of 1.71.

The government must provide health and life-skills education at an early age along with ensuring access to sexual and reproductive health services. It must absolutely swear off coercive population-control policies for good. The way forward requires less chest-thumping and more collaborative efforts if we are to sustain the trend towards population stabilisation.

The writer is the Executive Director of Population Foundation of India

On the
LOOSE

LEHER KALA

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STAND-UP comic Vir Das elicited a wholly predictable response to his impassioned lament on the dichotomy of surviving two, contradictory Indias. In the much-applauded monologue held at Washington's prestigious Kennedy Centre, Das highlighted the shocking contrasts we internalise, like how the world's largest population under 30 endures "75-year-old leaders with 150-year-old ideas". Madhya Pradesh's Home Minister declared Das persona non grata in his state while another BJP leader filed a complaint against him for "vilifying" India on foreign soil. Comedy in India has become a dangerous business: in January, comedian Munawar Faruqui was arrested

The power of ridicule

for allegedly passing indecent remarks about Hindu deities. In 2019, comic artist Agrima Joshua received rape threats for a joke on a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji.

It's not difficult to see why touchy politicians feel threatened by comedians. They instinctively understand humour packs in so much more than just frivolous entertainment; it provides clarity on bizarre situations that are otherwise impossible to comprehend. Some years back, a friend's father expired on a cruise liner in the Caribbean. There's nothing funny about this — until you hear that the friends he was travelling with continued with their vacation despite this catastrophe. Undoubtedly, it cast a dampener on everyone's spirits, but logic had reared its sensible head. They had paid a full advance and had flights booked only at the end of the cruise. Meanwhile, my friend

doesn't tire of relating this morbid story, how he reached shattered three days later, to a teary mother and his father in a morgue. A way, perhaps, to process the painful realisation: what makes every trauma bearable yet unbearable is that life goes on.

Throughout history, disaster has inspired dark satire. The genre of 'tragicomedy' emerged around the 3rd century BC and gained in popularity as theatre evolved to include nuance. It is thriving in a new millennium because we are all familiar with the dysfunctions of adulthood. Existence isn't purely tragic or comic but a frustrating combination of the two. In fact, if one must find fault with Das's diatribe, it's that it wasn't (bitterly) hilarious enough. The best jesters point out deficiencies in human nature and society by slyly revealing them to be absurd. Basically, turning the grim into

grimly amusing. Ridiculousness is implied, never overtly stated. However, when a joke speaks truth to power, it can turn into a lethal tool for disruption. Bill Cosby's life blew up because of one sneer by a comedian: "You rape women, Bill Cosby, so turn the crazy down." Just like that, the floodgates to uncontrollable fury burst open.

Indians are not known for their ability to laugh at themselves. In our defence, life here has always been a struggle to keep suffering at bay while building endurance. You need to be able to take basics for granted to engage in light-hearted merriment. But circumstances have us tightly wound up, unable to relax. Alas, even a who-cares attitude is a privilege of richer nations. Our countrymen are religious but not spiritual, which means a lot of mind space is wasted worrying about nonsense, like kids' mar-

riages and relatives' opinions. So, when comedians use our depressing realities as material, not everyone sees that truth is way funnier than fiction. Many people feel genuinely aggrieved that Das was denigrating India abroad, not realising that articulating the unsaid stirs dialogue. It makes room for the perspective that, even with all our differences, we are essentially the same.

To brand comedians as dissenters for critiquing historical wrongs through parody is, ironically, a perfect example of the genre of absurd comedy — that taps into the paradoxes and irrationalities of the modern world. It takes courage to make peace with our chaotic country and, occasionally, we are entitled to laugh at it. In any case, who are we kidding? The joke's on us.

The writer is director, *Hutkay Films*

TOP OF THE WORLD



Burned cars block a road in Petit-Bourg, Guadeloupe. Reuters

FRANCE

Paris says willing to talk autonomy for Guadeloupe

FRANCE IS willing to discuss autonomy for the French Caribbean territory of Guadeloupe if it is in the interests of the people who live there, government minister Sebastien Lecornu said. Guadeloupe and the nearby French island of Martinique have seen several days of protests against Covid-19 measures that have spilled over into violence. Lecornu, the minister for France's overseas territories, said in a YouTube video issued late Friday that certain elected officials in Guadeloupe had raised the question of autonomy, changing its status as an overseas region. "The government is ready to talk about this. There are no bad debates, as long as those debates serve to resolve the real everyday problems of people in Guadeloupe," he said. **REUTERS**

SOLOMON ISLANDS
Police find three bodies after violent protests

SOLOMON ISLANDS police found three bodies in a burned-out building and arrested more than 100 people in this week's violence sparked by concerns about the Pacific nation's increasing links with China. Australian media reported the bodies were recovered late Friday after riots and protests subsided. No other details were given. Authorities imposed a curfew in the capital Honiara, after a 36-hour lockdown ordered by the embattled PM Manasseh Sogavare ended Friday. Sogavare blamed outside interference for stirring up the protests calling for his resignation, with a thinly veiled reference to Taiwan and the US. **AP**

SOUTH KOREA

Widow of dictator issues apology

THE WIDOW of South Korea's last military dictator issued a brief apology over the "pains and scars" caused by her husband's brutal rule as dozens of relatives and former aides gathered at a Seoul hospital on Saturday to pay their final respects to Chun Doo-hwan. Chun, who took power in a 1979 coup and violently crushed pro-democracy protests a year later before being jailed for treason in the 1990s, died at his Seoul home Tuesday. **AP**

OMICRON VARIANT: MORE COUNTRIES IMPOSE TRAVEL CURBS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

UK reports cases of new variant, world on alert

Probable case of omicron in Germany

AP & REUTERS
LONDON, NOVEMBER 27

BRITAIN BECAME the latest country Saturday to report cases of the new potentially more contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus as governments around the world sought to shore up their defences by slapping restrictions on travel from nations in southern Africa.

Amid fears that the recently identified new variant — named omicron by the WHO — has the potential to be more resistant to the protection offered by vaccines, there are growing concerns that the pandemic and associated lockdown restrictions will persist for far longer than hoped. UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid confirmed that two people have tested positive with the omicron variant and that the cases are linked and related to travel from southern Africa.

Britain added four more countries — Angola, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia — onto the country's travel red list from Sunday. Six others — Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe — were added Friday. A host of countries, including the Pakistan, US, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Iran, Japan and Thailand, joined others, including the European Union and the UK in imposing restrictions on southern African countries.

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson tightened up rules Saturday, saying anyone arriving in England will be asked to take a mandatory PCR test for Covid-19 on the second day and must self isolate until they provide a

EXPLAINED
Doubts over travel curbs

EVEN AS countries rush to impose travel bans on South Africa and its neighbours, the WHO has warned against taking such steps before there is more information about the new variant. Some experts have said that it is likely that the variant is already spreading in other parts of the world, and that travel bans at this stage would already be too late. There are also suggestions that omicron was detected in South Africa because of the advances made by the country in genome sequencing and identifying new variants, and not necessarily because the variant originated there.

negative test. He also said mask-wearing in shops and on public transport will be required and that vaccination will be accelerated.

In addition to the UK, cases have been reported in travellers in Belgium, Israel and Hong Kong. Germany also said it suspected a positive case and Dutch authorities were testing if 61 people who arrived on flights from South Africa with Covid-19 have the variant.

US President Joe Biden on Friday reiterated his call for nations to agree to waive intellectual property protections for Covid vaccines in the wake of the new variant. "The news about this new variant should make clearer than ever why this pandemic will not end until we have global vaccinations," Biden said in a statement.



GERMAN AIR FORCE PLANES TRANSFER COVID PATIENTS: A Covid-19 patient is taken into an air force aircraft in Memmingen, Germany. Hospitals in southern and eastern regions of Germany have warned they are running out of ICU beds because of the large numbers of Covid-19 patients, prompting the country to organise large-scale transfers of patients to other regions. Germany's health minister said he hopes the sight of air force planes transferring patients across the country will act as a "wake-up call" to those who still haven't got vaccinated. **AP**

S Africa feels 'punished' by travel bans after detecting new variant

LYNSEY CHUTEL
JOHANNESBURG, NOV 27

AS THE US and European countries close their borders over fears over the recently detected coronavirus variant, many South Africans say they feel as if they are being "punished" for alerting global health authorities.

Hours after South African scientists announced the existence of a new variant that they said displayed "a big jump in evolution," Britain banned travellers from southern Africa. Other European nations and the US followed suit. "I do apologise that people



A lab at the Nelson Mandela School of Medicine in Durban

took a very radical decision," said Tulio de Oliveira, director of the KwaZulu-Natal Research and Innovation Sequencing Platform and the scientist who announced the new variant on Thursday.

MEANWHILE

SPANISH POLICE MARCH IN MADRID

Thousands of Spanish police officers marched through Madrid on Saturday to protest against a proposed reform of a security law which they say will hamper their ability to do their work. They were opposed to proposed changes to the 2015 Citizens Security Law, which critics say violates the right to protest and limits free expression.

Top UK scientist says Omicron 'not a disaster', vaccination likely to protect

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, NOVEMBER 27

THE NEW potentially highly-transmissible variant of Covid-19, named Omicron by the WHO, is not a disaster as vaccines are still likely to protect against the serious disease from it, a UK scientist, who advises the government, said on Saturday.



Professor Calum Semple

struck a note of caution on the worldwide headlines around the new B.1.1.529 variant detected in South Africa.

"This is not a disaster, and the headlines from some of my colleagues saying 'this is horrendous' I think are hugely overstating the situation," Semple told the BBC.

"Immunity from vaccination is still likely to protect you from severe disease. You might get a snuffle or a headache or a filthy cold but your chance of coming into hospital, or intensive care or sadly dying are greatly diminished by the vaccine and still will be going into the future," he said. **PTI**

Russia spy chief says Ukraine invasion plan 'malicious' US propaganda

REUTERS
MOSCOW, NOVEMBER 27

RUSSIA HAS no plans to invade Ukraine and suggestions to the contrary are malicious US propaganda, Moscow's foreign intelligence chief said on Saturday.

US, NATO and Ukrainian officials have raised the alarm in recent weeks over what they say are unusual Russian troop movements near the border with Ukraine, suggesting that Moscow may be poised to launch an attack.

Russia has repeatedly said it is free to move its troops on its own territory and that such movements should not be a cause for concern.

"I need to reassure everyone. Nothing like this is going to happen," Sergei Naryshkin, head of Russia's foreign intelligence agency, said in an interview broadcast on state television, referring to comments on Russia's alleged invasion plans.

"Everything that is happening around this topic right now is of course malicious propaganda by the US State Department."

Naryshkin spoke a day after the State Department's top US diplomat for European affairs said all options were on the table in how to respond to Russia's troop buildup near Ukraine's border and that NATO would decide on the next move after consultations next week.

While US officials have voiced concerns about a possible Russian attack on Ukraine, Moscow has accused Washington, Kyiv and NATO of provocative and irresponsible behaviour near its borders.

Cash-strapped Pak to get \$3 bn from Saudi; to park money in central bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, NOVEMBER 27

CASH-STRAPPED PAKISTAN will soon get \$3 billion as loan from Saudi Arabia as the Cabinet led by Prime Minister Imran Khan has approved an agreement to keep the amount in the country's central bank, media reports said on Saturday.

The Saudi government had promised to maintain a reserve of \$3 billion at the State Bank of Pakistan, Geo News reported.

According to the agreement, the aid will remain in the SBP's deposit account for a year.

"The SBP has finalised all arrangements and now everything is in place and the amount of the agreed deposit will be received within the next couple of days," official sources told *The News*.

The federal Cabinet approved the agreement to keep the \$3 billion aid from Saudi Arabia in the SBP, the reports quoted an official document as saying.

The Cabinet approved the State Bank's retention of \$3 billion from the Saudi Development Fund.

Pakistan's entire liquid foreign reserves, according to the central bank, stood at \$22.773 billion as of November 19, according to Geo News.



UK: STORM ARWEN LEAVES 2 DEAD

Waves crash against the pier wall at Seaham Lighthouse during Storm Arwen, in Seaham, Britain, on Saturday. At least two people died and tens of thousands were left without power as Storm Arwen brought strong winds across many parts of the UK, with gusts of up to 160 kph. **Reuters**

US city panel clears bid to demolish Wright Brothers' first bicycle shop

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DAYTON, NOVEMBER 27

THE DAYTON Board of Zoning Appeals has approved the city's request to demolish a 129-year-old historic building that once was the site of the Wright brothers' first bike shop.

The city wants to tear down the site because the building has deteriorated to a point where it can no longer be maintained, the *Dayton Daily News* reported. The Dayton Landmarks



At the site of the shop in Dayton, Ohio. **AP**

Commission had rejected the city's demolition request in September.

A cure for Type 1 diabetes? For one man, it seems to have worked

GINA KOLATA
NOVEMBER 27

BRIAN SHELTON'S life was ruled by Type 1 diabetes.

When his blood sugar plummeted, he would lose consciousness without warning. He crashed his motorcycle into a wall. He passed out in a customer's yard while delivering mail. Following that episode, his supervisor told him to retire, after a quarter century in the Postal Service. He was 57.

His ex-wife, Cindy Shelton, took him into her home in Elyria, Ohio. "I was afraid to leave him alone all day," she said.

Early this year, she spotted a call for people with Type 1 diabetes to participate in a clinical trial by Vertex Pharmaceuticals. The company was testing a treatment developed over decades by a scientist who vowed to find a cure after his baby son and then his teenage daughter got the devastating disease.

Shelton was the first patient. On June 29, he got an infusion of cells, grown from stem cells but just like the insulin-producing pancreas cells his body lacked. Now his body automatically



Brian Shelton may be the first person cured of Type 1 diabetes. **NYT**

controls its insulin and blood sugar levels.

Shelton, now 64, may be the first person cured of the disease with a new treatment that has experts daring to hope that help may be coming for many of the 1.5 million Americans suffering from Type 1 diabetes.

"It's a whole new life," Shelton said. "It's like a miracle."

Diabetes experts were astonished but urged caution. The study is continuing and will take five years, involving 17 people with severe cases of Type 1 diabetes. It is not intended as a treatment for the more common Type 2 diabetes.

"We've been looking for something like this to happen literally for decades," said Dr Irl Hirsch, a diabetes expert at the University of Washington. **NYT**

CRITICS SAY THE NEW RULES ARE HALF-BAKED, SHORT ON DETAIL AND UNFEASIBLE

Workers' paradise? Portugal's new teleworking law takes flak

BARRY HATTON
LISBON, NOVEMBER 27

PORTUGAL'S NEW law on working from home makes the European Union country sound like a workers' paradise.

Companies can't attempt to contact their staff outside working hours. They must help staff pay for their home gas, electric and internet bills. Bosses are forbidden from using digital software to track what their teleworkers are doing.

There's just one problem: the law might not work. Critics say the new rules are half-baked, short on detail and unfeasible.

And they may even backfire by making companies reluctant to allow working from home at all.

"The law is badly written and doesn't meet anybody's needs," says José Pedro Anacoreta, an employment attorney at PLMJ, one of Portugal's main law firms. "It's no good for anyone. ... It doesn't make any sense."

In many places around the world, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated a prior trend toward the digitalisation of work and more flexible work arrangements. Amid such a sudden and massive shift in the employment landscape, governments are scrambling to accommodate working from home in their em-



Portugal's new law on working from home has grabbed attention around the world. **AP**

ployment laws. Those efforts are largely still in their infancy.

During the pandemic some countries have recommended teleworking. Others — like Portugal — have demanded it. Most EU countries have specific legislation on teleworking, though with different ap-

proaches, and others are considering it through amendments, extensions or conventions.

As home working grew in recent years, workers' "right to disconnect" — allowing staff to ignore work matters outside formal working hours — was adopted before the pandemic in

countries such as Germany, France, Italy, Spain and Belgium. It is now becoming the standard.

But Portugal is taking that concept a step further, by flipping the onus onto companies. "The employer has a duty to refrain from contacting the employee outside working hours, except in situations of force majeure," meaning an unanticipated or uncontrollable event, states the new law.

Also, parents or caregivers with children up to eight years old have the right to work from home if they choose, as long as the type of work they do is compatible with teleworking. Fines for companies breaking

the law go up to almost 10,000 euros for each infringement.

The Portuguese rules are meant to address the downside of what has become known as WFH.

The technology that enables working from home has also opened the door to abuses, such as drawn-out workdays as staff remain reachable outside their normal eight-hour shift. But the new law has met with scepticism from those it is intended to protect.

Andreia Sampaio, 37, who works in communications in Lisbon, agrees with the law's purpose but thinks it is too general and will be "very hard" to enforce. Prompted by the pandemic but designed to apply in the fu-

ture irrespective of Covid-related measures, the law could come into force as soon as December 1.

Nevertheless, practical questions abound: must staff be taken off company email lists when their shift finishes and then put back on when they start work again? What about Europeans who work in financial markets and need to know what's going on in, say, Hong Kong, and have colleagues working in different time zones?

"The devil is always in the details... but also in the implementation," says Jon Messenger, a specialist on working conditions at the International Labor Organization. **AP**

tributes quickly flooded social media as performers and writers alike saluted a giant of the theatre. "We shall be singing your songs forever," wrote Lea Salonga. Aaron Tveit wrote: "We are so lucky to have what you've given the world."

"The theatre has lost one of its greatest geniuses and the world has lost one of its greatest and most original writers. Sadly, there is now a gack in the sky," producer Cameron Mackintosh wrote in tribute. **AP**

17 ECONOMY

DIIs ACCUMULATE ₹12,818 CRORE OF STOCKS IN LAST SIX SESSIONS

Domestic institutions bought stocks as FPIs rushed out during market rout

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 27

DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONAL investors (DII) were active buyers last week when stock markets faced a nervous sell-off with foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) dumping stocks across the board.

While foreign investors exited from stocks worth Rs 25,000 crore (\$3.34 billion) in the last six sessions, DII accumulated stocks worth Rs 12,818 crore during the same period. Domestic institutions have been using every major correction to buy into stocks and reshuffle their portfolios. The benchmark Sensex nosedived 2,901 points, or 4.83 per cent, to 57,107.15 in the last six sessions.

On Friday, when the Sensex fell 1,688 points, FPIs pulled out Rs 5,785 crore from Indian markets

while DII invested Rs 2,294 crore, according to data available from stock exchanges. On November 24, when the Sensex declined by 320 points, FPIs sold Rs 5,122 crore stocks but DII were buyers of Rs 3,809 crore worth of stocks. Insurance companies led by LIC and mutual funds are the major players in the market, absorbing the sales triggered by FPIs.

"Domestic institutions follow the policy of 'buy when others sell'. They are long-term players and utilise every opportunity to get stocks cheap," said an analyst.

In November so far, FPIs have taken out Rs 31,124 crore from Indian markets while DII invested Rs 20,598 crore. LIC alone usually invests around Rs 50,000 crore in the markets every year.

Analysts are worried about the sell-off continuing in the wake of several uncertainties relating to

INVESTMENTS BY FPIs AND DII (in ₹ crore)		
DATE	FPIs	DII
Nov 26	-5,785	+2,294
Nov 25	-2,300	+1,367
Nov 24	-5,122	+3,809
Nov 23	-4,477	+1,412
Nov 22	-3,438	+2,051
Nov 18	-3,930	+1,885

Source: BSE data

the new Covid variant and tightening of the monetary policy in the United States. The sharp correction in the market on Friday was mainly triggered by concerns arising out of the new strain of the virus spotted in Africa.

In March 2020, when the Covid pandemic first hit the world, the market crashed with

FPIs pulling out Rs 65,816 crore. However, DII which bought Rs 55,595 crore worth of stocks made a good profit as markets bounced back subsequently.

Setting the stage for further downward pressure on other world markets, the Dow Jones Industrial Average in the US on Friday dropped about 905 points, or 2.5 per cent, for its worst day of the year, while the S&P 500 and Nasdaq Composite slid 2.3 per cent and 2.2 per cent, respectively. The Dow was down more than 1,000 points at session lows.

The big question is whether retail investors will follow the exit route taken by FPIs. Retail investors have been pumping money into the stock markets through SIPs of mutual funds in the last 12 months. Another possible impact of the market rout will be on the IPO market which has been wit-

nessing a flurry of activity with the entry of high-profile unicorns.

The FPI sell-off can accelerate if the US tightens monetary policy. "Foreign brokerages had downgraded India early this month on high valuations. India's valuations vis-a-vis emerging market peers also became stretched. The further negative trigger came from the RBI observation that valuations are stretched," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

The market action next week will depend on how the new virus strain spreads and its impact on the world. There are concerns over rising inflation in the minutes of the recent US FOMC meeting, signalling higher chances of an aggressive policy tightening. Worries over overvaluation and a possible rate hike have been haunting foreign investors.

'India faces uphill battle to meet 2030 climate targets'

India must substantially alter its current trajectory if it has to deliver on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's climate targets for 2030, Fitch Solutions said in a note



At the COP26, Modi announced that by 2030, India will increase its non-fossil fuel power generation capacity to

500 GW, generate 50% of its power from renewable sources, reduce its total carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes and bring

down carbon intensity of its economy by 45%

Based on current state of play, India will fall far short of its climate objectives, Fitch said

By 2030, the shares in primary energy mix will fall, with coal accounting for 45%, oil 33%, and natural gas 8% — with a decline in coal largely offset by a rise in oil and gas

Strongest prospects for displacing fossil fuels are in the power sector, but targets are likely to be missed in absence of a step change in the sector

Emissions reduction benefits will be limited, as long as fossil fuels are the dominant source of power generation

Source: Fitch Solutions/PTI

Analysts forecast nuclear, hydropower and non-hydropower renewables generation capacity to reach 314 GW by 2030, with their share in total generation rising to around 30%

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Emissions reduction benefits will be limited, as long as fossil fuels are the dominant source of power generation

Source: Fitch Solutions/PTI

Omicron strain forces WTO to postpone ministerial meet

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE WORLD Trade Organization (WTO) has postponed its crucial meet of trade ministers from various countries — scheduled to start from November 30 in Geneva — for a second time, after an outbreak of a new strain of the Covid-19 virus led several governments to impose travel curbs.

It is the first major trade casualty of the new Covid variant. No date has been set for reconvening the 12th ministerial conference, widely seen as a test of the WTO's relevance amid criticism by key members on the multilateral trading system that it represents.

The Geneva meet was to run until December 3 and host talks on a broad range of issues, including the WTO's response to containing Covid-19, curbs on fishery subsidies and a permanent solution to the public procurement programmes for food security.

The B.1.1.529 variant, known as the Omicron variant, detected in South Africa has been classified as a "variant of concern" by the WHO, which says it may spread more quickly than other variants.



WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said many could not have participated due to travel constraints. Reuters file

WTO director-general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said the travel constraints meant that many ministers and senior delegates could not have participated in face-to-face negotiations at the ministerial Conference. "This would render participation on an equal basis impossible," she said. The meeting was originally due to take place in June 2020 in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. Although the General Council decided to move the meeting to Geneva, Kazakhstan was chosen to chair the meet. FE

Tai: US to keep pushing for vaccine IP, WTO reform

DAVID LAWDER
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 27

US TRADE Representative Katherine Tai said the United States would continue to push for WTO members to agree on an intellectual property framework for Covid-19 vaccines after a major WTO ministerial meeting set for next week was postponed Friday.

The delay of the in-person meeting in Geneva over travel restrictions and concerns about the spread of the new Omicron Covid-19 variant complicates Tai's plans to push her vision for WTO reform and rekindling the spirit of dynamism and compromise that led to the trade body's creation in 1995. In a pair of tweets, Tai said the postponement "is a reminder that we still have much work to do to end the pandemic." REUTERS

INTERVIEW: CO-CHAIR OF BACC & FOUNDER-CEO OF COINSWITCH KUBER

'We never advocated crypto as legal tender... but this tech is solving real world problems'

AS THE government gets closer to opening the curtains on its Bill to regulate cryptocurrencies, the crypto exchange industry hopes for a balance between protection of India's financial stability and the innovation possible from the blockchain technology. ASHISH SINGHAL, co-chair of Blockchain and Crypto Assets Council (BACC) and Founder & CEO of CoinSwitch Kuber, told PRANAV MUKUL and SANDEEP SINGH about the factors that led to the proliferation of crypto investments in the country and the future of crypto exchanges. Edited Excerpts:

Now that there's a clear indication of cryptocurrencies not being recognised as legal tender, what is the future of these digital coins as a mere asset class?

First of all, exchanges and crypto companies never expected India to adopt cryptocurrencies as legal tender. India, being a sovereign country, should have capital controls, financial stability. It makes sense for countries where there is instability, but for India it doesn't make sense to give control to a cryptocurrency.

We, as an industry, stand by the government and believe that a CBDC (central bank digital currency) is the right way to solve the problem of digitisation. Money is not digital today and CBDC is the right way to solve that problem and we have never advocated for crypto to be legal tender in India.

Second, it is not a mere asset class. Asset class is the biggest use case for cryptocurrencies. The next Google, Facebook and Microsoft will be built on blockchain and will hopefully come from India. So, the scope is much wider. It is the new internet in the making, and is not just about trading a commodity. The trading happens because of its use case.

What role do crypto exchanges play in the next 5-10 years and what problem are you hoping to solve?

Think of us like the stock exchanges of the world. Amazing companies do IPOs, create value and an NSE or a BSE provides that access to investment for these companies. The use cases of crypto may be smaller, but those use cases are being solved amazingly.



Credit: Company

"Most of our users are very young. It is the Gen Z population, which is very excited about crypto. Average age is about 25-26 years on our platform that is investing in crypto."

ASHISH SINGHAL

Be it Covid-19 certificates, checks getting issued on Ethereum blockchain in the US.

There are many real world problems that this technology is solving, and these are the problems that we see many companies from India solving. We will be the custodians for retail users to invest in these companies. Think of us as an exchange equivalent in the world where crypto companies are creating value.

Could you give us a sense of who in India is investing in or is invested in cryptocurrencies?

Today, 45 per cent of our users come from tier-1 cities and 55 per cent come from tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Most of our users are very young. It is the Gen Z population, which is very excited about crypto. Average age is about 25-26 years on our platform that is investing in crypto. People from over 4,000 pin codes have invested in crypto — so it's not that just people from tier-1 cities have invested but the whole of India is investing in cryptos through CoinSwitch Kuber. To give a sense of the kind of money they are putting in — on average, they are putting in about Rs 10,000 every month for investment into crypto and the value decreases when you go to tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

Does the explosion in number of investors over the last one year explain the shift in the government's stance on a complete ban to a regulation?

Definitely, adoption does help. The government is able to see the use cases beyond currencies.

When you look at crypto just as a currency, there are many issues that lie — terror, money laundering. But our discussions with the government over the last few weeks indicate there is a broader agreement on ensuring that customers are protected, financial stability is reinforced and India is able to take advantage of crypto technology, and build the next generation of companies on blockchain. The developments that are happening outside as well — every now and then, countries adopting crypto. All of that culminated into from the talks of a ban to where we stand today, which is that the government does agree that use case is much bigger and we should have progressive regulations, so we are able to guide everyone in the right direction and don't miss out on innovation.

With regard to the proliferation of cryptocurrencies over the last few years, what explains how it happened?

I would say there are multiple factors to that and Covid helped, but let me take a step back. Since 2018, crypto was banned in India. The entire revolution of crypto was happening in other countries and the adoption rate was increasing. Crypto is now a household name in the US. Although India wasn't a party to that equation, but in the two-year period after the ban by the RBI, the revolution was happening outside and Indians were learning.

So Indians were not behind in this because of factors like lack of internet penetration. We were almost side by side in figuring out what those developments are and we wanted to be a part of this ecosystem. Once the Supreme Court verdict came in, that gave Indians the opportunity to get into this. In a way, it was the residual demand generated in those two years that has resulted into the growth in the last 1-1.5 years.

Full interview on www.indianexpress.com

Goyal to industry: Our effort is to reduce burdensome compliances

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

THE EFFORT of the Central government, along with states, is to eliminate burdensome compliances, reduce the need for licensing and rationalise the renewal process with an aim to promoting ease of doing business, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said Saturday.

At the CII National Conference on Ease of Doing Business for Aatmanirbhar Bharat, Goyal suggested that the industry and the government together can engage with the judiciary on issues like fast resolution of commercial disputes and capping adjournments.

"Our effort, along with states, is to eliminate burdensome compliances, or reduce the need for licensing, reduce the regulatory burden, permissions, and ratio-



PIYUSH GOYAL

Commerce Minister

File

nalise the renewal process. But it only happens when we work together. Self-regulation and self-certification should be the way forward," the union minister said.

On fast resolution of commercial disputes, Goyal said the government is working on making mediation the preferred mechanism rather than everybody rushing to courts. WITHPTI

Gems, jewellery: Goyal stresses on design, tie-ups

New Delhi: Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday asked the gem and jewellery industry to focus on areas like design, diversification of export product basket and lab grown diamonds.

"Focus on four points... Good design should be patented; include new things such as pearls, platinum and fashion jewellery in the exports basket; increase collaboration with other countries for fusion jewellery; and lab grown diamonds," he said at the inauguration of Gems & Jewellery Manufacturing Association, 2021. PTI

SECTOR WATCH INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Review of overseas flights: New Covid variant key cause of concern at PM meet

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 27

JUST A day after the Ministry of Civil Aviation announced the resumption of international scheduled commercial flights effective December 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday directed senior government officials to "review" plans for easing of international travel restrictions in light of the emergence of new evidence regarding the Omicron variant of Covid-19.

What had the Civil Aviation Ministry announced?

On Friday, the ministry announced that international scheduled commercial flights will resume from December 15 after a 21-month ban.

According to the ministry, the resumption was to happen in a calibrated manner with a staggered reopening for countries considered 'at-risk'. These include Europe, including the UK, in addition to South Africa, Brazil, Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Mauritius, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Singapore, Hong Kong and Israel. Among these countries, if India has an air bubble arrangement, flights will be resumed at a 75 per cent capacity as decided in bilateral agreements, and for those without an air bubble, at 50 per cent capacity. For all the remaining countries that are not a part of the 'at-risk' category, 100 per cent of the flights were allowed to resume.

Why is the decision being reviewed?

On Saturday, the Prime

Several countries are restricting travel from south African nations, in addition to curtailing travel from where the new variant has been detected

EXPLAINED

Minister chaired a two-hour meeting with senior government officials to review the public health preparedness and vaccination-related situation for Covid-19, where he was briefed about the omicron variant. The mutation has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a 'variant of concern'.

During the meeting, Modi asked officials to review plans for easing of international travel restrictions in light of the emerging new evidence. In addition to the relaxations announced Friday, India also eased visa restrictions — having resumed granting of tourist visas for those flying on chartered flights from October 15 and for other flights from November 15.

Is international travel being restricted by other nations?

Yes, a number of countries are restricting travel from south African countries including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Botswana, etc, in addition to curtailing travel from jurisdictions where the new variant has been detected.

Full report on www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

MoSon internet

New Delhi: Democratic countries need to join hands to think about creating safety, trust and accountability on the internet which has no boundaries, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Saturday at the first ever India Internet Governance Forum (IIGF).

MCL solar plant

Sambalpur: Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL) will set up a 50-MW solar power plant in Odisha's Sambalpur at a cost of Rs 301.92 crore as part of its goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2024. PTI

'Xiaomi to set up car plant in Beijing'

REUTERS
SHANGHAI, NOVEMBER 27

CHINESE SMARTPHONE giant Xiaomi Corp will build a plant that can produce 300,000 vehicles annually in Beijing for its electric vehicle unit, authorities in the capital said on Saturday.

The plant will be constructed in two phases and Xiaomi will also built its auto unit's headquarters, sales and research offices in the Beijing Economic and Technological Development Zone, the economic development agency Beijing E-Town said on its official WeChat account.

Black Friday draws US shoppers, but many go online

RICHA NAIDU & ARIANA McLYMORE
CHICAGO, NOVEMBER 27

BARGAIN HUNTERS ventured out in chilly weather to buy Christmas gifts on Black Friday only to discover that many US retailers offered smaller price markdowns this year amid tight supplies.

Covid fears and fewer "door-buster" sales thinned crowds the day after the US Thanksgiving holiday, which kicks off the year-end holiday shopping season.

On the same day, the World Health Organization named the newly identified omicron variant of the coronavirus as a "variant of concern," triggering worldwide alarm and a selloff in the US stock market.



People line up near a store on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, New York City, on Black Friday. Reuters

Stores on Black Friday had the lowest level of clearance goods for sale in five years or more, Cowen analysts said in a note.

Many shoppers chose to pick up merchandise curbside rather

than venturing inside stores. Black Friday retail sales are up 29.8 per cent versus 2020 through 3 p.m. ET, according to Mastercard SpendingPulse.

Consumers spent \$6.6 billion

up until 9 p.m. ET on Friday, according to Adobe Digital Economy Index, which expected total spending of between \$8.8 billion and \$9.2 billion for the day.

Walmart and Target stood to outperform other retailers in part because of their buy-online-pick-up-at-store services, Cowen said. Target added more than 18,000 "drive-up" parking spaces, more than doubling spots versus last year.

The company said its most popular Black Friday deals included \$219.99 for a KitchenAid professional stand mixer that regularly sells for \$429.99, and savings of up to \$60 on Apple Watches and AirPods.

Several retailers — including Walmart, Target and Best Buy — are expected to post lower fourth-

quarter profit margins because of tight inventory and higher costs for raw materials, freight and labor. "Even though the holiday season should be okay from a sales standpoint — because retailers are discounting less — the margins won't necessarily be higher because of inflation," said Forrester Research analyst Sucharita Kodali.

US consumers are entering the holiday season flush with cash thanks to a still-hefty pile of savings from multiple rounds of government pandemic relief and double-digit wage increases as businesses compete for workers. Yet retailers had lured shoppers to make holiday purchases as early as September, because the supply chain logjam has prevented them from quickly replenishing year-end merchandise. REUTERS

Paytm Q2 loss stretches to ₹473 crore

New Delhi: One 97 Communications, the parent company of fintech major Paytm, on Saturday posted a widening of consolidated loss to about Rs 473 crore during the quarter ended September, mainly on account of increase in payment processing charges.

Paytm had a loss of Rs 436.7 crore in the same quarter a year ago, according to an exchange filing. Its consolidated total income rose 49.6 per cent to Rs 1,086.4 crore during the quarter from Rs 663.9 crore in the corresponding period of FY21. Paytm's expense of payment processing charges rose 36 per cent to Rs 670 crore during the quarter. ENS, WITHPTI

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE

eye



POINT OF VIEW

With a Dot and a Dash

How the use of the telegram was of strategic interest for different power structures in the country



ARTS etc

Eenam-Pechi in Your Backyard

An animated short film presents a slice-of-life glimpse into characters who populate the afterlife in Malayalam folklore

Benita Fernando with Ankita Dwivedi Johri

STAND-UP comedian Munawar Faruqui's post on social media from the last fortnight goes something like this:

I come from Two Indias
1947
2014 #FreedomOfSpeech

Faruqui's joke, while alluding to the controversial statements made by actor Kangana Ranaut (who claimed that India actually got its freedom in 2014 when the Narendra Modi-led government came to power, and not in 1947), is modelled along the lines of yet another controversy — stand-up comedian Vir Das' Emmy-nominated monologue, *I Come from Two Indias*.

On November 15, Das, 42, posted a YouTube video that presented observations on India, some intended to expose the nation's hypocrisies and ironies, at a sold-out show at the Kennedy Centre, Washington, US. "I come from an India where we take pride in being vegetarians and yet run over the farmers who grow our vegetables" was part of this piece as were remarks on Bollywood, cricket, and the PM Cares fund.

The viral clip from the show lasted all of six minutes. As of this week, at least two persons associated with the BJP in Mumbai and Delhi have lodged police complaints against Das; the Madhya Pradesh home minister Narottam Mishra, also from the BJP, has disallowed Das' future performances in the state; and INC spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi tweeted that Das had generalised "the evils of a few individuals and vilified the nation as a

Comedians now have staggering reach and the potential for impact and that's making everyone nervous

Ravina Rawal
editor, *DeadAnt Co*

whole in front of the world".

Das is the latest in a long line of stand-up comedians and satirists who have been intimidated or arrested in recent years for hurting religious or national sentiments. In January this year, Faruqui, 28, was arrested at a venue in Indore even before he could perform his set, *Dongri to Nowhere*. The arrest came after a complaint from the son of a BJP MLA, who accused Faruqui of making jokes on Hindu deities and home minister Amit Shah. The alleged jokes, however, were not made at the venue, as per eyewitness accounts reported in news and research website *Article 14*. Faruqui spent over a month in jail.

"Someone or the other is targeted everyday on the internet now," says Faruqui, who started off with open mics in 2018 and has risen to nearly 1.5 million subscribers on YouTube recently. Earlier this month, organisers cancelled his events in Mumbai and Goa following threats of physical, emotional and financial harm. Faruqui says, "You say what you think is right and what you stand by. There are lots of people who follow you on public platforms. You have to take the responsibility that comes along with it."

Other comics have also faced backlash on grounds of "hurting" sentiments, religious or otherwise. By now, it's clear that political humorists come from two Indias — one, where you are thrown in jail for a joke and another, where you joke about your time in jail. In a country where biker groups and physiotherapists are offended by jokes, nationalists can't be far behind. Comedians prepare for a whole lot of things — awkward silences or an audience that is not in on the joke — but is an FIR also among them?

There have been several warnings in recent years about the shrinking space for freedom of expression in India, such as a steadily falling rank in the World Press Freedom Index. Speaking on this subject also has become a challenge, with observers often labelled as dissenters. Several well-known comedians chose not to comment for this story or retracted their comments, citing various reasons.

"We have artists like Kunal Kamra and Varun Grover, who have developed a strong voice in the space... But they know that it still comes with potential legal complications, threats of violence, people showing up at venues to shut down shows or vandalise the place, and even getting tossed in jail, as we saw earlier this year. Younger comedians are extra cautious. Few are willing to open themselves up to the increasing risks involved," says Ravina Rawal, editor, *DeadAnt Co*, an online publication that tracks India's comedy culture.

Stand-up comedy in India is currently a well-defined genre, distinct from film com-



ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

NO LAUGHING MATTER

Stand-up comedians in India prepare for a lot of things — awkward silences or an audience that is not in on the joke. But, over the last decade, amid increasing instances of fragile egos and easily-hurt sentiments, is an FIR also among them?

edy and YouTubers, but just over a decade old. From around 2017 onwards, Rawal recounts, a lot of comedians were venturing into the space of political satire, and it looked like it could evolve into a solid sub-genre with many exciting voices. Aisi Taisi Democracy (ATD), Das's *News on the Loose*, AIB's *On-Air With AIB*, were among them. Audiences also got used to laughing at things they haven't had the nerve to say out loud themselves. "But things started getting messy quickly. I think it comes from the realisation that comedians now have staggering reach and the potential for impact — on young voters, for instance — and that's making everyone nervous," she says.

When Mumbai-based comic Azeem Banatwalla, 32, calls himself a "traditional Muslim man", the audience scoffs, knowing well that the comedian is by no means one. In July 2020, Banatwalla suspended his Twitter

account and later issued an apology for tweets from many years ago. He stated that he was subjected to the "vilest of Islamophobic abuse". Over email, Banatwalla tells us that he has spent most of his career making jokes about the culture he was born and brought up in. There are jokes about the stereotype of Muslims being terrorists, but that seems forgotten because the focus is always on perceived slights against "Hindu culture". People with political agendas attack smaller comics and venues — soft targets, essentially — to showcase themselves to their political peers, he adds. Banatwalla says that it is easy for a lot of comics, especially the newer ones, to joke about the right wing. "It's an easy laugh because, let's face it, nobody in the government exactly covers themselves in glory," he says.

Banatwalla's apology was one of the many posted online around the same time in 2020.

Rohan Joshi, Sahil Shah and Sapan Verma (also members of East India Company), and Aadar Malik were among them. The spate of apologies rose in the aftermath of a joke on misinformation surrounding a proposed Shivaji statue in the Arabian Sea. Agrima Joshua, the stand-up comedian who had made the joke, was threatened by a Hindu activist with legal action if found guilty of insulting a state and national icon; she was viciously trolled online and subjected to rape threats.

Practising for the last five years, Joshua, 31, has often made digs on Indian politics, but doesn't identify herself as a political humorist. In her first and only video, "UP is the Texas of India", Joshua jokes about life in Uttar Pradesh, as both a citizen and a Christian. She unlisted the video that also mentions the Shivaji statue after threats to her life. "If you profile these men attacking comedians, women and

artistes, you'll learn they are the same people who made an issue out of (Pakistani actor) Fawad Khan performing in India. There's a lot to unpack here — fragile masculinity and the need to protect women or our culture, along with the panic over interfaith and inter-caste relationships," she says.

Stand-up comedian Shyam Rangeela, 26, says that sometimes his family asks him to "go easy" on his content. Earlier this year, when Rangeela was visiting his village in Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan, he got into a discussion with his friends regarding the petrol price crossing the Rs 100 mark. "As I expressed my concern, most of them said *Modiji har kaam soch samajh kar kartein hain* (The PM gives a lot of thought to all his deci-

sions). The hike in fuel prices must be to deal with the pandemic-induced slump in the economy," recalls Rangeela, who rose to fame mimicking the Prime Minister. It gave him an idea for a new act. He immediately searched for the nearest petrol pump and got verbal permission from the owner and agreed to share the video with him, he says. The next day, however, moments after he had uploaded the two-minute parody video in the Prime Minister's voice on his YouTube channel, he got a call from the owner, informing him that he was filing an FIR against him.

Rangeela uploaded another video, "Petrolwala crime", explaining why he decided to not take down the February 16 act. It has got close to 30 lakh views. "If I had taken down the video, then it would have been better to just give up doing comedy. Even I support PM Modi, but that does not mean that I cannot disagree with him," says Rangeela, but admits that decisions such as these have come at a cost. In 2017, the comedian was allegedly told on a reality TV show, on which he was a contestant, to not mimic either Modi or Rahul Gandhi. He was eventually eliminated from it.

Political satirist and member of ATD, Sanjay Rajoura, 49, says his scripts are tailored for his audiences and he relies mostly on everyday observations for inspiration. "Today there is an audience for stand-up comedy even in small towns, where people respond to jokes on issues related to daily life. In urban centres, people are largely ignorant," he smiles, adding, "But jokes on government's criticism work in all centres. Everyone relates to it."

Rajoura and ATD had an FIR registered against them following a show in Shillong in 2019 titled *Science ki honour killing*, but, over the years, he says, only "those who identify

Venues are brick-and-mortar spaces. When a comic is hard to find, the venue is an easier target

Balraj Singh Ghai
owner, *The Habitat*, Mumbai

with our content come to our shows" and so the backlash has reduced. "Say if there are 2,000 people in the audience, then only 4-5 people will disagree with us... We also don't upload most of our shows, only small clips," he says.

Many believe that political humorists are inherently anti-establishment. Karthik Kumar, who runs *Evam Standup Tamasha* in Chennai, says that comedy takes pot-shots at the establishment, that they wouldn't take labels like right-wing or left. "We really don't care who's in power. We are the ones who call the emperor naked and if we are not allowed to do that, there is a great loss..." There are comedians whose material aren't anti-establishment, as much as just pointing out little absurdities in political leadership or the social fabric. It may be a small part of a larger narrative on, say relationships and sex, but attacks against them are focused on that stray line or two.

In 2017, 34-year-old comedian Sourav Ghosh's joke on how airports in Mumbai were named after Shivaji became the basis for an attack from Maharashtra Navnirman Sena's (MNS) supporters. When Ghosh responded to comments on his video, MNS supporters grew more enraged and Ghosh was forced to issue a statement. The incident came in the way of getting shows in the city, too. "I was never the kind of comedian who had sold-out shows. But even the controversy did not help me sell tickets," he says with a laugh. Last year, Ghosh left Mumbai for good due to pandemic-related reasons. He opened his own comedy venue, *Topcat Retired Comedy Club* in Kolkata, with the intention of building the scene in his city. "Comedians have to find a way that works for them because attackers will always find a way. Currently, the whole comedy scene in India is a tad bit defensive," he says.

In Mumbai, *The Habitat*, currently the most popular venue for comedy events, is no stranger to controversies. Joshua's attackers had vandalised the venue when she had performed her piece; a mob had gathered outside the venue in retaliation to Ghosh's show, and Balraj Singh Ghai, its owner, was asked by the police to shut the venue for a week. Ghai says, "Venues are brick-and-mortar spaces. When a comic is hard to find, the venue is an easier target." As of this year, Ghai has started a light screening of scripts being performed at the venue and is more vigilant about what parts of the show make it to digital platforms.

In one of Faruqui's videos, *Ghost Story*, *The Habitat's* logo gleams, dented in a corner from the time the attackers came to the venue in July 2020. "I think we are going to let that be there. It's like Leopold Cafe has its bullet marks [from the 26/11 terror attacks]. Let people know what we are dealing with," says Ghai.



DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

Don't Throw a Hissy Fit

Being fussy about food can be tricky but it has led to the evolution of an admirable biodiversity

SOME ANIMALS and even plants are real prima-donnas when it comes to what they eat and where they live and what the climate should be like if they are to survive. At the other extreme are those which don't really give a damn: they'd try anything, adapt to any environment and tolerate hideous living conditions. Scientists have divided them into "specialists" and "generalists". Of course, there are many middle-of-the-roads that slot between these two extremes, but let's meet a few of the real fussy eaters and few of who are willing to put just about anything into their mouths and doss down anywhere.

Anyone who has ever tried to rear caterpillars in the hope of them eventually turning into chrysalises and then butterflies will know that the caterpillars will binge like gluttons, but only on their particular brand of food. Offer them something else and they will rather starve to death than take a nibble. There are many other such fussy eaters in nature — by and large, herbivores tend to be specialists though there are many who break convention.

Among the fussiest is the giant panda — who wants bamboo for breakfast, lunch and dinner and any snacks in between, and who gets 95 per cent of its intake from bamboo. Another famous example is Australia's koala, which has a thing for eucalyptus leaves and nothing else. Eucalyptus leaves are poisonous and shunned by all other herbivores except the koala, whose tummy does not get upset by them, and so it has the whole eucalyptus buffet all to itself, carving an ecological niche for itself.

Now eucalyptus leaves would probably not appreciate being eaten — even if it were by a cuddly animal — and, so, would be working towards strengthening its poisons, just as the koala would be working at negating even this, thus setting off a kind of arms race between the two. This, in fact, is how new species evolve — as they get more and more specialised in order to survive. While carnivores generally tend to help themselves to any kind of meat (including rotting), the fastidious Canadian lynx will only want snowshoe hares to be served at its table.



RANJIT LAL

EAT LIKE A BIRD

For eclectic eaters like gulls, anything from fish to namkeen goes

Of course, there is a dangerous downside to this: Take away the bamboo and where would that leave the giant panda? Well on the road to extinction. If eucalyptus were to suddenly die out, so would the koala. They simply would not have enough time to adjust to another diet. That's why many zoos have hell of a problem feeding stubborn exotic creatures who demand designer food and nothing else. Fussy eaters will need larger territories than non-fussy eaters, because only so much of their favorite food can grow in a particular patch. But it's a frightening dependency and is not confined only to *khana-peena!*

Many species of plants depend on particular species of insects to pollinate them. The grand banyan tree — a keystone species in the tropical forest — has its own species of wasp, less than one millimetre long, which does this job. If this wasp were to go extinct (say by reckless use of pesticides), the grand banyan would fall and in doing so, eventually bring the entire forest down with it.

Being fussy can be dangerous but it has led to the evolution of our bewildering and astonishing biodiversity, with enough space for all.

At the other end of the spectrum are the "generalists". These would include such lovelies as cockroaches, rats, goats, horseshoe crabs and, of course, ourselves. Our kind can eat anything, live anywhere in any kind of climate — we "adjust". Horseshoe crabs, which evolved some 360 million years ago, have an extensive variety in their diet and can tolerate a wide range of water temperature, not to mention low oxygen levels, too. Some specialists also seem to be changing their colour: gulls were supposed to be sea-going fish-eaters but now throng garbage dumps and fight over offerings of *namkeen*. Bears in Alaska, traditionally living off salmon, berries, roots and honey have now discovered the joys of fast food in suburban garbage bins especially since their wild territories are increasingly encroached upon. And some "generalists" like ourselves have specialised too! The Inuit can live virtually only on meat, fish and blubber with a little seaweed and berries on the side.

Thanks to their eclectic nature, generalists tend to have larger populations than specialists and are less in danger of going extinct. Overpopulation is more their problem. I guess the best compromise — and means of survival — would be not to throw a hissy fit if your favourite dish were not available — but accept what is with good grace.

History in Dots and Dashes

In its time, the telegram was a remarkable feat of communication that met more than just routine needs

Jagannath Srinivasan

THE GRANDEUR of the Rashtrapati Bhavan makes it easy to overlook the fact that it is an office too, and quite a busy one at that. Its records, reaching back to colonial times, afford a glimpse into the evolution of the government in India. And occasionally, the telegram peeks out from notes and letters, bearing testimony to its once pivotal role in moving the wheels of the government.

Governments are command and control structures and colonial governments, more so. The advent of the electric telegraph allowed its nerve centre, the governor general, to overcome the limitations imposed by physical modes of communication, cutting down to hours what took days to communicate. William O'Shaughnessy, who joined the East India Company (EIC) army as a surgeon in 1833, had experimented with the telegraph in Bengal but it needed Lord Dalhousie to make the parsimonious Court of Directors of the East India Company — reluctant imperialists but active colonialists who were always averse to incurring any expenditure in the usual course — to approve the introduction of the electric telegraph in India. Dalhousie understood the criticality of communications for the empire he was extending and commissioned O'Shaughnessy to work on the telegraph.

From its beginning in Diamond Harbour in 1851, the telegraph grew like a chain, syncing with the military needs of the empire. It moved from Calcutta to Lucknow to Attock, connecting the newly acquired territories. Agra was linked to Bombay and from there to Madras. The transformation of the communication system was electrifying. For instance, a request for troops for the Crimean War (1853-56), which was received in Bombay by ship, was transmitted to Calcutta in six hours. It would have taken at least a week but for the telegraph.

The EIC was to better appreciate the significance of the telegraph during the Indian Rebellion of 1857, when an official noted that "Under providence, the electric telegraph saved us". Freedom fighters, on the other hand, felt they were "strangled by that damned wire".

Telegraphic information, however, didn't always give a complete picture. "All well in Oude," one of the first messages received by Lord Canning when he became governor gen-



COURTESY: RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN PHOTO ARCHIVES

eral in 1856, optimistically missed the powder keg of 1857 lurking around the corner — to quote the sender General Outram somewhat out of context.

After the Uprising, connectivity between India and England was established, initially by overland telegraph across the Ottoman Empire and Europe and, later, by the under-sea cable to the Suez. This telegraphic connection shifted the nerve centre of the empire to England. Students of history would recall that, before the Battle of Plassey, Robert Clive had been ordered to return to Madras. His reply refusing to do so took a month to reach England, by which time he had put the Company on the path to empire building. The telegraph in Clive's time would definitely have proved providential for India!

Telegrams soon became an integral part of government communications. They would cover the routine and the strategic — from the appointment of Major Strachey as the comptroller of the Viceroys Household in 1903 to the secretary of state for India's queries on the impact of the Rowlett Act, 1919, and questions on whether the Andaman and Nicobar islands should remain with free India. Lord Dufferin in 1887 had got approval for the creation of the Intelligence Bureau through a telegram from the secretary of state for India. Churchill's infamously peevish remarks during Mahatma Gandhi's fast in 1943, asking the viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, to confirm if Gandhi took glucose in his water when he fasted, and

AT SHORT NOTICE

Former President Rajendra Prasad during the Telegraph Centenary in 1953

Linlithgow calling Gandhi the "world's most successful humbug" were conveyed through telegraphic dots and dashes.

Unlike letters, telegrams needed to be transcribed and transmitted by signallers, who had to perform read the message. To ensure secrecy, the use of the cypher was common, which in the early days of the telegraph was a source of complaints, as the coded messages weren't comprehensible to the signallers. For a colonial government, dealing with a growing nationalist movement (whose leaders were, ironically, major users of the public telegraph), coding was sacrosanct, with the Cypher Rules being strictly followed. A note from 1928 underlines how serious the secrecy of communications was considered. HG Haig, secretary to the Home Department, remarked on a reply from George Cunningham, private secretary to the viceroy (PSV), Lord Irwin, "PSV should not have replied *en clair* to a telegram sent to him in cypher."

This sin aside, the PSV's office was quite efficient in getting the draft telegrams received from various departments every day approved by the viceroy, encoding and despatching them. Cunningham, however, records the difficulties faced while the viceroy was in Shimla or on tour with his "cypher clerks being always busy". The viceroy being the fulcrum of government and telegrams having become the main mode of communicating the urgent business of governance, Cunningham initiated the Home Department to issue an order in 1930, detailing a procedure to reduce the burden on the PSV's office while on tour or in Shimla.

The flow of information was also aided by news agencies. In the 1860s, Reuters had opened offices in Bombay and Calcutta, and regularly supplied news to the India Office in

London. It was a Reuters cable, received at 10am on December 23, 1912, which informed the India Office of the attack on Lord Hardinge. The official telegram reporting the occurrence in detail, with a medical report on the viceroy's condition, reached the India Office only at 3.30pm. As is required with all government communications, the competent authority (in this case the Viceroy's Council) had to approve the draft of the telegram. Since the Delhi Durbar had continued in spite of the attack, this approval got delayed.

Telegrams received in the same office after Independence would have caused an imperialist like Dalhousie to wince — especially when Hungarian Prime Minister István Dobi's telegram to India's first President, Rajendra Prasad, on December 22, 1961, said that the liberation of Goa gave encouragement to people still languishing under colonial slavery elsewhere, or when Nigerian Prime Minister Abubakar Balewa's telegram to former president S Radhakrishnan lamented Jawaharlal Nehru's demise and noted how his wise counsel would be missed in international affairs, or the time Chairman Mao, who founded Communist China, congratulated India on becoming a republic.

After playing a prominent role in weaving Indian history for over a century, the telegraph was superseded by other modes of communication. The Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum symbolically preserves its legacy in a facsimile copy of the telegram from US President Harry S Truman to Rajendra Prasad on January 26, 1950, greeting him on India becoming a republic — an ode to a technological marvel of a bygone era.

Jagannath Srinivasan is Officer on Special Duty with the President's Secretariat



Living History

AN INDIAN EXPRESS COLLABORATION WITH THE RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN

Finding Home in Us

When we are mindful and content, we feel at home wherever we are

SLICE OF LIFE



Suvir Saran

Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

HOLIDAYS LIKE Diwali, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Passover and Eid teach us about our place in this world. They also educate us about the importance of being at home in our inner sanctum. But are we paying attention to the cues they offer? Do we care? Too many of us live aimlessly, going from one festival to another, from one social high to another, until we crash and are in deep despair.

One can happily be alone and not be lonely. Being alone is a physical state we choose. We decide to remove ourselves from the other to do something that's important to us. It is right for us, meaningful to us. But being lonely is an emotional state in which we

are disconnected or removed from others. We feel empty, afraid and broken.

When we are alone, we can reflect, rest, travel, create, contemplate. We are choosing a freedom that allows us to be apart from others and not feel lonely. We haven't been forced into being disconnected to people we might choose to be with. We have separated ourselves by our own volition. But when we are lonely, we feel unloved, abandoned and desolate. We feel scared, left out, and forgotten.

When we experience loneliness, we actually have a negative sense of self. But when we choose to be alone, we often take that time of isolation to grow, to go back into ourselves. Then, when we are with others, we are better versions of ourselves.

We can live, love, work and discover, all while being alone and totally at peace with ourselves and the world. But when we are lonely, we feel removed from those we respect and love, even if we are in the same room, and it causes us to languish in a state of despair and desolation.

A busy life doesn't always mean a life that is comfortable with itself or at peace with the world, Name, fame and success get us notoriety, access and material comforts. But a life well lived is a life lived with peace of mind, without self-doubt, and in harmony with one's inner self. It is a long road getting to our inner sanctum where we are never lonely. It is in this home of our soul that we find the equipoise that doesn't require external validation or connection and that is happily lost in acquainting itself to its own self. It is in this sanctum sanctorum of consciousness that we find freedom from those hankerings and distractions that can make us broken when all seems perfectly functional in our lives on the surface.

Who wants to think of one's conscience



SUVIR SARAN

Home is deep inside us, not grounded in geography; rather, it is a connection between mind and soul. If we have that connection working, and are feeding our soul with the nourishment of mindfulness, then we are at home and at peace with self

and soul-health when the going is good? No one! Troglodytic life and living is nothing like what we see depicted as desirous or sexy on social media or the idiot box. Movies and books that truly help the self never make it to bestseller lists and hardly get oxygen on the stage of hugely celebrated mindless living and ruthless capitalist profiteering. The high one gets when chasing lucrative success is unmatched and puts all other comforts in its shadow where mindfulness is eaten away by the sparkle and shimmer that is soulless indulgence and popularity.

After we have experienced all the riches and material discoveries of the world, after travels across the planet to beaches, valleys, mountains and plains, after retreats or in the hustle and bustle of human madness, we have to retire to our inner sanctum alone and feel in love with the self and loved back by

the self. Without this self-love and self-appreciation, we are truly alone even when not lonely.

I learnt the difference between lonely and alone after I started travelling across the US for book tours and cooking demos, for lectures and classes, for appearances and interviews. I was forever on stage. I was seeing the world and the world was seeing me. I was never alone; I was endlessly lonely.

Then one day, my body's total collapse took me to living in India. Living mindfully, I learned to be alone, find value in who I was, appreciate my body's cues, understand my mind's comfort, feed my soul's fulfillment. More importantly, I realised that I'm just as happy being alone as in the company of a gazillion.

I found myself more of myself, reflective, smiling with no one around me at all, singing to myself, writing to free my mind, dancing all alone. I realised I had come home to myself, to my inner sanctum. I had made peace with my body, within my spiritual home, my inner sanctum.

Home is deep inside us, not grounded in geography. Rather, it is a connection between the mind and the soul. If we have that connection working and are feeding our soul with the nourishment of mindfulness, then we are at home and at peace with self, and at peace wherever we are.

So many of us are so lost in the material that we are unaware of the needs of our own mind and soul. We are so lost in the bodily and physical, that we could be living lavishly, eating opulently, travelling like kings and dressing like fashionistas and yet have vacant, homeless eyes and broken hearts and restless minds. It doesn't have to be this way.

When the circuitry between our brain and our soul works, it is then that we live with a social-emotional connect that is at once purposeful and fulfilling. When mindfully happy and satisfied, we feel at home wherever we are, and even when all alone.

We come into this world alone, and it is alone that we leave it. The sooner we appreciate this fact, the sooner we can start making a more meaningful contribution to the world, and also be in harmony with self.

Solidarity in a Polarised World

How we can create spaces for discussing transgressions, weave in accountability and work towards a collective transformation



For me, forgiveness and compassion are always linked: How do we hold people accountable for wrongdoing and yet at the same time remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed?

bell hooks, *Black feminist writer*



IMAGINE
BY SHELJA SEN

JOLADKI izzat layak hoti he, hum uski izzat karte hein. Jo izzat layak na ho, uski hum izzat nahi karte. (We respect a girl who deserves it and not the ones who don't). I turned around and saw a schoolboy, possibly 15 years of age, shouting out these words to a young girl running by in shorts and a T-shirt. The girl immediately slowed down and started walking self-consciously, head bent down, and the boy surrounded by his friends began laughing, back-slapping with "Bilkul, bilkul!"

Fast forward to another time in the same park, where I see two young women, full of glee and laughter, playing badminton in *hijabs*. Suddenly, a crowd of boys, possibly 13 to 15 years of age, jostle their way through as they return home from evening school. They come close to the girls, snigger and point fingers at them. The girls immediately wrap up their play and scuttle away, leaving the boys to do a victory dance — thumping their chests, stamping on the ground, arms stretched out with loud chortling. What struck me as ironic is that they were wearing school uniforms — white-collared shirts, ties, trousers — and making fun of young women playing badminton in *hijabs*, a garment that is very much part of our country's history and cultural traditions. They were also oblivious to the colonial references of their own attire.

These incidents of intersectional transgressions have made me question: What are the different scenarios that could have played out?

I could have dismissed these antics as "boys will be boys," the misogyny or Islamophobia might have become invisible and the injustice of it completely obscured. I could have taken to shouting and shaming the boys or even lectured the girls on feminism and how we have to stand our ground, shoving the responsibility of resistance on to them. I could have walked to the neighbourhood school, reported to the authorities, where the boys would have been duly punished, starting another cycle of oppression. Would any of these have helped at all? Not really, as they might have got chastised, but in many ways, I might have worsened the situation for the girls, when the jeers and abuses would be even louder and more vengeful the next time. The only person who might have ended up feeling good about it is me as I would march home after taking a moral grandstand.

Talking about metaphors, this daily play of power in the park is a reflection of what is happening on social media. At every hint of a transgression, there is a knee-jerk outrage, and the wrongdoers are drummed out for public humiliation. Lines are drawn in the sand, sides taken and pushed to polarised positions. Issues that are so nuanced and complex are presented in binaries of black and white. We locate the problem in individuals rather than see it as a reflection of a society that is steeped in gender inequality, casteism, Islamophobia and violence. Shaming might make us feel good about ourselves, but what does it do to dismantle generations of oppression?

FEMINIST ETHICS IS A PRIVILEGE AND NOT A BADGE OF HONOUR

The schoolboys I ran into at the park have grown up in a society where a girl's worth and

accountability is measured in terms of culturally sanctioned, stringent ideas of clothing, body language, or religion, where every girl is sorted into good/bad, *layak/na-layak* boxes, and the boys stuck in a maze of cultural clichés of narrow masculinity. If you take that lens, then their actions in the park make perfect sense. Rather than judging them, it becomes my responsibility not to shame them but to ask myself, what am I doing to perpetuate this injustice? If I am committed to feminist ethics and social justice, does it give me the right to automatically rubbish people who might not have had that privilege? How can I meet them in a way that does not lead to polarisation and further entrenchment?

DANGER OF VIRTUE SIGNALING

So what am I saying here? *Sab chalta hai?* Not at all. This is not about obscuring issues of social justice but about reflecting on how the typical virtue signalling in social media — "I am right and you are wrong," is very much like the victory dance of the schoolboys in the park. It ends up othering the problem as if it is out there and we do not have anything to do with it. There is no "us" and "them" here. We all carry scarred memories of the boys' similar metaphorical chest-thumping on Instagram in May 2020 (the Bois Locker Room controversy), which led to such a massive public outrage and, ultimately, tragedy.

Who did this social media lynching really help? Did it enable in restoring justice or just sow seeds of intense shame with virtue signalling in the guise of social justice — instant high, minimal healing, maximum damage.

GENDER POLITICS AND ACTIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

The social justice movement can move forward when we instate gender and active

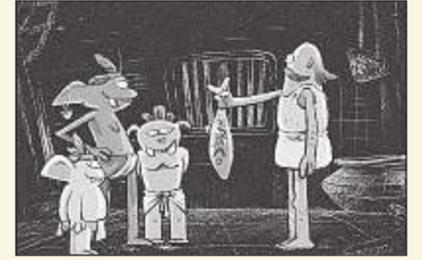
accountability at the core of school and college curriculum. There was an incident in a school when some Class IX girls took a stand on how the boys in the class commented on their bodies. The wise teacher decided to bring the conversation to the class circle time and built a safe space for girls to talk openly about the humiliation they had to face every day. The teacher later shared with me that what was remarkable was that despite the intensity and pain, there was no blame, and the boys apologised. Together, they started talking about what they could do to make the class a safer and more respectful space for the girls and what steps could be taken if there was a transgression. This conversation created ripples of resistance as the girls were called to speak in the school assembly, and other classes started having conversations on gender politics and diversity, too.

What if this could happen throughout their school life rather than just a one-off class — where issues of gender, sexuality, consent, disability, body types, caste, religion could be discussed in safe spaces without judgement or shaming? How will it be to inform our young people to question power and patriarchy? How would it make this world a safer place for all? How would it enable us to make spaces for discussing wrongdoings, weave in active accountability and solidarity?

I resonate deeply with these words by bell hooks, the Black feminist writer, "For me, forgiveness and compassion are always linked: how do we hold people accountable for wrongdoing and yet at the same time remain in touch with their humanity enough to believe in their capacity to be transformed?"

Shelja Sen is a narrative therapist, writer, co-founder, Children First. In this column, she curates the know-how of the children and the youth she works with. She can be reached at shelja.sen@childrenfirstindia.com

Eenam-pechi in your Backyard



TALL TALES

A still from the animation *Kandittund!*

A Malayalam animation film presents a glimpse into characters who populate the afterlife

Shiny Varghese

IF YOU haven't seen it, do *Kandittund!* (Seen It!) by Mumbai-based Studio Eeksaurs is a Malayalam short film that has leaped over fences that caged animation in India, given us a personality-driven script that allows our imagination to climb outside the box and bursts the myth that without distribution channels, animation cannot be successful.

Kandittund! is inspired by the stories of 89-year-old PNK Panicker, who is sure that ghosts and ghouls surround us and claims to have seen them. He is introduced in the animation by his son, Suresh Eriyat, also the creative director of Studio Eeksaurs, as a "jolly, good fellow" who enjoys watching films and conjuring stories from what he sees on screen and retains from folklore.

We meet characters from the afterworld popular in the Kerala landscape — Eenam-pechi (a pangolin), who traps pregnant women; Aana Marutha, who wears iron chains as anklets and is a pretty harmless one-and-a-half-foot elephant creature; Arukola floats like a faceless shadow, while the six-foot tall Thendan is a deity, whom Panicker has only met once. There's the all-too-familiar Kuttichaathan, too, whom you can call upon to nip your enemies' happiness in the bud.

"I did the video recording on my phone camera four years ago, and wanted to turn it into a film, with real footage of my father and animation in the narration of the ghosts. But it didn't shape up. Adithi joined us two years ago. When she made my father's sketches, it was spot-on," says Eriyat. "The film loosely follows a documentary style. Many of these characters are known entities but here they have been reimagined visually."

The film by Adithi Krishnadas is the 24-year-old's ambition of bringing together her childhood love for cartoons and the craziness of Malayalam films. "For me, everything about *Kandittund!* was challenging, but that's what made it fun! For instance, for some of the scenes, I had to enact the actions before a mirror to see how the body moved and then put it back into animation," says Krishnadas, about the film that took nearly 18 months to complete.

While its black-and-white format was a radical decision, Krishnadas has done a fine job of balancing dialogues with 2D animation, says Eriyat. The film is an ode to his father, which comes with an endearing quality of story telling and a peculiar piquant humour. Krishnadas says, "When Panicker talks about the monsters, it's as if they are actually there. You see him surreptitiously watching the ghost behind a bush, for instance."

What also draws the viewer in is the music. With award-winning sound designer-editor Resul Pookutty and Vijayakumar on board, Eriyat and the team got live *chenda melam* (drum beat) recordings done in Thrippinithura (Kochi). They found Nandhu Kartha, who gave the film its original background score.

For more than two decades, Eriyat's studio has been winning awards for its ad films and animation, centered on local stories with a universal appeal. *Kandittund!* has already won over six international awards, including Japan's Satoshi Kon Award for excellence in animation.

A River Runs Through It

Paris-based Indian writer-filmmaker Vijay Singh on his three-decade-old first novel's recently released Hindi translation

Tanushree Ghosh

THIS NUMBER Does Not Exist, yeh number maujood nahin hai. The lines between Mangalesh Dabral's verse and reality blurred for Paris-based Indian writer-filmmaker Vijay Singh last year, around this time, when the Hindi poet was claimed by COVID-19. Having never met the poet-translator — who had translated poets/writers such as Pablo Neruda, Zbigniew Herbert, Bertolt Brecht and Arundhati Roy (*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness/Apar Khushi ka Charana*) — for Singh, 69, Dabral will remain only a telephone voice. One with whom he had deliberated on love, life, death, poetry, music, rivers, mountains.

Thirty-six years since Singh's debut French novel *Jaya Ganga: le Gange et son Double* (1985), reprints/translations (*Jaya Ganga: In Search of the River Goddess*, 1989), and a Hindi film (Smriti Mishra-starrer *Jaya Ganga*, 1996; available on Cinemasofindia.com), comes its first Hindi edition (by Rajkamal Prakashan) and an English reprint (Rupa Publications), released recently.

In the early 1980s, Singh, a PhD student at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, wrote a fact-cum-fiction article on the caste-class intersectionality of modern Indian society and polity, which was published in the French daily *Le Monde*. That landed him a book deal with Editions



With Ganga as a narrative thread and metaphor, Vijay Singh marries spirituality with surrealism

Ramsay publishers, to sketch a portrait of India, to be released at the 1985 Festival of India, an event that showcase the country's rich and diverse culture. An inexplicable fascination for the writings of the surrealism master André Breton (especially *Nadja*, 1928), and his exposition of "sensuality... love, chance encounters", had taken the Jawaharlal Nehru University history student

to Paris, where, he met Breton's artist-writer wife Elisa, and, through her, the intellectual *crème de la crème*.

The book commission prompted Singh to embark on a Ganga *yatra*, from Gomukh (Uttarakhand) to Gangasagar (Bay of Bengal), a pilgrimage-cum-romantic-odyssey, albeit without forethought. "Till today, there's no proper navigation till Allahabad (Prayagraj)," says Singh, who'd changed 200 boats, and travelled by Jeep, over six months.

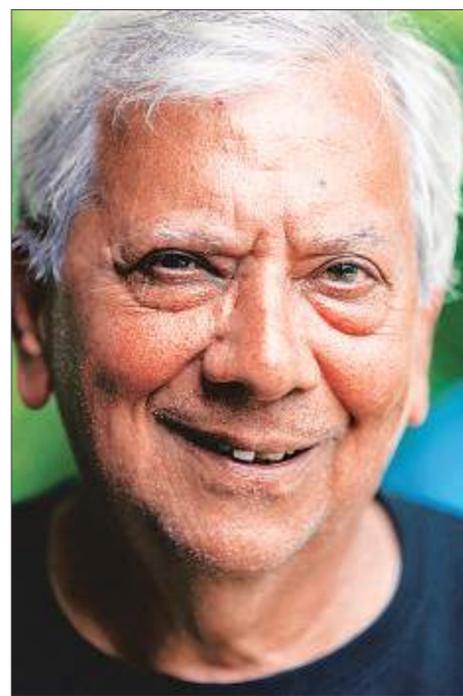
There was no directional help at hand. "No *sadhu*, no *guru* I met had done this journey," he says. "The book kind of ends in Benares; my journey from there on was less difficult. Ganga has been very kind to me."

The journey "showed (him) the Hindu underbelly the Western rationalist had consigned to the dustbin of history".

Among other things, he met people who couldn't pay Rs 150 to cremate the dead, so they tied it to a stone, and when the river receded, the bodies surfaced, and the dogs attacked — it isn't just a post-COVID reality.

With Ganga as a narrative thread and metaphor, Singh marries spirituality with surrealism. Fiction and poetry meets memory, travelogue, reportage, letter, history. *Jaya Ganga*, an instance of automatic writing, is an "empirically, realistically verifiable fictional search," he says.

The story follows the semi-autobio-



SANJAY ACHARYA

SOUL SEARCH
Vijay Singh; his book covers

graphical young Paris-based writer Nishant who, haunted by Jaya's memory (part-real, part-fantasy), undertakes a journey along the Ganga, and plans to write a book on it. On the river banks, he meets Zehra, a poetess/*nautch* girl, falls in love, rescues her from the brothel, instills hope of a better future

together. Nishant is a soul in limbo, torn between the past and the present, ephemerality and physicality. The elusive Jaya is the Bretonian "convulsive beauty" (like *Nadja*), in whose quest lies the author's search for self-identity.

Jaya Ganga, the book, carries backstories, intertextuality, and inadvertent humour, like a tea-shop conversation, where people authoritatively declare an atom bomb has killed thousands in Bhopal, a reference to the 1984 gas tragedy.

Dabral, a man of simple words, was alienated by some of the "baroque-like", "flowery prose" in *Jaya Ganga*. "Double adjectives", which work in English, "become a catastrophe in Hindi and French," says Singh, whose preference for reported speech met Dabral's emphasis on the dialogue format.

Dabral also steered away from using Urdu words (*rihais/residency, shaista/civilised*), which were used in the film. "He bequeathed the language back to the actors of history, whom I had distorted by writing in English and French," says Singh.

Dabral, whose poetry includes untranslatable English words, was not a linguistic puritan. In *Jaya Ganga*, the untranslatable lines were either deleted or, the *pathniye* (readable) ones, reimagined. For instance, in Nishant's letter, Dabral turned "You are the miracle by which leaves change colours/The magic by which Ganga wears her sparrow-veil" into "Pattiyon ke rang badalta chamatkar ho tum/Aik sammohan apsara ka devavtar ho tum".

After Dabral's immaculate rendering, Singh wants to get his *Whirlpool of Shadows* (1992) translated into Hindi. "Among all my books, this (*Jaya Ganga's* Hindi edition) is the first one which is the closest to the French edition."

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Tejbir Singh S/O Sh. Ganganam gupta, R/o H.No-C-37, Milan Garden, Near Seva Dham, Mandoli Extn., Delhi-110093, have changed my name to Tejbir Singh to Tejbir Singh Gupta for all purposes.
0040593661-2

I, MUDIT SINGH, R/o-90/960 CIVIL-LINE SAKET MEERUT UTTAR PRADESH-250001, have changed my Minor daughter name SARAH to SARAH SINGH.
0040593664-3

IFAZIL S/o MUZAHIR HUSAIN R/O H-621, SUNDER NAGRI, NAND NAGRI, DELHI-110093, declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as MUJAHIR HUSSAIN in my 10th Class Marksheets Roll No. 8641451. The actual name of my father is MUZAHIR HUSAIN which may be amended accordingly.
0040593691-1

I, Mehraj Vishal Manyal W/o Vishal Manyal R/O-15, Permandan Society, Mumbai have changed my name & address after divorce to Chanchal Madani D/o Mukesh Chand Madani R/O-C-17, Madhuban Kunj, Mahendru Enclave, GTK Road, New Delhi-110033 for all purposes.
0040593616-1

I, Niket S/O, Ratnesh Ranjan R/O B-197, UG-4 SHALIMAR GARDEN MAIN, SAHIBABAD GHAZIABAD 201005 (UTTAR PRADESH) have changed my name to Niket Kulshreshtha for all purposes.
0040593652-1

I, Rakesh Kumar S/o Mani Ram R/O Flat-no-7A, Block-P9,SR5 Residency, Sector-88, Faridabad, Haryana, have changed my name to Rakesh Kumar Vatsa.
0040593664-2

I, Umed Kumar Ghorawat alias Umaid Jain S/O Late Sh. Jwarimal Jain R/O B-18TF, Block-B, Old Qtrs., Ramesh Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110015 have changed my name to Umaid Jain for all purposes.
0040593605-5

I, ANEING DAULAGAPHU, D/O SIBU DAULAGAPHU, R/O D-996, 1ST-FLOOR, RAMPHAL CHOWK, SECTOR-7, DWARKA, DELHI-110075. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO ANEING DAULAGAFU.
0040593658-2

I, Bhoomika Preetika Zaveri D/O Ms. Preetika Chiman Lal Zaveri, R/O-185/7, Vimal Jagan Niwas, Front-side, G/F Block-No-7, Near-Kant Medical, Ramesh Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Yana Singh
0040593619-2

I, Yogendra Kumar Sharma s/o Om Prakash Sharma R/O 11/27, Nehru Park, Opp. Court, Bahadurgarh, Jhajjar, Pin-124507, Haryana, declare that I have changed my name from Yogendra Kumar to Yogendra Kumar Sharma and Yogendra Kumar and Yogendra Kumar Sharma both are same person.
0070763061-1

I, VIDHI JAIN, D/O MANISH JAIN DATE OF BIRTH -04/08/2003 R/O H-5/5 KRISHNA NAGAR DELHI-110051, have changed my name to MONISHKA JAIN.
0040593658-5

I, SONIA RANI ROSE W/O -MANOJ KUMAR R/O-694/GRD-FLOOR/BLOCK-M 16TH-AVENUE, GC-2 GH-03, GREATER-NOIDA EXTENSION, GAUR CITY, GAUTAMBUDHA-NAGAR U.P-201009, changed my name to SONIA RANI.
0040593658-7

I, Ranjeet Singh, s/o-santokh Singh, R/O-E-6/231, sultanpuri, delhi-110086, rakamal Singh, but my actual & correct name is Ranjeet Singh rakamal Singh & Ranjeet Singh both are same & one person. Have changed my name in voter-id rakamal Singh to Ranjeet Singh.
0040593664-10

I, Ankita Aggarwal W/o Shri Akshay Aggarwal, R/O B 42, Greater Kailash Part 1, New Delhi-110048, have changed the name of my minor daughter Anvi Aggarwal (aged 3 Years) and she shall hereafter be known as Ananya Aggarwal.
0040593639-1

I, Rajesh Kumar Singathia, S/o Attar Singh R/O Flat-No.8253 C8 Near Gate-No.8, Vasantkunj, South-West Delhi-110070, have changed my name, from Rajesh Kumar Singathia To Rajesh Kumar.
0040593664-4

I, Narender Bhardwaj, S/o-Late Sh. Tek Chandu Sharma R/O-3898/14, Kanhya-nagar, trinagar, delhi-110035, changed my name to Narinder Bhardwaj, S/o-late sh. Tek Chand bhardwaj.
40593658-8

I, Kirtna Subramanian, D/o Thirumalai Subramanian R/O-279F, Pocket-2, Mayur-Vihar Phase-1, Delhi-110091, have changed my name to Keertana Subramanian.
0040593658-6

I, Indrawati, W/O Late. Sant Ram R/O-86, Pachosa-Panna, Kair, New Delhi-110043, in my husband Service-Record name of mine has been wrongly written as Indrawati & DOB is-01/07/1950, but correct name is Indrawati & correct DOB-01/01/1950.
40593658-11

I, Anuj Kumar, S/o-Shri. Begraj, R/O-Gram & Post-Katha, Thanabaghat, Distt.-Bhagpat, U.P.-250609, do hereby solemnly inform that my permanent address which is written in my service record, but now my present address is R/O-Block, No.754, Gal. No.22, E-Block, Amar Colony, Gokal Pur, Delhi-110094.
40593658-9

I, Deepak Kumar, S/o-Mahesh Kumar, R/O-496A/1C, Street No.5, Mahavir Block, Bholanath Nagar, Shahdara Delhi-110032, have changed my name to Deepak Kumar.
0040593664-7

I, Charanjit Kaur Nagpal W/o-Tajinder Kumar Nagpal R/O-ED-128, Tagore Garden New Delhi-110027, have changed my name to Charanjit Nagpal.
0040593664-9

I, Anil Chait, S/o Raja Lal Chait, R/O-C-34, Rosewood-City, Sector-49, Gurugram (Haryana)-122018, have changed my name to Anil Chandra Chait, for all purposes.
0040593658-1

I, Vikesh Singh S/o Ajab Narain Singh R/O Flat No. 704, DG-02, Devika Gold Homz, Sector-1, Greater Noida West U.P. have changed my name to Vikesh Kumar Singh for all future purposes.
0070763089-1

I, Tarannum Praveen D/o Mohammad Anwar Khan R/O Hno-C-6 1B-Block, Palika Enclave South Moti Bagh, Delhi-110021, declare that name of my mother has been wrongly written as Razia Khan in my 10th and 12th Class Marksheet and Certificate. The actual name of my mother is Razia Begum, which may be amended accordingly.
0070763087-1

I, Saroj Devi W/o Swaran Lal R/O-48, Deep-Enclave, Vikas Nagar, New Delhi-110059 have changed my name to Asha Rani.
0040593664-5

I, SATENDRA YADAV S/O-DIPITI SINGH YADAV, R/O E-6/124, SANGAM-VIHAR PUSHP-VIHAR P.O-DELHI-110062, have changed my name to SATENDRA SINGH YADAV.
0040593658-4

I, Nisha Nehra D/o Inder R/O Vill-Bhudka, Dist-Gurugram, Teh-Manesar, PO-Sidhravli have changed my name to Nisha for all purposes.
0040593627-1

I, Manish Mehta S/o Darshan Lal Mehta R/O-B-108, Motia-Khan, Pahar Ganj, N.D-55, I have Changed My Name Manish to Manish Mehta, Manish and Manish Mehta is same Person.
0040593619-1

I, Rajnish Kumar Kohli S/O-Raj Kumar Kohli R/O-285, Street, No.4, Sri-Nagar, Shakur Basti, Delhi Changed Name To Rajnish Kohli.
0040593658-3

I, Lakhvir Singh Hanspal s/o Gurdial Singh R/O D-98, Sudershan Park, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Lakhvir Singh, for all purposes.
0040593617-1

I, Huma Tabassum W/o Nadeem Ahmed R/O-A-48, Vivek Vihar PH-2, Delhi-95 have changed my name to Huma Ahmed permanently.
0070763097-1

I, Hemant Kumar S/o Damber Singh R/O-C-74/10, Vijay Vihar, Phase-II, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Hemant Thakur.
0040593664-1

LOST & FOUND
I, Lakshay Gupta S/O Sh. Sushil Kumar Gupta R/O E-1/2, Old 12, Khadra No. 23/1/L, 24/1, E-Block, 40 Foota Road, Bharat Vihar, Begumpur, North West Delhi-110086 do hereby solemnly inform that I have lost my Original College ID Card & First Semester Marksheet of Diploma in Mechanical Engineering issued by Board of Technical Education Delhi & Roll No-1804131021 from Guru Nanak Dev Institute of Technology, Rohini. If found please contact Mr Lakshay # 9310742630.
0040593438-2

PROPERTY FOR SALE
S-168, Panchshilla Park, 516 Yds, built-up-2700 Sft. Basement & Ground Floor with 1/2 Terrace, East Facing, 2 Car Parking @ 14cr. # Cont.-paramjitpanama@gmail.com
0040593538-1

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Michael Vaughan has apologised "for the hurt" that whistleblower Azeem Rafiq experienced but again denied making racist comments while at Yorkshire. In a BBC interview shown Saturday, Vaughan was asked if he ever made any racist comments during his time at Yorkshire. He replied: "No I didn't, no."

BRIEFLY

Sindhu, Satwik-Chirag lose in Indonesia Open semis

Bali: Ace Indian shuttler P V Sindhu's impressive campaign at the Indonesia Open came to an end after she lost her hard-fought semifinal to former world champion Ratchanok Intanon, here on Saturday. Third seed Sindhu, a two-time Olympic medalist, lost 21-15 9-21 14-21 to world number eight and second seeded Ratchanok in 54 minutes for her third semifinal finish on the trot. The 26-year-old Sindhu had made it to the last four in Indonesia Masters last week and also at the French Open in October. World number 11 men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, seeded sixth, lost excited the Super 1000 tournament after a 16-21 18-21 defeat to top seeded Indonesian combination of Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo in the semifinals. It was 10th straight defeat for the Indian pair against the world number one pair, a two-time former All England Open champions and reigning Asian Games gold medalist. **PTI**

ICC calls off Women's World Cup Qualifier

Dubai: The ICC on Saturday called off an ongoing qualifier for next year's Women's ODI World Cup in Harare following the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant in the African region, paving the way for Pakistan, West Indies and Bangladesh to make the cut on the basis of rankings. Travel restrictions have been introduced from a number of African countries after detection of the new variant in South Africa stoked fears around the world. The ICC said the decision to stop the event was based on its concerns about how the participating teams would head back in the wake of Omicron variant's rise. The decision was taken during the preliminary league phase of the nine-team tournament, that was to decide the final three qualifiers for the World Cup 2022, to be played in New Zealand, as well as two additional teams for the next cycle of the ICC Women's Championship. "The qualifiers will now be decided according to the team rankings as detailed in the tournament playing conditions. Therefore, Bangladesh, Pakistan and the West Indies will now progress to the event in New Zealand," said the ICC. **PTI**

Gone in 11 minutes: ATK Mohun Bagan crush SC East Bengal

Fatorda: ATK Mohun Bagan crushed arch-rivals SC East Bengal 3-0 in the much-anticipated season's first derby of the Indian Super League at Tilak Maidan here on Saturday. In a scintillating display, ATK Mohun Bagan scored through Roy Krishna (12th minute), Manvir Singh (14th) and Liston Colaco (23rd) as they did not allow SCEB the breathing space to make it three out of three in their ISL exchanges. After a quiet start, Fijian star marksman Krishna connected a perfect cross from Pritam Kotal to net the derby's opening goal. Singh was quick to double the strike with a thunderbolt strike within two minutes. Colaco capitalised on a goalkeeping bloomer from Bhattacharja to make it 3-0. **PTI**

India find Axar-factor

Left-arm spinner's 5 for 62 on Day 3 proves vital in India taking a 49-run first innings lead

SANDIPG
KANPUR, NOVEMBER 27

THERE ARE days where it pays to hold the line, not panic and just wait. If India were fretful on the second day, they poured in an incredible amount of attrition and patience to reclaim the advantage on the third day, bowling out New Zealand for 296, when they looked destined to erase India's first-innings total of 345.

For 66.1 overs and five hours, as New Zealand's openers, Will Young and Tom Latham welded discipline to technique and temperament, thwarting India at every turn, nothing seemed to work or happen.

The strip was tormentingly sluggish, so much so some of the close-in fielders were kneeling and not crouching, edges agonisingly evading the fielders, and reviews were being misjudged. India could have easily wilted, but they laboured on, masking their frustrations, sustaining their energy and sound levels, blocking runs tigerishly, probing tight lines and lengths, barely gifting freebies and shuffling their strategies.

Perhaps, a comeback fashioned in the mould of their new coach Rahul Dravid's ideals. One built on sweat and blood.

Then late in the first session, patience brought its dividends, as Ravi Ashwin terminated Will Young and Umesh Yadav took out Kane Williamson. Then in the second, they bolted the stable door, dislodged the obdurate Tom Latham and skinned through the middle order. At the end of an engrossing, if old-fashioned, day of cricket in the subcontinent, New Zealand, who had begun their innings so promisingly, walked off gloomily, shrugging their heads and pondering how they squandered the advantage, even as India left the field on a pleased note, glowing in the sweat of their toil.

The Test is still on a knife-edge, India's overall lead of 63, is not yet a match-winning proposition. At the heart of India's comeback narrative was Axar Patel, perceptibly the most understated of their three-man spin firm. In spite of his mind-spinning entry into Test cricket, he's judged condescendingly, often stereotyped as a conditions-reliant bowler. All of his 27 wickets might have been wrought in extremely beneficial conditions in Chennai and Ahmedabad, against a group of English batsmen allergic to spin as ghosts are to a cross. But here, his five wickets were heckled from a largely unresponsive wicket, where his most decorated partners, Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, laboured 74 overs for three wickets, showing that he could bring a third dimension to India's spin attack.

He is not a Jadeja clone, or an inferior version of him. Rather, he is a different bowler, operating with a different bandwidth of skills, with a different perspective, and someone who is utmost comfortable in his skin. With his height, he wooed more bounce from the wicket, and on a surface with variable bounce, this attribute of him stood out. Though he has a slightly round-arm, he still generates ample bounce. Resultantly, New Zealand batsmen, who were comfortably playing Ashwin and Jadeja on their front foot, were more tentative against him, forcing them to play him a lot on their back-foot and coming out of their comfort zone.

Latham's dismissal was a classic example. He was resolute against most spinners, but the variation of bounce was playing at the back of his mind. So to unsettle him and force him to bowl shorter or fuller—Axar was mostly hitting the spinner's good-length—he stepped out. But the ball sped quicker after pitching, turned in a shade, and took his inside edge to be stumped. Among the three, he turned the ball the least, but he discovered more spite from the wicket than the rest. The lighthouse was brought down, New Zealand lost their di-

rection, even though they did fight till the end.

In that sense, he is more early-year Anil Kumble like in his methods, relying on bounce, discipline, over-spin, change of angles and pace. He might not possess too many eye-popping variations—he skids the ball in, makes it turn away a shade, bowls the hard-spun straighter one—but he knows how to maximise his gifts. There are more subtleties to his game too. He occasionally uses the scrambled seam to check if he gets more bite. He then presses the middle finger harder on the ball at release to get it to go straighter. A few deliveries were under-cut so that the ball skidded on.

Slowing the pace

Some of the other dismissals are equally illustrative of his craft. He slowed up his pace against Ross Taylor, encouraged him to the front-foot and after he conceded a false sense of security, he slipped one faster into him with a bit of inward turn. Taylor played inside the line and edged behind. Had he been on the back-foot, he could have wisted it through the leg-side. Rather than bamboozling batsmen, he dulls them into making mistakes. Taylor's exit put India further on the front-foot.

Henry Nicholls was given a quick working over. A few balls on length stayed low, and Nicholls brought out his sweep, so that he would push the length back. Axar smartly second-guessed the intention, flung one fuller and faster, which Nicholls completely missed and was trapped in front. By this time, he had grown so much on Kiwi batsmen that doubts began to creep up, and they were increasingly and dangerously content at playing him on the back-foot.

With other bowlers, they could trust the bounce, and the turn, as it was slow. But with Axar, they were unsure of how much he would bounce and how much he would not. Tom Blundell realised the folly when he hung back to defend a good-length ball, only to see his stumps splayed by a crawler. He then fooled Tim Southee with his angle from wide of the crease to wrap up his fifth five-for in seven innings, an incredible feat irrespective of conditions. His accomplices, Ashwin and Jadeja did their part too—Ashwin in continuously chatting with him and encouraging him, putting behind his own lack of fortune. Jadeja, though not at his deceptive best, kept his end quiet. Their chemistry was such that irrespective of the nature of the pitch, India could field three in typical subcontinental pitches in the future.

In many ways, Axar was the perfect poster boy of India's third-day resurgence, because he held the line, did not panic and just waited. He out-willed New Zealand's will. He might not turn the ball by much, but could surely turn the destiny of a match.

SCOREBOARD: India 1st Innings: 345
New Zealand 1st Innings: (Overnight 129/0) Tom Latham st sub (KS Bharat) b Patel 95, Will Young c sub (KS Bharat) b Ashwin 89, Kane Williamson lbw b Yadav 18, Ross Taylor c sub (KS Bharat) b Patel 11, Henry Nicholls lbw b Patel 2, Tom Blundell b Patel 13, Rachin Ravindra b Jadeja 13, Kyle Jamieson c Patel b Ashwin 23, Tim Southee b Patel 5, William Somerville b Ashwin 6, Ajaz Patel not out 5
Extras: (B-6, LB-4, NB-5, VV-1) 16
Total: (all out in 142.3 overs) 296
FoV: 1-151, 2-197, 3-214, 4-218, 5-227, 6-241, 7-258, 8-270, 9-284.

Bowling: Ishant Sharma 15-5-35-0, Umesh Yadav 18-3-50-1, Ravichandran Ashwin 42.3-10-82-3, Ravindra Jadeja 33-10-57-1, Axar Patel 34-6-62-5.
India 2nd Innings: 14-1
Mayank Agarwal not out 4, Shubman Gill b Jamieson 1, Cheteshwar Pujara not out 9
Extras: 0
Total: (1 wkt, 5 Overs) 14
FoV: 2-1
Bowling: Tim Southee 2-1-2-0, Kyle Jamieson 2-0-8-1, Ajaz Patel 1-0-4-0.



Axar Patel's five-for included the key wicket of opener Tom Latham.

PTI

Six-hitting Dhoni fan KS Bharat shows his prowess behind stumps

SANDIPG
KANPUR, NOVEMBER 27

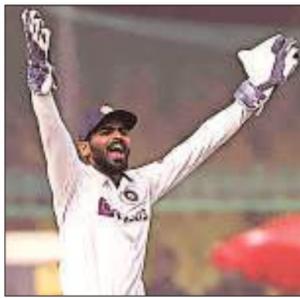
AFTER THE first day's play, Srikar Bharat was stretching in the corner of the ground, when a few teenage boys spotted him. "Woh RCB wala hai na? Six maarke match jeeta tha!" (He is the RCB player right? He hit a six and won a game). Bharat's last-ball six against Delhi Capitals a couple of months ago is his instant connect with the fans. They fumbled for his name, before they gave up, though they squealed for a selfie, which a coyly smiling Bharat obliged. They yelled out a parting wish too, "Six maarke match jitwao!" (Hit a six and win the game).

Bharat responded with an all-knowing smile. He wouldn't hit a six in the match; for he was not even in the eleven. He was, yet again, fated to be a nearby man. If Rishabh Pant was not fit for the England series, he would have made his Test debut; if Wriddhman Saha was not fit for this series, or if he had hurt his neck a day before, he would have been playing in this Test.

But fate, in a twisted way, was kinder to him, as Saha sustained a stiff neck on Friday, giving Bharat his first outing in a Test match, but one that would not statistically count as he played as a substitute keeper. He ended and began the day as it is, someone waiting for his first Test appearance.

But between the end and start of the day, he demonstrated that he has the requisite standard to stake a larger claim in the playing eleven. It was a tough examination on an up-and-down wicket, an ordeal for keepers, which he passed with flying colours.

The stumping of New Zealand opener Tom Latham might be his most spectacular moment of the match, wherein his agility of mind and body stood out, but there were several other instances too. The moment Latham jumped down the track, he made that side-ward shuffle, his hands following his feet in a



KS Bharat appeals against New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson.

harmony of muscles, in anticipation of a stumping. But what happened next was the stuff of nightmares. Latham bottom-edged it, and rather than collecting the ball from left-side, he had to gather from his right in less than a split second. What's worse, the ball dropped on to the ground in an instant. Now he had to realign his eyes from the left down to the ground.

But Bharat had the flexibility of mind and speed of reflexes to make complex moments look natural. A lot of keepers would have groped at it, but he didn't. The hands, like a good keeper's, descended with the ball, the upper-body arched just enough, the knees flexed just enough to maintain the balance, as he gathered the ball and whipped the bails off in the blink of an eye.

From where he was standing, it must have emerged into view at the very last second, but he pushed his hands through, moving forward and stumped him with time to spare. There is a bit of MS Dhoni too — his favourite cricketer and whose maiden ODI century he watched as a ball boy on the ground — in his stumping,

in the absence of follow-through. Bharat's flourish is not as minimalistic as Dhoni's, but it's relatively less than Saha. Even when picking on the off-side, he doesn't lift his right-leg as pronouncedly as say Nayan Mongia, that keeper-artist.

The impeccable balance when gathering stood out, most gloriously when he pocketed the catch of Will Young, a faint outside edge off a ball that kept low. He doesn't lose his shape and even when the ball seems to have misbehaved, he is there to pick it, like a strict hostel warden with a never-flinching gaze on his inmates.

A few times, the ball did beat him, especially on the leg-side, but there is only so much he could have done on this deck. Relatively easier was the Ross Taylor one, or rather he made it look easy. It's what he always does — makes it look ridiculously simple. He often makes the magnificent look mundane, in a positive sense. When lesser-gifted keepers lunge, he just needs to stretch his arms, because he is already in a better position.

His stability begins with his stance — he has his head on the sixth stump to get the proper vision on the bowler's hand and ball, because any further, batsmen would block the sight of the ball, and as good keepers are Bharat's eyes are always fixed on the ball and not the batsman.

But for all the verve he displayed in this match, he could end up as a perennial fringe keeper; deputy to Saha as well as Rishabh Pant. Therein is his fix — he is a better keeper than Pant, but not a better batsman (supposedly); he is a better batsman than Saha, but not a better keeper than him. It could turn out to be the story of his career too. Nonetheless, if he could pile on performances like in the chance breaks he gets he could put pressure on both Saha, now 37, and Pant, still unpredictable. He might not win every game with a six, but he can win games with his glove-work. As was evident on Thursday.

India seniors taking notes and guiding the U-21s at Jr Hockey Worlds

MIHIR VASAVDA
BHUBANESWAR, NOVEMBER 27

HOURS AFTER their shocking loss to France, some of India's junior players received a link for an e-meeting. Their host was the Tokyo Olympics bronze medalist Harmanpreet Singh. Having watched from the stands the team concede five goals against an unheralded opponent, the defender-cum-drag-flicker had prepared a dossier of sorts.

Next door, India captain Manpreet Singh was having a conversation on leadership and tactics with the junior team skipper Vivek Sagar Prasad.

These weren't crisis talks. Rather, just a casual exchange of ideas between veterans who have been there, done that and rookies for whom this is an initiation to international hockey, except Prasad who was in Tokyo as well.

The relationship between India's senior and junior teams has evolved over the months; from being 'respectful' of the 'seniors', they now idolise the bronze medalists.

Prasad is in awe of the way Manpreet carries the team together. Drag-flicker Sanjay Kumar, who has netted a couple of hat-tricks already, has modelled himself on Harmanpreet. Goalkeepers Pawan and



India started strong and lead by two goals within 10 minutes.

Prashant Chauhan look up to PR Sreejesh and forward Arajjeet Singh Hundal is in awe of Akashdeep Singh, who wasn't in Tokyo but remains an integral part of the team.

Now, in Bhubaneswar, the U-21 players' heroes have turned into their analysts and mentors. During every match India's colts have played in this World Cup, the senior team members have sat in the stand behind the goal and dutifully made notes. "It's a learning experience for us too," says

India beat Poland, to face Belgium in QFs

New Delhi: Once they went up by two goals inside 10 minutes, India practically stopped playing. Keeping themselves fresh for the quarterfinals but more importantly, aware that their last-eight opponents were watching from the stands, keeping a close on every move they were making. Yet, India eased past Poland 8-2 to end their group stage commitments, finishing second behind France to whom they lost in the opening match. That defeat means while France will face a relatively-easier opponent, Malaysia, in the quarterfinals, defending champions India will square up against Belgium, whose senior side is currently the best in the world. It'll be an even contest — a repeat of the 2016 Junior World Cup final — given that both teams have had wobbles in the group stage. **ENS**

Manpreet. "We are analysing the games from the stands and after it's over, we are giving the players our feedback."

Returning favour

In a way, it's returning a favour as well. Both, senior and junior, teams had a far-from-desirable build-up to their respective marquee events of the year. For a major part of the last two years, they were locked inside Sports Authority of India's Southern Centre in Bangalore, staying and training together.

As the Olympics got closer and with the national team barely getting any match practice due to the pandemic-forced travel restrictions, the junior team turned into a simulation machine of sorts for them. During training, the coaches would make the under-21 side line up and play like India's opponents at the Tokyo Games. They even played six matches against each other, and the colts eked out a win in one.

The mentoring process began with that. "Whenever we used to spot something, we spoke to them. If they had any problem, they reached out to us," Harmanpreet says. "They just needed some fine-tuning, not a lot of work."

After India returned from Tokyo with the bronze, the senior team resources were shifted to the junior side. Chief coach Graham Reid was asked to take over the side and the players started to individually guide their juniors.

Even though both teams are in Bhubaneswar — the senior side preparing for next month's Asian Champions Trophy — they

are staying in separate bio-bubbles, which means physical interactions aren't possible. "So, we have been in touch through online meetings," Harmanpreet says.

Exchanging ideas

The senior team vice-captain, who was a member of the 2016 Junior World Cup-winning side, has been guiding the defenders and drag-flickers. He spoke to the two freemen — the player who floats between his team's defence and midfield — in particular, Sanjay and Yashdeep Siwach.

"Even I play as a freeman so from whatever I observed watching from the stands, I told them. I spoke to them in detail about how they need to stay within the danger lines, aligning with the goalposts, so that they can intercept dangerous balls," Harmanpreet says.

For the senior players, analysing the junior sides from the stands has helped them improve knowledge about their opponents, given that the styles and patterns used by most teams in the World Cup have been very similar to their senior sides. "So, while watching them, we also understand the areas where we can improve," Manpreet, who captained India in the 2013 Junior World Cup, says.

After the team lost to France, the biggest upset of the Junior World Cup so far, Manpreet had an immediate talk with Prasad.

RESULTS

Pakistan	3	1	Egypt
France	11	1	Canada
South Africa	3	4	Malaysia
Belgium	3	0	Chile
India	8	2	Poland

TODAY'S FIXTURES

- South Korea vs Spain
- Netherlands vs USA
- Pakistan vs Argentina
- Germany vs Egypt

"That wasn't a time to blame anyone or finger-point. He had to lead the team on the field, make sure the players communicated with each other and showed unity," Manpreet says. "They need to believe in themselves."

Manpreet knows. Belief carried the team onto the podium in Tokyo. And as the colts prepare for the biggest test of their nascent careers, facing Belgium in Wednesday's quarterfinals, they'll know the seniors have their backs.

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