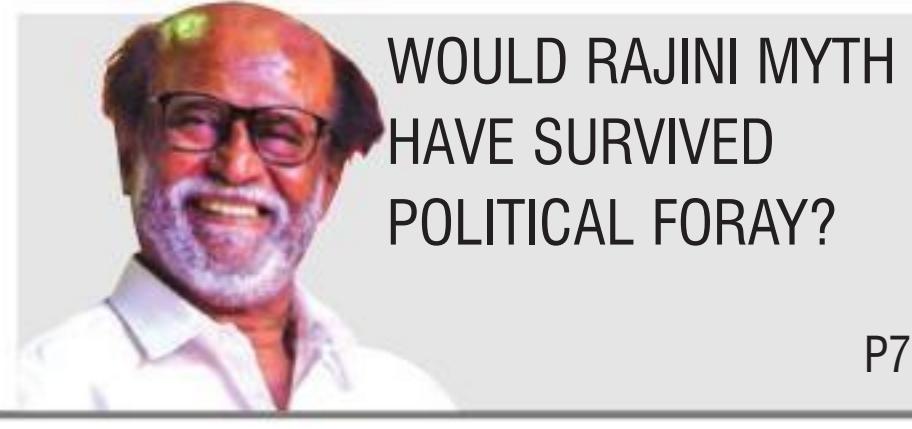




SAJAD LONE QUILTS  
PAGD; BLOW TO  
KASHMIR ALLIANCE

P5



WOULD RAJINI MYTH  
HAVE SURVIVED  
POLITICAL FORAY?

P7



SKY-HIGH  
EXPECTATIONS FROM  
JOE BIDEN

P10



COACH SHASTRI  
GETS "EMOTIONAL"

P12

## WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 20 and 08 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 61%  
TEMPERATURE  
Max: 20.4°C (+1) Min: 06.9°C (0)  
SUN RISES SUN SETS  
07:14 hrs 17:51 hrs  
MOON RISES MOON SETS  
11:45 hrs 0:33 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Union MoS, Ministry of Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel briefs the Press at National Media Centre in New Delhi. The government has decided to observe 23 January as 'Parakram Diwas' every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in the first 'Parakram Diwas' event in Kolkata, Bose's 125th birth anniversary.

PIB

**India-France air exercise:** India and France will launch a five-day air exercise, Ex Desert Knight 21, today at the Air Force Station, Jodhpur, with the participation of Rafale and other fighter jets. The Defence Ministry said the French Air Force will bring in its Rafale, Airbus A-330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT), A-400M Tactical Transport aircraft and around 175 personnel for the exercise.

PIB

**Tandav makers to modify content:** The makers of Amazon Prime series *Tandav* have said they will make changes in the content "to address concerns", a little over 24 hours after a police complaint was filed over hurting religious sentiments.

## No vaccine on priority for MPs, Question Hour to return in Budget Session: Speaker

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY



The Parliament is taking steps for smooth conduct of its Budget Session from 29 January, the second to be held during the Covid-19 pandemic, and will have 12 and 21 sittings in its two phases. President Ram Nath Kovind will address a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament on 29 January as usual.

The MPs will sit in the chambers of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, and their galleries, besides the Central Hall of Parliament, which was the sole venue of the event earlier.

The first phase of the session will run up to 15 February, after which there will be a three-week recess to allow Parliamentary Standing Committees to examine the Budgetary demands. The sec-

ond phase will run from 8 March to 8 April.

Speaker Om Birla told newspe-

soners after a review of arrangements for the coming session that RT-PCR tests for all Members of Parliament shall be performed on 27 and 28 January in Parliament House Complex, and arrangements will be made for the tests close to the res-

Birla said the standard operating procedures as per Covid-19 guidelines will be followed this session also. The Rajya Sabha will sit from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. while the Lok Sabha will sit from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Question Hour and the Zero Hour, which could not be held during the last Monsoon session due to the severity of the pandemic, will have their normal run in the Bud-

get session.

Replies to questions, the Speaker said the General Budget documents and the Economic Survey will be released digitally only.

Birla said the Central Hall will

be open to MPs only during the session. He said the MPs will be covered by the vaccination programme being run by state and Central governments like normal citizens.

encies of the MPs also.

Birla said the standard operating procedures as per Covid-19 guidelines will be followed this session also. The Rajya Sabha will sit from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. while the Lok Sabha will sit from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. The Question Hour and the Zero Hour, which could not be held during the last Monsoon session due to the severity of the pandemic, will have their normal run in the Bud-

get session.

At least 15 people, including a year-old girl, were killed and half a dozen others seriously injured near Surat early Tuesday morning after a dumper truck ran over them while they were sleeping by the roadside.

The accident occurred on Kim-Mandvi road near Kosamba village when the driver lost control over his vehicle after it hit a sugar-cane heap hanging from a tractor-trolley coming from the opposite side.

The truck's front glass pane was shattered due to the impact, blocking the driver's vision. The truck

veered off the road, crushing the 20-odd labourers sleeping on the roadside.

As many as 12 labourers died on the spot while others succumbed to their injuries in the hospital.

All the victims belong to Banswara district of Rajasthan and had come to Surat in search of casual work, including jobs in sugar mills in the vicinity.

The accident occurred on Kim-Mandvi road near Kosamba village when the driver lost control over his vehicle after it hit a sugar-cane heap hanging from a tractor-trolley coming from the opposite side.

The truck's front glass pane was shattered due to the impact, blocking the driver's vision. The truck

who, notwithstanding his well-chronicled successes with the bat, might never have been pitchforked into the role of the punitive marauder in a chase like this. Rigid purists could look askance at it but, as S Venkataraghavan once said, Alan Knott had played more matches for England for his batting though Bob Taylor was just as good a wicketkeeper. Some fairytale elements in the Indian victory are too obvious to be missed. Coach Ravi Shastri's repeat triumph. A few Indian new-

comers' coming of age, into which is India's new-found ability to retaliate with pace against a team proud of their fast bowling arsenal. And all of this is made possible with a captain away from it all, having been granted paternity leave.

Virat Kohli, though, will have to be complimented on emphasising pace in a switch from MS Dhoni's tradition-bound conservatism.

Though stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane was far less than spectacularly successful holding the bat

SEE ALSO PAGE 12

## Vaccination count surpasses active cases; 0.18% adverse events

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

A total of 4,54,049 beneficiaries have so far been vaccinated against Covid-19 in the country which is more than double the number of coronavirus active cases, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday.

In a span of 24 hours, 2,23,669 people were vaccinated across 3,930 sessions taking the cumulative total of people vaccinated to 4,54,049 (across 7,860 sessions conducted so far) in the country, the ministry said. Of the total people vaccinated so far, the government on Tuesday said 0.18 per cent were adverse events following immunisation, while 0.002 per cent had to be hospitalised which is fairly low.

Addressing a press conference, NITI Aayog member (Health) VK Paul said concerns about adverse effects and

serious problems post immunisation as of now seem to be unfounded, negligible, insignificant and stressed that both the vaccines are safe.

He also said that it was sad that "doctors, nurses and healthcare workers are refusing to get vaccinated" and requested the people to get the shots.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said, "As per the data available so far, only 0.18 per cent is the Adverse Event Following Immunization (AEFI) and 0.002 is the percentage of the people who were hospitalised following immunisation. These are fairly low, in fact lowest so far as we know in the world in the first three days."

He said India recorded the highest number of first day vaccinations for Covid-19 immunisation.

Bhushan said in India 2,07,229 people were vaccinated on the first day, while



The government is set to launch vaccine diplomacy tomorrow by dispatching Indian-manufactured vaccines to six neighbouring countries and its key partners to help them fight Covid-19. "...supplies under grant assistance to Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles will begin from 20 January," the Ministry of External Affairs said. PG 4

in the US 79,458 people were vaccinated, in the UK 19,700 and 73 were vaccinated in France on the first day.

"The important point here is that if we look at the first week figures then the US conducted vaccinations of 5,56,208 people so that number will already cross by day 3. In the UK, in the first seven days 1,37,897 were vaccinated, 516 people were vaccinated in France in the first week and in Russia 52,000 people were vaccinated in the first week. So these are the comparative figures for you and we have just started so we will pick up speed," he said.

Meanwhile, allaying fears and attempting to build confidence among people over vaccination, Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry said there has been "no case of serious or severe" adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) till date.

The comments from the Ministry came after media reports about two men ~ one from Uttar Pradesh and another from Karnataka ~ dying

hours after they received the Covid-19 jabs.

Speaking to media, additional Secretary in the Health Ministry Manohar Agnani said the man from Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh died due to cardiopulmonary disease.

The death "is not related to vaccination as per the post-mortem report", he said. The health worker who was vaccinated on January 16 died the next evening.

Agnani said that the man from Bellary in Karnataka died due to anterior wall infarction with cardiopulmonary failure.

The post-mortem report of the man, who was vaccinated on January 16 and died on Monday, is scheduled to be conducted at Vijayanagar Institute of Medical Sciences in Bellary.

Cumulative total number of vaccinated healthcare workers across the country are more than 6.31 lakh so far.

India records 10,064 new cases

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

India reported the lowest number of daily coronavirus infections in over seven months with 10,064 new cases, which took the case-load to 1,05,81,837, while recoveries have surged to 1,02,28,753 according to Union health ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The country's death toll increased to 1,52,556 as 137 fatalities, the lowest in around eight months, were recorded in a span of 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,02,28,753, pushing the national Covid-19 recovery rate (SEE P2)

to 96.66 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.44 per cent.

The Covid-19 active case-load remained below three lakh. There are 2,00,528 active Covid-19 cases in the country which comprised 90 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, 18,78,02,827 samples have been tested up to January 18 with 7,09,791 samples being tested on Monday.

Delhi logs 231 cases, 10 deaths: The national capital today recorded 231 fresh Covid cases and 10 deaths, even as Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain reportedly said that the coronavirus situation in the city "seems quite under control" now.

**FACT FILE**

<b>TOTAL CASES</b>	<b>1,05,81,837</b>
<b>ACTIVE CASES</b>	<b>2,00,528</b>
<b>NEW CASES</b>	<b>10,064</b>
<b>NEW RECOVERIES</b>	<b>17,411</b>
<b>TOTAL DEATHS</b>	<b>1,52,556</b>

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.  
TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 2021



Ranjan Gogoi's nomination undermines  
independence of judiciary

SENIOR CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON ANAND SHARMA  
OPPOSING THE FORMER CJ'S NOMINATION TO THE RAJYA SABHA

# 4,936 get jabs in Capital on day 3; 16 'adverse events' reported

The number of people who were given Covid vaccine in Delhi on Tuesday was however still only 48 pc of the targeted figure of 10,125; Satyendar Jain says the city's corona situation seems a 'lot under control'

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

**A**s many as 4,936 health-care workers received the Covid-19 vaccine in Delhi on the third scheduled day of the immunisation exercise in the national capital today, which marked an increase from the previous day, according to data shared by officials.

However, the number of people who were vaccinated today was only 48 pc of the targeted figure of 10,125, as per the data.

"On day three of the vaccination drive in Delhi, 4,936 people were administered corona vaccine. AEFI (adverse events following immunisation) were reported in 16 persons," a senior official of the Delhi health department said. Under the nationwide mega Covid vaccination drive launched on 16 January, a total of 4,319 health workers (53 percent of the then target of 8,117) were administered the shots at 81 centres across Delhi on day one. While there was no vaccination scheduled on Sunday, 3,598 healthcare workers were vaccinated yes-

terday, the second scheduled day for the inoculation drive.

The sharp fall had come after one "severe" and 50 "minor" cases were reported, following

the vaccination drive on day one. According to data shared by officials, yesterday's vaccination target in Delhi was 8,136. Thus only 44 percent of the tar-

get was then reached.

Various reasons are being attributed to the low turnout, including some technical issues and fears related to adverse events. However, the government has maintained that no case of serious/severe AEFI is attributable to vaccination till date.

Meanwhile, Delhi today recorded 231 fresh Covid cases and 10 deaths, even as Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain

said the coronavirus situation in the national capital "seems quite under control" at present. The city had yesterday recorded 161 coronavirus cases,

the lowest in nearly nine months, with a positivity rate of 0.32 percent. It had recorded 293 cases on 26 April, according to offical data. According to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin, the city's Covid caseload climbed to 6,32,821 and its coronavirus toll mounted to 10,764 today. The death rate based on the last 10 days' data was 0.25 percent.

"The fresh cases and active cases both have come down a lot. Seems, the situation is lot under control now in Delhi," Jain told reporters today.

The 231 fresh cases were

stood at 2,172, the bulletin added. As regards the Covid cases data for this month in Delhi, 585 cases were reported on January 1 and 494 on January 2, 424 on January 3, 384 on January 4, and 442 on January 5, 654 on January 6, 486 on January 7 and 444 on January 8, 519 on January 9 and 399 on January 10, 306 on January 11 and 386 on January 12, and 357 on January 13 and 340 on January 14.

On December 29 and 30, the national capital had recorded 703 and 677 coronavirus cases respectively. On December 31, the city had reported 574 cases.

## Classified

### LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF COMMISSIONER UNDER THE EMPLOYEE'S COMPENSATION ACT, 1923 CIRCLE IV SHARAM SHAKTI BHAWAN GROUND FLOOR MINI SECTT, GURUGRAM  
Claim Appl No. 15/2019  
Smt. Rihana & Others Vs Khushi Mohammad & Others  
PUBLICATION NOTICE  
To, Khushi Mohammad S/o Sh. Munshi Khan R/o 341, Delhi Road, Behind Amar Nath Petrol Pump, Mungasla, Alwar (Raj) [Owner of Trailer No. RJ-02-GB-4656] No. Dated: Whereas in the above noted case it has been proved to the satisfaction of this Tribunal that the above named respondent no. 1 cannot be served by way of ordinary process, therefore this publication is issued being under order 5 rule 20 CPC directing respondent no. 1 to appear in this Tribunal on 29.01.2021 at 10.00 AM personally or through counsel/pleader, failing which ex parte proceedings shall be taken against you. Issued on this under my signature and seal of this court.  
Commissioner  
Under Employee's Compensation Act. 1923, Circle IV, Gurugram

IN THE COURT OF COMMISSIONER UNDER THE EMPLOYEE'S COMPENSATION ACT, 1923 CIRCLE IV SHARAM SHAKTI BHAWAN GROUND FLOOR MINI SECTT, GURUGRAM  
Claim Appl No. 13/2019  
Smt. Shahnara & Others Vs Khushi Mohammad & Others  
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Commissioner  
Under Employee's Compensation Act. 1923, Circle IV, Gurugram

IN THE COURT OF MS. NEELAM SINGH Addl. District Judge-01 (South-East)  
Rohini Courts, Delhi  
Seal of the Court  
Claim App. No. 12/2019  
Smt. Farmina & Others Vs Suman Roadways Corporation Pvt. Ltd. & Others PUBLICATION NOTICE  
To, Suman Roadways Corporation Pvt. Ltd. 903, A Wing Sai Mannat, Plot No. 1, Sector-34, A, Kharshar, Panel Mahashrav, Raigarh-410210 (Owner of Container/Truck No. MH-46-BB-4801) No. Dated: Whereas in the above noted case it has been proved to the satisfaction of this Tribunal that the above named respondent no. 1 cannot be served by way of ordinary process, therefore this publication is issued being under order 5 rule 20 CPC directing respondent no. 1 to appear in this Tribunal on 29.01.2021 at 10.00 AM personally or through counsel/pleader, failing which ex parte proceedings shall be taken against you. Issued on this under my signature and seal of this court.  
Commissioner  
Under Employee's Compensation Act. 1923, Circle IV, Gurugram

IN THE COURT OF SH. PANKAJ GUPTA Addl. District Judge-01 (North)  
Rohini Courts, Delhi  
Probate Court No. PC - 112/2016  
Sh. Rajan Saini & Ors.  
Petitioner  
State & Ors.  
— Respondents  
PETITION UNDER SECTION 276 OF THE INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT 1925.  
Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of probate of the Will of Late Sh. Rajan Saini, died on 10-07-2014 has been made by Sh. Rajan Saini, Sajan Saini and Deepak Saini, all s/o Sh. Satish Kumar Saini, r/o VPO Holamby Kalan, Delhi, presently at: H. No. 1439, Saini Mohalla, Naiqafgarh, Delhi.  
Whereas the 01-02-2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having power and authority given by the terms of registered cancellation of Power of Attorney dated 11th January, 2021, Registration No. 24 in Book No. 4, Vol 4515, Page No. 131 to 134 to Shri Aman Kapoor, s/o Sh.

Notice is hereby given that my client Rakesh Chandra Nayar, s/o Partap Chand Nayar, r/o C-14, Nizamuddin East, New Delhi-110013, hereby removes and cancels all the powers and authorities given by me in the Seal of this court  
NOTICE  
Notice is hereby given that Amit Prakash Sharma son of Late Shri Vinod Prakash Sharma is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why naturalization should not be granted should send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

IN THE COURT OF COMMISSIONER UNDER THE EMPLOYEE'S COMPENSATION ACT, 1923 CIRCLE IV SHARAM SHAKTI BHAWAN GROUND FLOOR MINI SECTT, GURUGRAM  
Claim Appl No. 13/2019  
Smt. Shahnara & Others Vs Khushi Mohammad & Others  
PUBLICATION NOTICE  
To, Khushi Mohammad S/o Sh. Munshi Khan R/o 341, Delhi Road, Behind Amar Nath Petrol Pump, Mungasla, Alwar (Raj) [Owner of Trailer No. RJ-02-GB-4656] No. Dated: Whereas in the above noted case it has been proved to the satisfaction of this Tribunal that the above named respondent no. 1 cannot be served by way of ordinary process, therefore this publication is issued being under order 5 rule 20 CPC directing respondent no. 1 to appear in this Tribunal on 29.01.2021 at 10.00 AM personally or through counsel/pleader, failing which ex parte proceedings shall be taken against you. Issued on this under my signature and seal of this court.  
Commissioner  
Under Employee's Compensation Act. 1923, Circle IV, Gurugram

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS  
Know all men by these presents, that my client Rakesh Chandra Nayar, s/o Partap Chand Nayar, r/o C-14, Nizamuddin East, New Delhi-110013, hereby removes and cancels all the powers and authorities given by me in the Seal of this court  
NOTICE  
Notice is hereby given that Amit Prakash Sharma son of Late Shri Vinod Prakash Sharma is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why naturalization should not be granted should send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

PUBLIC NOTICE  
Be it known to all that our client Sh. Raju Soni & Late Sh. B.R. Soni R/o B/145, New Ashok Nagar, Delhi-110096 disowns his son Sh. Anuj Soni for all purposes. Our client has severed his relationship with his son Sh. Anuj Soni and shall not be responsible for any act committed and omission of his son. Any person dealing with our client namely Sh. Anuj Soni may do so at his own risk and consequences and our client shall not be responsible for the same. Alok Kumar & Yashvir Sethi Advocates, Kumar Garg & Associates, W-99 (L.G.F) Greater Kailash-I, New Delhi 110048.

MY CLIENT Kishoray Sarkar, S/o. Late. Ranjeet Sarkar of A. 702, Giria Shalom Apartment Block, Battaramballi, VTC, Bangalore North, P.O.: Bangalore 560025. Tel: 080-2229129, 080-2224800. Email: delhinstatesman@gmail.com bangalore@thestatesmangroup.com

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, MADAN Lal Poudel, resident of Panchkalguri, Nemai, P.S.: Matiguri, Dist: Darjeeling, hereby declare that my son's actual name is Hemant Poudel. But his name has been written as Hemant Paudel in my service record. Hemant Paudel & Hemant Paudel is same & one identical person, vide affidavit on 17.12.2020, Notary Public at Siliguri.

Ms. Supriyo Basu & Associates  
Advocates  
'Temple Chambers'  
Room No. 48, Ground  
Floor  
6, Old Post Office Street  
Kolkata-70001  
Ph.: 033 4610 4819  
E-mail:  
sbsuadv@gmail.com  
Date: 19.01.2021

GANGOLU Swathi (existing name of spouse as per change of next of kin in Record / Service Document) spouse of LNK/PTR Kandu Suresh, resident of Guntur, A.P. (existing name of spouse Kandu Swathi as per change of Record Document) date of affidavit : 23.05.2020, Notary Public at Siliguri.

The DBJ produces 935 MG of potable water per day. To conserve water, it is essential to measure the quantity of water by installing flow meters. The DBJ has also initiated projects for the installation of flow meters.

The DBJ intends to install about 3,200 flow meters for the

real-time monitoring system for Delhi's water supply as well as for the proper functioning of water treatment plants through the SCADA system.

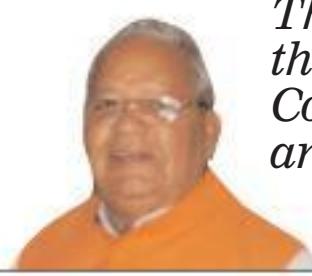
This system provides details such as the pressure and flow of water at pre-decided important locations in the water supply system.

It is designed to ensure that water losses are reduced and maximum utilisation of water is achieved.

On inspecting the SCADA water monitoring system, the DBJ Vice-Chairman found certain things wanting, and issued immediate instructions to the officials concerned to complete any pending work on a war-footing, and for the uninterrupted operation of the SCADA centre to ensure efficient monitoring of water utilisation across Delhi.

He said, "Keeping in view the limited resources of water and the importance of water conservation, the identification of water losses across Delhi must be the prime objective of SCADA."

The DBJ's objective is to establish a state-of-the-art,



*There have been many achievements of the United Nations in the last 75 years, but there have been many occasions like the Covid-19 epidemic when the need of serious introspection has arisen in front of the United Nations.*

KALRAJ MISHRA  
RAJASTHAN GOVERNOR

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2021

# Punjab AAP to join farmers' tractors parade on 26 Jan

AAP's Punjab unit president Bhagwant Mann says his party's volunteers from across the state with tractors from every village would join the farmers' tractors parade in Delhi on the Republic Day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 19 JANUARY

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s Punjab unit today announced that it will join the "Kisan (farmers) Tractors Parade" in Delhi on the Republic Day.

In a statement, the AAP's Punjab unit president and Member of Parliament (MP), Bhagwant Mann, said that AAP volunteers from across the state with tractors from every village would join the farmers' tractors parade in Delhi on 26 January.

He said the AAP would join this agitation not as a political party but as a party of farmers, labourers and volunteers. He said that the AAP was a party of common people who were mostly farmers and labourers.

Mann said that the peaceful agitation being undertaken by the farmers for their



survival and existence has become the "largest agitation" in the world with the participation of such a large

number of people and in a planned and peaceful manner.

The AAP leader said that

this fight was not only to demand the repeal of the Centre's "black farm laws" but also to save the Constitution of the country. He pointed out that it was the constitutional right of the farmers to take out the tractors rally in a peaceful manner, which the government was trying to thwart.

"The manner in which the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central government has been looting the constitutional rights for a long time and working against the Constitution, is very dangerous for the country. Following the Hitler regime, the Narendra Modi government is trying all sorts of tricks to crush the farmers' movement," Mann said.

He alleged that after the Modi government came to power, the public properties of the country were first "sold" to corporate houses and now

"they were trying to enslave" farmers by bringing "black laws" to grab their lands.

Mann said it was strange that the democratically elected government was allegedly "working for Adani-Ambani" instead of listening to the people.

He said that the AAP has been opposing the "anti-farmers agricultural laws" brought by the BJP-led central government from day one.

"It is our primary duty to rise above the political party and support the struggle of the benefactors of the country, which we are trying our best to do by supporting the farmers' movement," Mann said.

He added that the Modi government should give up its "stubborn attitude" and immediately accept the demands of the protesting farmers for repeal of the three controversial agri laws.

## Public tip-offs help Haryana Police in seizure of 765 kg narcotics

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 19 JANUARY

Secret tip-offs received from public about drug trafficking in 2020 helped the Haryana Police in seizure of 765 kilogram (kg) of narcotic substances and 36,761 tablets falling under the category of prohibited drugs.

While stating this on Tuesday, Director General of Police (DGP) Haryana, Manoj Yadava said 286 public persons 'fearlessly' came forward and shared the information about illegal peddling and possession of drugs through toll-free number, mobile number and whatsapp account of the Interstate Drug Secretariat.



arrested accused.

"After getting a secret input about drug smuggling in Sirsa district, our teams immediately swung into action and recovered 27,600 intoxicating capsules and 8,000 prohibited tablets from the possession of arrested accused in February 2020," the DGP said.

"Acting upon a similar input in Rohtak, police recovered 41 kg ganja in April whereas a whopping 619 kg 450 gram ganja was seized in district Palwal in the month of July 2020. Relying on similar credible information, over 60 kg ganja was seized in district Jind in April, last year," he added.

In an attempt to jointly tackle the drug menace in the country's northern region, six States namely Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Delhi and Union Territory Chandigarh had set up a centralized drug secretariat at Panchkula, Yadava said.

Any person who has any information regarding the drug supply network or others can share it with the Police at toll-free number 1800-180-1314, mobile number 7087089947 and landline number 01733-253023. The informer's identity is kept 'confidential', the DGP said.

### DAILY CYCLE



People going about their daily business in Chandigarh on a chilly Tuesday morning.

PARDEEP SAINI

Tribal students to get NIFT-designed Khadi school uniform

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Tribal students studying in government-run Eklavya Model Residential Schools will get a special Khadi dress designed by the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) here, Union minister Arjun Munda said on Tuesday.

The Tribal Affairs Ministry will purchase 6 lakh metres of Khadi fabric worth Rs 14.7 crore from Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in 2020-21 for this purpose, he said.

A pact has been signed with KVIC in this regard, Munda added.

At present, there are 73,000 tribal students studying in such schools in 23 states.

There was no standardised school uniform design for students in these schools till now. The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), New Delhi, has designed a dress with a distinct logo and color scheme, and the best available khadi cloth will be sourced from KVIC, Munda said. Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Nitin Gadkari, who was present on the occasion, said the requirement of Khadi fabric is expected to increase in subsequent years as enrolment in the schools go up.

Under another Memorandum of Understanding the National Scheduled Tribe Finance Development Corporation (NSTFDC), an agency of the ministry responsible for the economic development of tribes, has been roped in as a partner to implement the Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme.

## HP mouts 'Safe City Project' in Mandi to ensure women safety



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 19 JANUARY

A presentation was made before Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur by officers of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) on 'Safe City Project Mandi' under Nirbhaya project here on Tuesday.

The chief minister said that the Safe City Project proposed to be executed in Mandi town under Nirbhaya fund would not only ensure safety of women in public places but would also provide smart solutions to better traffic management and crowd control.

He said that the Union government provides funding in 90:10 ratio to the states having difficult terrains like Himachal Pradesh under this project.

Thakur said that the project envisages design, development, implementation, and CCTV based surveillance system for Mandi town. The latest technology such as IP based camera infrastructure, unhindered viewing, monitoring record

and storage of data would be done under this project. He said that this project intends to implement a holistic and integrated surveillance system including commissioning of command and control centre at police line Mandi.

He said that the system would help in providing assistance to women, girls and senior citizens of Mandi city at the time of emergency besides facilitating smooth movement of ambulances, police vans and fire brigade. He said that this would also help the police in checking crime against women and maintaining law and order and improving traffic management.

He said that these phones could prove handy for ensuring better connectivity during various adventure activities such as paragliding, trekking, river rafting, mountaineering and disaster management.

Additional Chief Secretary Social Justice and Empowerment Sanjay Gupta, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister JC Sharma, Director Social Justice and Empowerment Kritika Kulhari and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

UHF student brings laurels to varsity at national level



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 19 JANUARY

Anirudh Sood, a final year student of BSc (Hons) Horticulture at Himachal Pradesh's Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF) Nauni, has brought laurels to the university at the national level.

Anirudh won the 'Best Verbal Communication' prize for English debate at the 14th National Conference and Inter-University Debate Competition (Online) organized by GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar.

The students from various universities from across the country participated in the competition. The topic of the debate was 'The current economic policy of the country is efficient to empower the youth for development of a self-reliant nation'. Four students from the university had taken part in the Hindi and English debate competition.

UHF Vice-Chancellor Dr. Parvinder Kaushal congratulated Anirudh for bringing laurels to the university at the National level competition. Student Welfare Officer Dr. Ravinder Sharma, faculty and staff also congratulated Anirudh on his achievement.

## Three Punjab farmers detained in Shimla



3 Punjab farmers being detained by the Shimla police from the Ridge ground on Tuesday.

The Punjabi farmers had come to Shimla from Singh border near Delhi to spread awareness and garner support for their protests against the Centre's three controversial farm laws; they were detained by police from the Ridge ground

The Statesman.

Meanwhile, Himachal Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore, Shimla district (Urban) Congress chief Jitender Chaudhary along with other party leaders reached Sadar Police Station in Shimla and demanded their immediate release.

Jitender Chaudhary said the detention of the farmers in Shimla was the murder of democracy as everyone had the right to freedom of expression.

"Congress party stands with farmers in their protests against the three farm laws and demands immediate repeal of these laws which have been enacted to benefit few businessmen," he added.

were detained by the police had not sought any permission from the administration or the police, he added.

The three farmers, who were carrying banners against farm laws, had been detained by the Shimla police under Section 107 (breach of peace) and 150 (unlawful assembly) of Indian Penal Code.

The farmers were released in the evening by the police after brief questioning. Shimla Additional Superintendent of Police Praveer Thakur told

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Administrative Officer



*Can he deny that thousands of kms, including the one in Arunachal he is referring to was gifted by none other than Pandit Nehru to the Chinese?*

**BJP PRESIDENT J P NADDAA**

**i**ndia

THUMBNAILS



Chandigarh residents on a chilly Thursday morning.

■ PARDEEP SAINI

**RSS annual meet in March:** A two-day annual meet of the RSS would be held in Bengaluru on 19 and 20 March during which the election to the highest executive post of the organisation — Sar Karyavah (general secretary) — is likely to take place.

**Dr Shanta dies of heart attack:** Chairperson of the Cancer Institute in Chennai, Dr V Shanta, noted for her outstanding contribution to cancer care, died after heart attack on Tuesday morning. She was 93. PM Narendra Modi led the nation in condoling her death and Tamil Nadu CM called for gun salute. ■ PTI

## BJP more dangerous than Naxalites, says Mamata

DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY  
PURULIA, 19 JANUARY

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee scolded at BJP calling it on Tuesday even more dangerous than the Naxalites while addressing a rally in Purulia, which was once the hotbed of Left-wing extremism.

She castigated the BJP for being absent during the 'bloodshed' in Junglemahal where, she claimed, numerous Naxalites and KLO ultras have surrendered and returned to mainstream and the government has provided them jobs. "It is we who have restored peace in Junglemahal and today, hotel, ITI, medical college, university, freight corridors, industrial hub and tourism centres have come up," she said.

TMC has indicted Chhatradhar Mahato, a former leader of Maoist-backed People's Committee Against Police Atrocities (PCAPA), who had hogged the limelight during the Lalgarh movement in the tribal-dominated Junglemahal area at the fag end of the erstwhile CPI(ML)-led Left Front rule in the state. Claiming that TMC is not perturbed over desertions by some leaders, she said politics is a solemn ideology and philosophy and one cannot change these everyday like clothes.

Accusing the BJP of false promises before election, she alleged that people in plight did not find BJP's respective MPs during the precarious situation of Covid and questioned their quantum of work after the BJP MPs were elected in 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Terming the desertions as "good riddance", she said these leaders would have disturbed the party if they remained in the TMC.

Taking a dig at Union Home minister Amit Shah and BJP chief JP Nadda over their lunch at homes of minority communities, she said, "Have you ever seen that Dalits, tribals, farmers of our state provide drinking water of premium brands costing Rs 100 mineral to the guests. The food was ordered from five-star hotels and the common people have been fooled."

On the recent controversy regarding Republic TV's Arnab Goswami, she said that Pulwama has been exposed and very soon, *notebandi* (demobilisation) and other issues will tot-



ter out in the open.

Before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in the country, the Trinamool Congress supremo had raised some serious questions about the timing on the issues of Pulwama blast on CRPF convoy and Balakot surgical strike. The purported WhatsApp message between Goswami and former BARC CEO, Partho Goswami which has been filed in the supplementary charge sheet by Mumbai Police to court went viral a few days ago and has rocked the national politics.

Opposition like the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress have raised serious questions on the *Chatgate* row and demanded a JPC probe and today the Miss Banerjee also demanded the same.

Assuring Tollywood actor Sayon Ghosh, who has been threatened over phone, she said, "We will provide all help to the Tollywood actors and actresses. They can express their independent views."

She railed at the BJP calling it a 'party of fake video, fake IT and fake promises', and called to attention their silence regarding the Rs 15 lakh that the saffron party promised before the 2014 Lok Sabha poll and the assertion of prime minister Narendra Modi on retrieving black money from foreign countries.

She said class XII students in the state will get Rs 10,000 each in their bank account "within a day or two" for buying tablets or smartphones for their stud-

ies in the virtual mode.

Asserting that Purulia has never bowed to the outsiders, Trinamool Congress supremo had raised some serious questions about the timing on the issues of Pulwama blast on CRPF convoy and Balakot surgical strike. The purported WhatsApp message between Goswami and former BARC CEO, Partho Goswami which has been filed in the supplementary charge sheet by Mumbai Police to court went viral a few days ago and has rocked the national politics.

The trainers of the self-help groups demand during the meeting at Hutmura that Miss Banerjee today, but later she took their memorandum and said she will try to address their issues.

From job to drinking water she has promised to look after the people of Purulia and has urged them to vote for TMC. The party will fight against the farm laws and claimed that the laws will 'take the crop away from farmers'. But most significantly, Birbhum MP Satyabati Roy, the newly appointed TMC vice-president was present in the meeting at the dais along with Miss Banerjee and she claimed that there are certain issues that can be settled within the party and no need of intervention of the outsiders. Through Roy the TMC supremo had tried to send a message to the other party dissidents, feels political observers. A multitude came to attend her public meeting today. (with agency inputs)

Apart from the law-and-order situation, the commission is likely to look at other aspects of the elections.

Recently, Deputy Election Commissioner in charge of West Bengal, Sudeep Jain, visited the city and met senior officials and reviewed poll preparations.

The elections are expected to be held in April and the dates are likely to be notified in February. Mr Jain had clearly mentioned that the commission will not tolerate any incident of lawlessness during the election.

On 22 January, the commission will meet chief secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay, home secretary HK Dwivedi, director general of police Virendra and other senior officials.

Arora and Commissioners Rajiv Kumar and Sushil Chandra will arrive in Kolkata after meeting political parties in Assam. Next day, at 10 am, they will meet representatives of

said Modi had used it as an acronym for "Security and Growth for All in the Region".

"This aspiration depends on securing end-to-end supply chains in the region; no disproportionate dependence on a single country; and ensuring prosperity for all stakeholder nations," Shringla added.

The foreign secretary said it was natural for India to be engaged in cooperation with the key actors in the Indo-Pacific, notably France and Japan. With France, India has a highly developed maritime security partnership. Similarly, India and Japan enjoyed a relationship that was crucial to the Indo-Pacific architecture.

India's "SAGAR" vision for the region and Japan's concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), both were convergent in principles.

Shringla said India has sought to strengthen security and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific by becoming a net security provider — for instance in peace-keeping efforts or anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

Recalling that India's Indo-Pacific strategy was enunciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a speech in Singapore in 2018 as the "SAGAR" doctrine, the Indian diplomat



*Can he deny that thousands of kms, including the one in Arunachal he is referring to was gifted by none other than Pandit Nehru to the Chinese?*

HITTING BACK AT RAHUL GANDHI FOR HIS BARB ON THE MODI GOVERNMENT OVER NATIONAL SECURITY

# China on mind, India, France, Japan launch dialogue on Indo-Pacific

Three nations launched a new dialogue to ensure that Indo-Pacific remains a peaceful region

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Against the backdrop of growing Chinese assertiveness on maritime issues, India, France and Japan today launched a new dialogue to ensure that the Indo-Pacific remains a peaceful region, taking into account needs and concerns of all its inhabitants.

An Indo-Pacific guided by norms and governed by rules, with freedom of navigation, open connectivity, and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all states, is an article of faith for India," Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said at the "India-France-Japan Workshop on Indo-Pacific." The workshop was attended by French Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain and Japanese Ambassador Satoshi Suzuki.

Recalling that India's Indo-Pacific strategy was enunciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a speech in Singapore in 2018 as the "SAGAR" doctrine, the Indian diplomat



## RKS members may get Covid jab

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 19 JANUARY

The health department headed by chief minister Mamata Banerjee is likely to allow MLAs and MPs who are attached with rogi kalyan samiti (RKS) in government hospitals and medical colleges to get Covid vaccines though they are not entitled to undergo the immunisation programme in the first phase.

But several Trinamool Congress MLAs and gram panchayat members of the party have already been given the vaccines in different districts like Alipurduar, Burdwan (East), East Midnapore, South 24 Parganas etc during immunisation programme held on 16 and 18 January respectively stoking controversy. "We have already alerted chief medical officers of health (CMOH) in districts and Kolkata civic body health administration saying to follow the guidelines strictly. No other than the healthcare workers will get the vaccine first in this phase," said Dr Ajay Chakraborty, director of health services (DHS).

Mr Tapir Gao MP, BJP, alleged that deep into AP in a 'disputed area' within Indian territory, the Chinese have built a 100-house village, a bazaar and a two-lane road last year. "If true, it's clear the Chinese have altered the status quo by converting a disputed area into a permanent settlement."

Japan-US, India-France-Australia and India-Indonesia-Australia trilateral arrangements offer cases in point," he added.

ties," Dr Chakraborty added.

Opposition felt that the health department's plan to consider non-medical RKS members for vaccination programme in the first phase is under pressure from the ruling TMC.

"Non-medical members like RKS presidents are mostly Trinamool Congress MPs and MLAs in respective hospitals and medical colleges across the state. This is a serious violation of Covid vaccination guidelines. Every irregularity in the administration is done with the inspiration from the party supremo Mamata Banerjee and same is happening in the vaccination programme," alleged Sujan Chakraborty, CPI-M leader.

BJP leadership has already slammed TMC after several sitting and former MLAs and gram panchayat members of TMC were found taking vaccines in different immunisations centres, violating health ministry guidelines.

"There has been huge corruption and irregularity even in Covid vaccine immunisation programme. How did the Central gram panchayat chairman get inoculated at a time when frontline health workers are entitled to get the vaccine on top priority basis," alleged BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari in a social media post.

## Rahul Gandhi attacks PM on reports of Chinese village in Arunachal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue of national security after reports that China has built a village in Arunachal Pradesh.

"Remember his promise ~ Mai desh jhukne nahi dunga (Will not let the country bow)," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi as he posted a link of news report about the alleged "Chinese village".

Congress leaders Ranjeet Surjewala and Manish Tewari also attacked the PM on the matter.

"Sharing what we can, in terms of equipment, training and exercises, we have built relationships with partner countries across the region.

To cite some examples, we are active in networks such as the Quad, with India, the United States, Japan and Australia as participants, and the India-

alleging that BJP MP Tapir Gao had claimed that China has built a 100-house village in the "disputed area" deep into Arunachal Pradesh.

He said if the allegation is true, will the government again give a clean chit to China or will blame the previous governments for it.

Mr Tapir Gao MP, BJP, alleged that deep into AP in a 'disputed area' within Indian territory, the Chinese have built a 100-house village, a bazaar and a two-lane road last year. "If true, it's clear the Chinese have altered the status quo by converting a disputed area into a permanent settlement."

In a cautious reaction to the reports, India on Monday had said that it keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on the country's security, and takes necessary measures to safeguard its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Congress leader P Chidambaram on Monday demanded answers from the government on the issue,

## POLL FEVER



TMC Rally in Kolkata on Tuesday. ■ BISWAJIT GHOSHAL

## India to launch vaccine diplomacy today

SNS

NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

The government is set to launch vaccine diplomacy tomorrow by dispatching Indian-manufactured vaccines to six neighbouring countries and its key partners to help them fight Covid-19.

"The Government of India has received several requests for the supply of Indian manufactured vaccines from neighbouring and key partner countries. In response to these requests, and in keeping with India's stated commitment to use India's vaccine production and delivery capacity to help all of humanity fight the Covid pandemic, supplies under grant assistance to Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Seychelles will begin from 20 January," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said today.

In respect of Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Mauritius, the government is awaiting their confirmation of necessary regulatory clearances, it added. The immunisation programme is being implemented in India, as in other countries, in a phased manner to cover the healthcare providers, frontline workers and the most vulnerable.

"Keeping in view the domestic requirements of the phased rollout, India will continue to supply Covid-19 vaccines to partner countries over the coming weeks and months in a phased manner. It will be ensured that domestic manufacturers will have adequate stocks to meet domestic requirements while supplying abroad," the MEA said.

Prior to the delivery of vaccines, a training programme, covering administrative and operational aspects, is being conducted for immunisation managers, cold chain officers.

The trainers of the self-help groups demand during the meeting at Hutmura that Miss Banerjee today, but later she took their memorandum and said she will try to address their issues.

From job to drinking water she has promised to look after the people of Purulia and has urged them to vote for TMC. The party will fight against the farm laws and claimed that the laws will 'take the crop away from farmers'. But most significantly, Birbhum MP Satyabati Roy, the newly appointed TMC vice-president was present in the meeting at the dais along with Miss Banerjee and she claimed that there are certain issues that can be settled within the party and no need of intervention of the outsiders. Through Roy the TMC supremo had tried to send a message to the other party dissidents, feels political observers.

A multitude came to attend her public meeting today. (with agency inputs)

information to a journalist is a criminal act, both on the part of the person who accepted it and on the part of the person who gave it," he said. These people call themselves patriots, but there is nothing patriotic about putting the Air Force at risk, Gandhi said.

"If Mr Arnab Goswami knows, if it is on his WhatsApp, I assume the Pakistanis also know it. It is not a very big jump. It is a criminal act and that investigation should begin," Gandhi said.

Referring to the contents of the purported chats, Gandhi said the distressing thing is that after the 2019 Pulwama attack, the journalist said that "this is good for us".

"This is a reflection of the mind of the PM that it is good that 40 of our people have been killed and we will win the elections," he alleged.

Centre should take note: Anil Deshmukh

Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh said that the Centre should take note of the chats between Arnab Goswami and ex-Broadcast audience research council head Partho Dasgupta in connection with Balakot air strike. The matter is "serious" as it relates to the national security, Deshmukh told.

"Giving official secret

information to a journalist is a criminal act, both on the part of the person who accepted it and on the part of the person who gave it," he said. These people call themselves patriots, but there is nothing patriotic about putting the Air Force at risk, Gandhi said.

information to a journalist is a criminal act, both on the part of the person who accepted it and on the part of the person who gave it," he said. These people call themselves patriots, but there is nothing patriotic about putting the Air Force at risk, Gandhi said.

He said that Adhikari is the son of the soil who knows the every inch of the area. "Yesterday Adhikari threw a challenge to TMC supremo that he will defeat Mamata if she contests from Nandigram by 50,000 votes. I think his claim is right. TMC is a party of the ungrateful, who forgot Suvendu's contribution," he said.

He also said TMC is scared to see the rise of BJP's popularity ahead of the Assembly poll and so they are indi-

## Dilip calls Suvendu face of Nandigram struggle

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 19 JANUARY

BJP state president Dilip Ghosh today said Suvendu Adhikari was the real image of the struggle to organise Nandigram movement during erstwhile Left Front government, and Trinamul Congress supremo had no contribution there.

Ghosh said that Adhikari is the son of the soil who knows the every inch of the area. "Yesterday Adhikari threw a challenge to TMC supremo that he will defeat Mamata if she contests from Nandigram by 50,000 votes. I think his claim is right. TMC is a party of the ungrateful, who forgot Suvendu's contribution," he said.

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Congress does not want the talks to succeed. It does not want the issues of farmers resolved. So it has adopted the tactic of obstruction

UNION MINISTER PRAKASH JAVADEKAR

HITTING BACK AT RAHUL GANDHI OVER HIS ATTACK ON MODI DISPENSATION OVER FARM LAWS & SECURITY

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2021

THUMBNAILS



Three cardinals (head priest) of Indian Catholic Church after a meeting with Prime Minister on various issue, in the Capital on Tuesday.

**Safe City Project Mandi:** BSNL officers made a presentation on 'Safe City Project Mandi' under Nirbhaya project before CM Thakur in Shimla on Tuesday. The project would ensure safety of women in public places and provide smart solutions to better traffic management and crowd control.

SNS

**National debate competition:** Anirudh Sood, a final year student of B Sc (Hons) Horticulture at the Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni in Himachal Pradesh, won the 'Best Verbal Communication' prize for English debate at the 14th National Conference and Inter-University Debate Competition (Online) organised by GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar.

SNS

**Delhi riots:** Several accused, booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in a north-east Delhi riots case, claimed before a court in New Delhi on Tuesday that they have not been given access to charge sheet in jail despite its orders.

PTI

**IFFCO plant gas leak:** The National Green Tribunal has formed a five-member expert committee and directed it to submit a report on the ammonia gas leak incident at IFFCO plant in Phulpur in Uttar Pradesh. It also directed that an interim compensation of Rs 2.5 lakh each be paid to the victims.

PTI

**Sajad Lone quits PAGD, causes severe blow to Kashmir Alliance**

JAMMU, 19 JANUARY

In a setback to the Farooq Abdullah-led Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), its key leader and chairman of the Peoples Conference, Sajad Lone, on Tuesday pulled out of the 6-party group citing "breach of trust among the partners".

In a three-page letter to Abdullah, Lone cited several instances of the Alliance partners trying to pull down each other by fielding proxy candidates during the recent elections for District Development Committees (DDCs).

Lone, who was spokesman of the PAGD, had from time to time during the elections hinted at the top leaders of the PAGD not taking the elections seriously.

The BJP leadership had been issuing statements about cracks in the PAGD which was formed to put pressure on the Modi government to restore Article 370 that was abrogated on 5 August, 2019 and J&K split into two UTs. PAGD included former CMs Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti.

Lone wrote to Abdullah: "There has been a breach of trust between partners which we believe is beyond remedy. But these elections were distinctive by virtue of the timing. First, the context of these DDC elections was politically very important. It was the first election post 5 August. And secondly it was a combined show of strength of a majority of the J&K political mainstream. It was less of an election and more of an opportunity to send a unanimous political message. This alliance need sacrifice..."

However, Lone assured Abdullah that "PAGD leadership should be assured that we'll extend support on all issues that fall within the ambit of stated objectives".

SNS

# SC panel on farm laws: Repeal not good for future reforms

Committee members say they will keep aside own ideology & views while consulting stakeholders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

**U**nder attack from protesting unions for their "pro-government" public stand on three contentious farm laws, members of a panel set up by the Supreme Court to resolve the crisis said on Tuesday they will keep aside their own ideology and views while consulting various stakeholders, even as they indicated a complete repeal won't augur well for much-needed agriculture reforms.

A key committee member and president of Maharashtra-based Shetkari Sanghatana, Anil Ghanwat said the farm sector reforms are much needed and no political party in the next 50 years will ever attempt them again if these laws are repealed.

He, however, added the panel will listen to all farmers, including those supporting and those opposing the laws, and accordingly prepare a report for submitting to the apex court.

He also said that the laws implemented in the last 70 years were not in the inter-



Farmers protest against new farm laws at Singhu Border, in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ SNS

est of farmers and about 4.5 lakh farmers have committed suicide.

After their first meeting here, Ghanwat said the first round of consultations with farmers and other stakeholders has been scheduled

for Thursday. Noting that the "biggest challenge" is to convince the protesting farmers to appear before the panel, Ghanwat said they will be still given a priority as the panel wants the long-running protest to end

at the earliest.

Agri-economists Ashok Gulati and Pramod Kumar Joshi are the other two members of the panel who were present in the meeting.

The Supreme Court had set up the four-member

panel on January 11 to look into the contentious three farm laws, against which thousands are protesting on Delhi borders for almost two months now. But one of the members, Bhupinder Singh Mann, later backed out of the panel.

Separately, nine rounds of talks have taken place between the government and agitating unions without any concrete resolution, while the tenth round is scheduled to be held on Wednesday.

Briefing media after their meeting, Ghanwat said, "In today's meeting, we have decided to hold our first meeting with farmers and other stakeholders on January 21 at 11 am. We will meet both physically and virtually depending on the convenience of farmers."

Besides farmers, the panel will seek views of farmers' bodies and other stakeholders such as farm exporters, traders, millers, ginners, dairy and poultry industry on the new farm laws, in addition to the central and state governments, he said, adding that a website will also be launched to invite suggestions.

Chirag dodges queries about prospects at Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PATNA, 19 JANUARY

Nitin Kumar where ministers were saddled with too many portfolios and an expansion was much needed.

The LJP chief was talking to reporters upon his visit to the state after a long time. His father, who had founded the party two decades ago, died in October last year and in the ensuing by-election to his Rajya Sabha seat, the BJP chose to field its veteran leader and former Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi.

## CoWin glitch: Several KMC health workers miss Covid vaccination

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 19 JANUARY

The CoWin app that is fraught with technical glitches deprived several health workers of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) of Covid-19 vaccine shots since they did not receive any message through the app, asking them to report to a vaccination centre.

Besides farmers, the panel will seek views of farmers' bodies and other stakeholders such as farm exporters, traders, millers, ginners, dairy and poultry industry on the new farm laws, in addition to the central and state governments, he said, adding that a website will also be launched to invite suggestions.

messages are sent to individual's mobile number to inform them of the date and centre for vaccination.

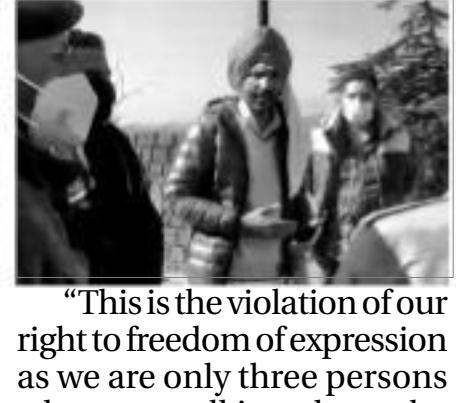
Due to the technical glitch and network issues, some health workers whose names were in the list did not receive the message. However they were called on their phones from the vaccination centre to inform them but one cannot really trust a random call asking them to report for vaccination. This led to the confusion" explained Ghosh.

Asked whether health workers are dropping out due to fear of adverse reactions from vaccines, he said

"Firstly, we need to be responsible and socially aware. There are rumors too which are spreading regarding severe adverse reactions but one must not rely on random news on social media. All the health workers who are in the list are willing to take the vaccine. Ones that could not take the vaccines were only due to the malfunction in the CoWin app.

## 3 Pb farmers from Singhu border detained in Shimla

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 19 JANUARY



"This is the violation of our right to freedom of expression as we are only three persons who were talking about the three farm laws of the Central government. Is this the democratic system of the country which doesn't even allow someone to speak or discuss farm laws," they said as they were whisked away by Shimla police to Sadar Police Station.

The three farmers who were detained by the police had not sought any permission from the administration

media that the protesting farmers were going to all the state capitals in the country to aware farmers and garner support against the three farm laws. "But Shimla is the only place where they are not allowed to speak and are being dragged and detained," he added.

Superintendent of Police Shimla Mohit Chawla said Mall Road and the Ridge Ground were core areas where any procession or meeting without the permission of the district administration was prohibited as per the High Court Orders.

The three farmers who were detained by the police had not sought any permission from the administration

or the police, he added.

The three farmers, who were carrying banners against farm laws, had been detained by the Shimla police under Section 107 (breach of peace) and 150 (unlawful assembly) of Indian Penal Code.

The farmers were released in the evening by the police after brief questioning, Shimla Additional Superintendent of Police Praveer Thakur told The Statesman.

Meanwhile, Himachal Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore, Shimla district (Urban) Congress chief Jitender Chaudhary along with other party leaders reached Sadar Police Station in Shimla and demanded their immediate release.

Avian flu not just confined to poultry birds

NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Avian Influenza, commonly known as Bird flu, is no more confined to poultry birds and has spread its wings over 10 states hitting crow, migratory and wild birds, claimed the ministry of fisheries, animal husbandry & dairy here on Tuesday.

The ministry said the 2021 outbreaks of Avian Influenza have been confirmed in five states for poultry birds and in 10 states it has been reported among crow, migratory birds and other wild birds. The Ministry has advised state governments where the bird flu has spread to keep a strict vigil and generate awareness to people.

It has further asked states to use even social media platforms to generate awareness and caution among the public to stop its further spread, said a senior officer of the Ministry. Meanwhile, the central team formed for monitoring the situation have been visiting the affected areas of the country to monitor the epicentres of AI outbreak and conducting epidemiological studies.

The French Air and Space Force deployment while ferrying to Australia for Ex Pitchblack in 2018 was hosted by IAF at Air Force Stations Agra and Gwalior for exercise with fighters and MRTT aircraft. Presently, the French detachment for Ex Desert Knight-21 is deployed in Asia as part of their 'Skyros Deployment' and will ferry in forces to Air Force Station Jodhpur.

The Indian Air Force aircraft participating in the exercise will include Mirage 2000, Su-30 MKI, Rafale, IL-78 Flight Refuelling Aircraft, AWACS and AEW&C aircraft. The exercise marks an important milestone in the series of engagements between the two Air Forces. As part of Indo-French defence cooperation, the Indian Air Force and the French Air and Space Force deployment while ferrying to Australia for Ex Pitchblack in 2018 was hosted by IAF at Air Force Stations Agra and Gwalior for exercise with fighters and MRTT aircraft. Presently, the French detachment for Ex Desert Knight-21 is deployed in Asia as part of their 'Skyros Deployment' and will ferry in forces to Air Force Station Jodhpur.

The exercise is unique as it includes fielding of Rafale aircraft by both sides and is indicative of the growing interaction between the two premier Air Forces.

**Red Fort shut for public:** A sample of a dead crow from Red Fort has tested positive for bird flu and orders have been issued to restrict the entry of public into the monument, officials said on Tuesday. Entry of public into monument has been restricted till 26 January as a precautionary measure, he said. ■ SNS & PTI

**WB: Fuel price hike: Bus operators threaten strike from 28 Jan**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 19 JANUARY

Operators of five private and minibus unions have called a three-day strike from 28 January 'to protest against the hike in fuel prices by the central government.'

The 72-hour strike is to be observed across the state by the members of Joint Council of Bus Syndicates, Bengal Bus Syndicate, West Bengal Bus and Minibus Owners' Association (WBBMOA), Mini Bus Operators' Coordination Committee (MBOCC) and Inter and Intra Region Bus Association. Over 30,000 buses are to stay off roads during the strike. "Our services were resumed on 3 June 2020 and since 6 June there has been regular hike in fuel prices," claimed Pradeep Narayan Bose, secretary of WBBMOA.

## CIRCULAR

Reference to advertisement dated 24.12.2020, which was published in English Newspaper "The Statesman" Delhi and Hindi Newspaper "Han Bham" Rohtak on 25.12.2020.

The written test for the post of Driver on adhoc/circular basis for a period of six month till regular appointment is made by the Hon'ble High Court of Punjab & Haryana, Chandigarh, whichever is earlier, will be held on 31.01.2021 at 11.00 A.M. in the premises of S.B.P. DAV Centenary Public School, Bighar Road, Fatehabad. The written test will consist of questions of general knowledge and knowledge of, traffic signs/rules of 30 marks, followed by driving skill test of 10 marks and interview of 10 marks. The schedule of driving skill test/interview will be uploaded on the official website of this Sessions Division i.e. <https://districts.ecourts.gov.in/india/haryana/fatehabad/recruit>

The lists of eligible candidates and rejected candidates are being uploaded on the said website of Fatehabad Sessions Division.

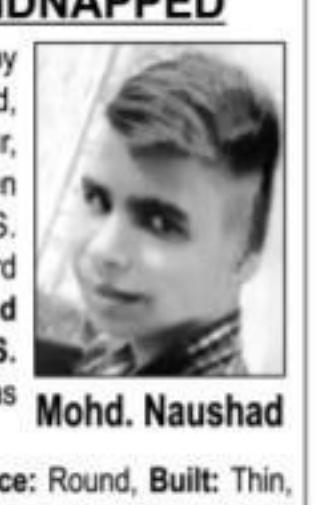
No TA/DA will be paid to the candidates for appearing the said written test.

(Balwan Singh)  
AD & SJ-cum-Chairman  
Recruitment Committee,  
Fatehabad

Dated : 18-01-2021

## SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo), **Namely: Mohd. Naushad, S/o: Babu, R/o: Village Sarai Alam, Post Jalalpur, District Bijnor, UP, Aged: 12 years, has been missing/kidnapped from the area of P.S. Wazirabad, Delhi since 25.12.2020. In this regard a case vide FIR No. 692/2020 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 27.12.2020, has been registered at P.S. Wazirabad, Delhi, His physical description is as under:**



**Height: 4'6" Feet, Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Thin, Clothing: Black colour Jacket, Blue colour Pant and Yellow Colour Shoes in feet.**

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/kidnapped boy, may inform SHO, Wazirabad, Delhi at E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in) or website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Tele No.: 011-24366358 or 24368641

S.H.O.  
P.S. Wazirabad, Delhi  
Ph: 011-23810069, 23810073

## PUBLIC NOTICE

My client M/s Renaissance Buildcon Company Pvt. Ltd. A-3, Ground Floor, CC Colony, Opp. Rana Pratap Bagh, New Delhi-110007, Tel.no: 9873172222, caution general public at large that Baldev Chand Bansal, Tarjinder Kumar Bansal and Krishna Devi all residents of H.No. 253, Sector-7, Panchkula, Haryana along with Rajiv Kumar S/o Pawan Kumar Hous No. 124 Green Valley Apartments, Dholi, Zirakhpur (working under Name and Style of BCL Homes) claiming themselves to be Director and Authorized Signatory have cheated public at large by selling, entering into an agreement to sell of the land belonging to M/s Renaissance Buildcon Company Pvt. Ltd., situated in village Kurali, Mohali (Punjab) and Village Rampur Kalan (Punjab). The said land is already mortgaged to various Banks & Institutions and the original title/sale deeds are in custody of the bank.

The above-named persons are already restrained from Hon'ble Delhi High Court in Co. Pet. 220/2013 from transferring, encumbering, alienating, disposing of or creating any third-party rights of the above said land. All Board Resolutions used by the above named persons are forged & fabricated and no authority whatsoever or any Board Resolution was ever passed by the undersigned company in their favour.

The public at large is informed that the above-said company has already initiated legal action against the above-named persons. Further, any person/s, companies, institutions who has been defrauded by the above said persons for the selling the undersigned company's land may take legal action against the above said persons at their own cost & risk.

The present Notice is issued in Public Interest.

Rajiv Bajaj Adv. (D/674/2006)  
SC/84, New Rohtak Road, New Delhi-110005  
9810806329; rajivbajajlaw@gmail.com

## FORWARD MARCH



## Guest from Nepal

For all the grandstanding in New Delhi, the rough edges in bilateral relations did impinge on the recent visit of Nepal's foreign minister, Pradeep Gyawali, to India. Chief among these was the inclusion of three Indian cities in the recently choreographed map of Nepal, described on this side of the border as cartographic aggression. Of a piece with the apparent cooling off of relations was the message conveyed to Mr Gyawali by the Ministry of External Affairs, specifically that boundary talks with the government in Kathmandu are unlikely until it amends the Oli government's unilateral initiative to incorporate areas that India claims as its own. Central to the raging tension, therefore, are the disputed territories. Yet these have been shown to be part of Nepal; the international border is too sensitive an issue to be settled with a stroke of the prime ministerial pen. And so it has been, going by the latest map of Nepal. "Kathmandu wants the bilateral relationship to go as if nothing has happened. That cannot happen," has been India's forthright retort, advanced in the presence of the neighbouring country's foreign minister. Mr Gyawali's visit did convey the message that bilateral relations were inching towards normality. Both sides have agreed that India was far more accommodative as regards the Covid vaccine, pledging to despatch the first package within a few weeks.

A striking feature of Gyawali's visit was that the guest left the host country without calling on the Prime Minister. Mr Narendra Modi's preoccupation with the vaccine was the official explanation that was proffered, but there is little doubt that this was a snub of sorts. Not the least because Nepal's Prime Minister, KP Sharma Oli, had regarded the boundary talks as the primary reason for Gyawali's visit, a compulsion that has been emphasised by the foreign minister. Arguably, the second reason must have been that India is loath to be viewed as taking sides, given the political uncertainty and infighting at the helm in Kathmandu. The equation between Oli and Prachanda is far from cordial, to say the least. Who actually pulls the strings in the Himalayan country has, over the past few weeks, been a matter of conjecture. Gyawali has rebutted the charge of unilateralism, asserting that India had advanced its political map in November 2019. While China had recently sent a delegation to Nepal to test the murky waters, India has thus far steered clear of the bickering at Kathmandu's helm of governance. Though Gyawali has spoken against "foreign interference", the fact remains that a high-level political delegation from China was in Kathmandu for three days in an attempt to settle the conflict within the Communist leadership. The flirtation between Nepal and China has been noticed, as indeed has its ambassador's interference in Nepal's domestic affairs. Noticed no less was Nepal's post-earthquake preference for Chinese assistance, peremptorily rejecting the airborne package from India. This is not to forget the prolonged border blockade.

## Starving Ethiopia

The cry for a biscuit says all and everything. It was a spurious victory that the federal government in Ethiopia had declared towards the end of November. The grim reality must be the humanitarian situation and fears of mass starvation ~ in parallel to the bloody strife ~ that the government will now have to contend with. The frightful reality was underscored recently at a meeting of humanitarian workers. "Hundreds of thousands might starve to death" in Ethiopia's Tigray region, according to a government official quoted in a leaked copy of notes. The government-run Tigray Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) is assessing the needs following the conflict there. Despite the federal government's declaration of victory, sporadic fighting has continued and the UN has described the humanitarian situation as "severe". Reports do indicate that food is not available or is extremely limited in markets. This has raised the risk of malnutrition. According to the Emergency Coordination Center (ECC), an estimated 4.5 million people need emergency food aid in Tigray, going by the figure quoted in a UN report. The population of Tigray is between 5 and 7 million. More than 50,000 have fled to neighbouring Sudan. Starvation amidst the strife has posed "outstanding challenges" that are still more forbidding, and recall the food crisis in Biafra (also in Africa) many winters ago.

Communication with much of the region remains difficult as phone lines and the internet have been cut making the verification of reports improbable. Hence perhaps the general refrain that "people are dying while they sleep". The situation on the ground is dire. If urgent emergency assistance is not mobilised, fears that hundreds of thousands might starve to death are dangerously real. Food and non-food items or other sources of livelihood are either looted or destroyed. Urgent emergency assistance is vital to save lives, the ECC was told. If the meeting's notes on 1 January are any indication, villagers are even asking for "a single biscuit". Ethiopia's defence forces entered Tigray early in November to oust the region's ruling party after its troops had captured federal military bases. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed insists that the army has been using proportional force to restore law and order and bring a "criminal clique" to justice. Since the end of November, there has been an operation to find fugitive Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) party leaders who vowed to continue the fight after the regional capital was captured by the army. According to the European Union's foreign affairs chief, Josep Borrell, the situation on the ground had gone "well beyond a purely internal law and order' operation". Hunger could be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

# Budget Blues

The government will need to boost consumption and demand as our economy remains primarily consumption driven; consumption contributed 72 per cent to our GDP last year. This implies that people should have money in their pockets and must be encouraged to spend it



After the disruptions caused by the pandemic forcing the government to dole out various stimulus packages, no one expects the budget numbers to hold. Even though the stimulus packages of Rs 20 lakh crore plus were more about easing liquidity than budgetary outgo, their impact on the fiscal deficit is not insignificant. It has taken a further blow from the revenue estimates falling way short of the target due to the prolonged interruption of economic activities. Even though these activities seem to have gathered some pace now, return to normalcy is still a far cry; in fact, we may not return to the old normal anytime soon and a new normal has to be calibrated and adjusted downwards.

According to the first advanced estimates released by the NSO, the real GDP is expected to contract by 7.7 per cent in 2020-21, while nominal GDP will contract by 4.2 per cent to Rs 194.8 lakh crore. A research estimates by the SBI projects a growth of 11 per cent in the real GDP for FY-2022 and 15 per cent in the nominal GDP to 224 lakh crore, as against 203 lakh crore in the last fiscal. SBI also expects the net revenue shortfall to be Rs 3.2 lakh crore and expenditure to exceed the budget estimates (BE) by Rs 3.3 lakh crore this fiscal, leading to a fiscal deficit of Rs 14.46 lakh crore, or 7.4 per cent of GDP, against the BE of Rs 7.96 lakh crore.

Actual data from the Controller General of Accounts, available till November 2020, shows fiscal deficit of Rs 10.76 lakh crore or 35 per cent more than BE by November end, and Government's market borrowing of more than Rs 12 lakh crore to finance this deficit. These figures corroborate the SBI research findings. Ms Nirmala Sitharaman will have to prepare her budget within the constraint of these numbers; she has very little fiscal space left for manoeuvring, given the stressed revenue position and spending pressures to spur economic activities. She has little option but to give fiscal consolidation a holiday and forget the FRBMA for the time being for reviving growth.

Next year, revenue may grow by an estimated 20 per cent to Rs 21.8 lakh crore. The December GST collections have surged to a peak of Rs 1.15 lakh crore. The Government is tightening controls against evasion and fraud at last; this must be accompanied by a reduction in the number of

slabs, by merging the 12 and 15 per cent slabs, and possibly eliminating the 5 per cent slab by distributing its taxable goods among the lower and upper slabs. This will significantly reduce classification disputes and litigation. An estimated Rs 9.56 lakh crore at the end of FY-2019 is locked up in tax litigation (direct taxes: Rs 8.02 lakh crore; indirect taxes Rs 1.54 lakh crore). Government should make all out efforts to settle these, if necessary, by giving concessions, to realise the much-needed revenue and also to release tax manpower for fresh assessments and follow up.

A major reason for receipt shortfall this year was the failure to achieve the disinvestment targets due to the disruption caused by the pandemic; against an estimated 2.1 lakh crore, the actual receipt so far is a

dismal Rs 12,778 crore. The process of disinvestment of Air India and BPCL is on, and with forthcoming disinvestments of LIC, SCI and Pawan Hans, the government can possibly garner Rs 2 lakh crore in the next fiscal. More non-strategic PSUs need to be privatised to generate more revenue.

As regards expenditure, there is an obvious need for trimming the umpteen number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes. Their restructuring into 28 schemes means very little as numerous schemes have been bundled together under a few umbrella schemes. The current budget provided Rs 3.4 lakh crore or 1.7 per cent of the GDP to these, and their rationalisation is essential for allocative efficiency.

For boosting growth, the budget priorities must be health, agriculture and infrastructure. The health expenditure in India is a paltry 1.15 per cent of GDP, and the PM has promised to raise it to 2.5 per cent by 2025, which is a tad too far if we are to combat the disruption by the pandemic. Even the 15th Finance Commission whose report is likely to be placed in Parliament along with the budget is believed to have recommended substantial increases in health expenditure. As it is, by the share of GDP spent on health, India ranks at 170 out of 188 countries as per the WHO's Global Health Expenditure database; its share of 1.15 per cent is way below the USA's 16.9 per

cent, OECD's 8.8 per cent, or China's 5 per cent. The immediate priority is vaccinating as many people as possible, and using the budget to boost the rural healthcare infrastructure.

To generate funds for investments in infrastructure and agriculture, the mechanism of tax-free bonds may be used to divert some of the funds from an overhated stock market with the Sensex getting within striking distance of 50,000, buoyed by substantial PIs of some \$25 billion during the last 4 months despite the sub-optimal fundamentals of a Covid-battered economy. The recently released Financial Stability Report of the RBI also highlighted the strong disconnect between the real economy and the financial markets as investors chase returns in the prevailing low

interest-rate scenario, making the financial sector increasingly vulnerable to risk. The report warned banks and financial intermediaries to be cautious against spillovers in an interconnected global financial system in a period of continued uncertainty, which may spread to the corporate and household sectors as well.

I have elsewhere argued for taxing the agricultural income but given the ongoing impasse between agitating farmers and a determined government, this is probably not the time to push it through. But the budget gives an opportunity to the government to pacify farmers. It will indeed be sad if the government is forced to repeal the bills or dilute these so much under pressure that their intent gets sabotaged, for this will permanently bring the curtains down on reforming the agriculture sector, so essential for realising the promise to double farmers' income ~ if not by 2022, a couple of years later.

For that promise to be realised, more reforms need to follow, including ending of Subsidy Raj for water, electricity and fertilisers that distort crop patterns and water usage, and the MSP that mostly benefits the farmers of a few northern states. Budget allocation on agriculture also needs to be increased substantially, with more funds to the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund scheme for setting up storage and processing facilities, besides supporting farmers, PACS, FPOs,

etc. in building community farming assets and post-harvest agriculture infrastructure to get the farmers higher value for their produce. Scope of the PM KISAN scheme may also be expanded. Last year the budget allocation on agriculture was only Rs 1.4 lakh crore, compared to Rs 4.7 lakh crore for Defence, which of course cannot be curtailed under the present scenario. Side by side the government will need to boost consumption and demand as our economy remains primarily consumption driven; consumption contributed 72 per cent to our GDP last year. This implies that people should have money in their pockets and must be encouraged to spend it.

This demands that firstly,

there should be no new taxation in the budget, secondly, the existing income tax rates must be rationalised further, extending the initiative the FM launched last year and reduce the tax burden especially at the lower slabs, and thirdly, interest rates should be kept low to discourage savings with appropriate incentives for senior citizens. One understands that given the stretched finances, there is little scope in reducing tax rates, but bringing it to the level of the reduced corporate tax rate of 22 per cent may be good for the economy and revenue in the long run. Export is another sector to boost growth. Our total trade amounted to 39.6 per cent of GDP in FY-2020, but its contribution to GDP as net exports was negative at -2.8 percent. However, from April to November, 2020, there was a net trade surplus of \$13.9 billion. In November, the Government announced Production Linked Incentives in 10 sectors like pharmaceuticals, automobiles, telecom, steel, etc. to reduce our dependence on China by giving 4-6 per cent incentives to companies on incremental sales from products manufactured in India. The scope of this may be extended to exports, over and above the other export incentives.

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A MEMBER OF THE

**ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

**Oxygen  
kannada?**

Environmentalists and religious dignitaries including Archbishop of Colombo, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, are cranking up pressure on the government to abandon a mega project to be implemented at the expense of a section of the Muthurajawela wetland. The incumbent dispensation apparently has a ravenous appetite for ecologically sensitive areas such as wetlands, forest reserves and wildlife sanctuaries. A state minister tried to clear a mangrove forest in Negombo to build a playground. He would have succeeded in his endeavour but for an intrepid female Forest Officer, named Devani Jayathilake, who stood up to him. In a bid to scoff at her concern for air quality in the area, he demanded to know whether oxygen could be 'eaten' - oxygen kannada? This seems to be the government motto where the environment is concerned. Another state minister took on a group of Wildlife officers who courageously frustrated his attempt to turn a wildlife sanctuary into a pastureland in Polonnaruwa. Now, some government worthies and their cronies are trying to gang-rape the precious wetland, nay ecological treasure trove, north of Colombo. Coronavirus reduces blood oxygen level in critically ill patients and makes them gasp for breath. Deforestation also could have a similar effect on humans. frantic efforts are being made to curb the spread of COVID-19, but precious little is done to prevent the deterioration of air quality due to the destruction of forests.

More than 82,000 acres of forest have been cleared for development projects, in this country, during the last decade, according to a recent news item in this newspaper. Development always entails an environmental cost, but everything possible must be done to mitigate its adverse effects and make it sustainable. The country's forest cover has receded to an alarming 17% due to development projects, agriculture and timber racks, and the need for urgent action to increase it cannot be overemphasised. But we have seen only half-hearted forest conservation or reforestation efforts during the last several decades.

The current administration has, in its wisdom, removed 'peripheral forests' or other state forests from the purview of the Forest Department and brought them under the Divisional and District Secretariats. This will invariably lead to encroachment and the destruction of the remaining trees in those areas, which should be left untouched for forests to recover. The country's forest cover suffered an irreparable damage at the hands of the British colonialists, who cleared virgin forests for coffee and tea plantations. But there were some colonial officers who really felt the need for forest conservation, unlike the so-called sons of the soil wielding power and wrapping themselves in the flag, today.

One of them was Sir Joseph Hooker, as Dr S A Meegama points out in his well-researched book, Guns, Taverns and Tea Shops: The Making of Modern Ceylon. Hooker intervened to prevent the British from clearing forests above five thousand feet. He, in fact, saved the forests around Sri Pada and the headwaters of the major rivers. It looks as if the present-day 'patriotic' leaders were making a determined effort to do what the British colonialists stopped short of doing.

## NPA WOES

SIR, The latest financial stability report of the RBI has struck a note of caution for the near and medium future. The report has sounded a warning about a financial crisis emanating from banks if some problems are not recognised and acted upon soon. In the report the RBI governor has warned that banks are likely to see "balance sheet impairments" and "capital shortfalls" in the coming months. The stress tests carried out by the RBI have given some ominous results. Bad loans could rise to 13.5 per cent by September 2021, as against 7.5 per cent in September last year. For public sector banks it would go upto 16 per cent. The report calls for financial development and risk mitigation efforts for better management of the recovery of bad loans. The government seems to be considering a proposal to extend the period for declaration of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs), but rather than pushing the crisis into the future, it should recognise the NPAs in time. It is necessary to do this early enough so that banks are in a position to raise credit levels when the economy starts picking up.

Yours, etc., Shovonali Chakraborty, Kolkata, 19 January.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

### Why should there be Dalits?

SIR, I would like to draw attention of the common man as well as of learned men by asking a question -- why should we give a denigrated appellation like 'Dalit' to some person or community? People dealing with politics use this term to brand a particular group of people who are said to be victims of social injustice, deprivation and harassment, and to whom they want to offer social justice, public support and honour of leading a normal human life. And such a gesture of playing good Samaritan is not always driven by a simple philanthropic spirit.

We have often seen that just before a General Election, a section of politicians who think themselves to be secular and philanthropic cry hoarse in favour of projecting the claims of the

'Dalit Samaj'. Here, a question arises. Since Independence, and since the promulgation of Constitutional provisions and laws, our country has been ruled under a parliamentary, democratic system where majority members of a political party, or a grouping of parties get the opportunity to rule at the Centre and in states. So, which political party, rule or administration should be held responsible for the plight of the downtrodden?

Yours, etc., B Sen, Kolkata, 18 January.

FARICAL STEP

SIR, This refers to the edi-

torial, 'Farce and reality' (12 January). The timing of the 'farical' step against the Lashkar-e-Taiba operations commander revealed a deceitful ploy before meetings of global terror finance watchdog, FATF.

As in the case of Hafiz Saeed, the action comes ahead of the meeting of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering on Tuesday and the FATF plenary in February.

Placement on the FATF 'grey list' is a warning of being put on the 'black list', which can invite global sanctions for Pakistan on being branded as uncooperative and a haven for terror funding.

The perception is that the routine exercise of arrests and convictions is carried out primarily to escape this eventuality. Pakistan has taken no real action against any of the terror networks and

terrorists operating from its soil against India.

The country is not willing to give up its confrontational attitude over Kashmir and needs the support of the likes of Lakhvi, Azhar and other hardcore terrorists.

A total of 146 Pakistanis are on the United Nations' most wanted terrorists list, including Lakhvi and Sayeed. Of those who target India, few are arrested, almost none convicted and none are ever punished.

It won't be surprising if, after the fear of blacklisting by the FATF is warded off, the deep state prevails upon the judiciary to get Lakhvi freed. As India begins its two-year tenure at the UN Security Council, it should vigorously campaign to ensure Islamabad ends up in FATF's 'blacklist', for failing to fulfil six key obligations.

Yours, etc., SS Paul, Nadia, 12 January.



ATANU BISWAS

**R**ajini has entered politics; now, will politics enter Rajini?" This was both a widespread joke and subject of media speculation when superstar Rajinikanth announced three years ago that he would launch a party and field candidates in all 234 Assembly constituencies in Tamil Nadu. In fact, Rajinikanth propounded "Faadhi madham illaadaa aanmiga arasiyal", literally translating into "spiritual politics without communalism or casteism", which was interpreted by many as an extension of the BJP's pro-Hindutva politics. And apparently Rajinikanth was seen as a natural ally of BJP in the Dravidian State.

Rajini's entrance in the political arena, however, was the natural consequence of more than a two decades-long wait for one of the most elusive political entries in the country. As a prelude to his political launch, Rajini's fan associations were integrated and converted into 'Rajini Makkal Mandram' (RMM) – a loosely structured outfit carved out for the epic political transition.

However, it is now clear that Rajinikanth never finally started his career in electoral politics. He remained in the transition phase for three long years, and in late 2020, in the backdrop of the poll-bound perspective in Tamil Nadu, he cited the Covid-19 pandemic and his health to make an exit even without entering politics. Much like his "spiritual" statements three years ago, Rajini's withdrawal also sounds spiritual: "I see this [hospitalisation] as a warning given to me by God." Fair enough, although earlier he had gone to the extent of saying he was ready to "sacrifice his life" for the people. And, although the possibility of Covid-19 was not there in the past, there is no doubt that Rajinikanth faced these health risks even when he made pronouncements about entering politics in December 2017.

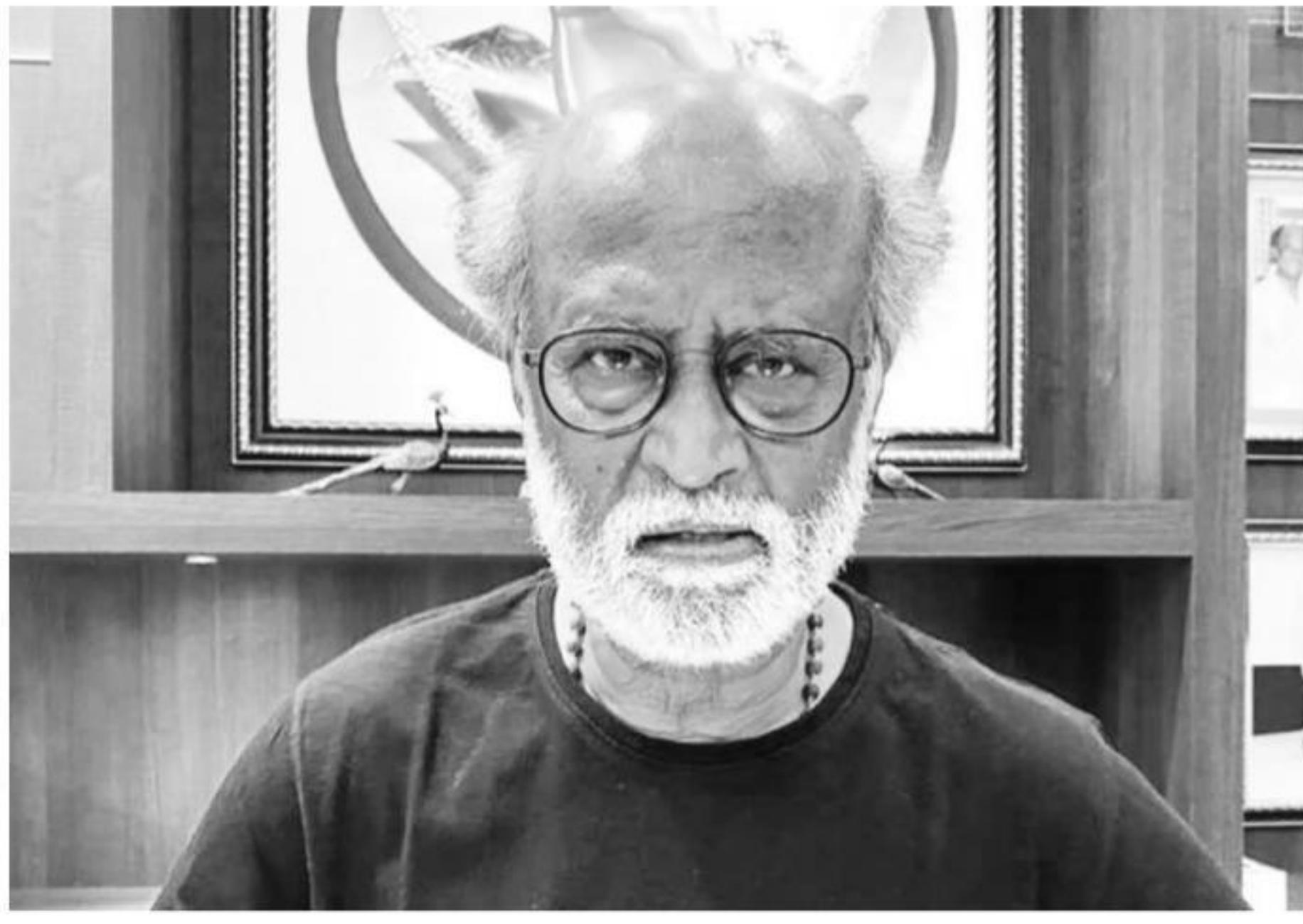
He was treated at a Singapore hospital in 2011 for a kidney ailment and underwent a kidney transplant at a hospital in the United States in May 2016. Moreover, Rajini's decision to withdraw himself from politics was not entirely a surprise – even before Covid-19 could exhibit its severity, as early as in March 2020, Rajini had given an indication that he was a reluctant political entrant.

## Would Rajini myth have survived political foray?

Over years, celluloid and Dravidian politics have been inseparable, although Kamaraj, a former chief minister of Tamil Nadu, was known to wonder: "How can there be government by actors?" Yet, Kamaraj was proved to be wrong as five out of seven chief ministers of Tamil Nadu from Dravidian parties so far are from Tamil cinema – either writers or actors. There is no denying that Dravidian politics depend too much on ethnic and cultural identity, and personalities associated with Tamil cinema have long dominated the political arena of the state. The illustrious list includes the likes of CN Annadurai, M Karunanidhi, MG Ramachandran, J Jayalalithaa, Sivaji Ganesan, SS Rajendran, Vijayakanth, Kamal Hasan. Rajinikanth, fondly called Thalaivaa (leader), is apparently a powerhouse in Tamil society, and has been viewed as a potentially powerful political player of the state for quite some time now.

"Naan late-aa vanthaalum latestaa varuven (Even if I arrive late, I will be the latest)." This was a very popular dialogue of Rajinikanth's 2002 movie 'Baba'. As his real-life entry into electoral politics did not materialise eventually, Rajinikanth would certainly remain an untested electoral force, despite having a 'larger than life' screen and social image and an almost similar political image bestowed upon him by several political experts and commentators.

Of course, there were those who thought Rajinikanth was a "marginal political player". Mani Shankar Aiyar, for example, believed that "it [Rajini's entrance in politics] is not going to make a tinker's difference." An interesting question we might search an answer for is: how successful could 'leader' Rajini be in Dravidian politics? Nobody really knows, and nobody would get to know this either. However, one may speculate that it was not a cakewalk for Rajinikanth in his quest to dominate the political scenario of Tamil Nadu as he would have still needed to fight with the legacies of towering leaders like Karunanidhi and Jayalalithaa had he



chosen to stick to electoral politics.

Let's have a brief review of the political influence of the politician who wasn't on Dravidian society during the last three decades or more. When, in 1988, the AIADMK split into two factions, led respectively by MG Ramachandran's wife Janaki and J Jayalalithaa, Rajinikanth supported Janaki Ramachandran. In the 1989 Assembly elections, Rajini fans worked for Janaki Ramachandran, but that didn't work. In the next Lok Sabha elections, Rajini fans worked hard for the DMK alliance, but the alliance failed miserably.

The superstar, however, tasted real political success about a quarter of a century ago. In 1996, when GK Moopanar quit Congress to protest the high command's decision to restore relations with the AIADMK,

and formed the Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC), Rajini declared support to the DMK-led TMC alliance. In a televised message, Rajinikanth said, "Even god cannot save Tamil Nadu if Jayalalithaa is re-elected to power." Many believe that one-liner sealed Jayalalithaa's fate in the 1996 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections. And, who knows, that could possibly have been the optimal moment for Rajinikanth's coronation in electoral politics. However, this success story was short-lived – Rajini supported the DMK-TMC alliance in the subsequent Lok Sabha elections in 1998, but his impact proved to be insignificant this time around when the alliance had a dismal electoral performance.

Then, Rajinikanth fasted for Cauvery water in 2002, which made him sort of a mass leader in Tamil Nadu.

He openly declared support to the BJP-AIADMK alliance in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, but the alliance failed to get even a single seat in the state.

Had Rajini not heard the "warning" from "God" and withdrawn himself from electoral politics, the electoral consequence in the forthcoming Assembly elections could still have been uncertain. There was no guarantee that the popularity of the actor would have carried over to the polling booth. Yes, there is no doubt that the actor has a tired body. Although some of his fans are still urging him to take the political plunge, for the time being, however, the "Rajini myth" survives. And that might be a great source of relief for Rajini fans as well.

The writer is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

## Decoding the 'special' marriage

JAWED NAQVI

**J**osh Malihabadi had a word for the pervasive suffocation that Indians are swamped by of late. "Ab booo-i-gul na baad-i-saba maangtay nain log! Woh habs hai ke loo ki dua maangtay hain log!" (The scent of flowers, the morning breeze, look distant if nice/ In this suffocating stillness a blast of scalding heat would suffice).

In this stillness, both political and cultural, came natural elation over the Allahabad High Court's ruling recently on civil marriages. The court deleted the waiting time and notice period of 30 days before a civil marriage could take place in Uttar Pradesh. The wait was a needless imposition, the court felt. And the requirement of a public notice impinged on the privacy of those who wanted to marry sans fanfare.

The pause clause is, however, not the issue it is made out to be. If anything, it's like the amber light before the green and seems to have been lifted from a not so disagreeable church practice. "If anyone has any objection to the marriage, they should speak up now or hold their peace forever," says the priest to the gathering without mostly inviting any trouble.

The court's order, albeit handy in some ways, has been projected as protection from harassment of marrying couples by social vigilantes, particularly if they were crossing religious or caste barriers that continue to mock the nation's egalitarian promise.

A more worrying reality is the fact that vigilantes enjoy unprecedented powers under the current set-up governing the country. The courts appear helpless before the daunting reality of majoritarian assertions in India, the same way as they are often known to



yield to mobs in Pakistan. What stops the mobs from coming for anyone before their marriage or after?

The essential problem with the Special Marriage Act of 1954 – a handy piece of legislation on its own – comes with couples who change religion or are made to convert in the bargain. This changing of beliefs in order to marry is a problematic practice for a secular country that India is. Conversion is not the issue here, which nobody should object to

between consenting adults. A woman or a man who wants to become a Hindu or a Muslim or a Christian should marry according to the rites prescribed in the chosen religion while leaving the Special Marriage Act alone. Religious conversion in a marriage denotes an illiberal spirit. One loves or likes the would-be partner but disapproves of his or her religion. The idea smacks of masked violence, as J. Krishnamurthy would say, violence not as much from any mob but

from the individuals who see the other's religion as inferior. The Special Marriage Act was meant to circumvent the crisis not to add to it.

There's a larger issue at stake, however. In their study of the institution of marriage, Marx and Engels had no hesitation in seeing its evolution as an adjunct of the bourgeois prop. A 'handmaiden of capitalism' is how they saw marriage. In 1846, they argued in The German Ideology that with the abolition of private property, "the abolition of the family is self-evident".

Engels noted subsequently, that the original meaning of the word 'family' (familia) "is not the compound of sentimentality and domestic strife which forms the ideal of the present-day philistine; among the Romans it did not at first even refer to the married pair and their children but only to the slaves. 'Familus' means domestic slave, and 'familia' is the total number of slaves belonging to one man. ... The term was invented by the Romans to denote a new social organism whose head ruled over wife and children and a number of slaves and was invested under Roman paternal power with rights of life and death over them all."

Indian objection to marriage presents itself in a less intellectual format. 'Ye shaadi nahi ho sakti'. This marriage cannot happen. On most counts the issue doesn't concern the Capulet-Montague problem. Usually, the hero objects to the marriage for his advantage over a trapped woman to be forcibly married off to the villain of the same religion. In popular Indian cinema, women are usually stripped of their agency in most matters concerning their lives. There are times when the villain pretends to res-

cue the heroine citing an uncertain future with the hero!

In some stories, stolen from more liberal ancient traditions, couples married quietly by skirting the presence of a third person such as the priest. Citing a pile of burning wood as witness was enough. Aradhana in 1969 became a blockbuster built around one such secret wedding, rooted in an ancient tradition called gandharva vivah. The ancient story of King Dushyant and Shakuntala is recast in countless modern narratives.

Aradhana made Rajesh Khanna a superstar, and gave Sharmila Tagore a money-spinner role, never mind that it would make her legendary mentor Satyajit Ray wince somewhat. Off screen, Tagore a Brahmo-Bengali woman married a cricket legend, Tiger Pataudi, and took a Muslim title as per tradition in her husband's erstwhile royal family. While the Hindu-Muslim couple appeared to be happily married, Rajesh Khanna struggled with his marriage to Dimple Kapadia. Success or failure in marriage is scarcely related to religion.

Thus, there's little special about the way Hindus or Muslims marry though they may claim an edge in their respective matrimonial systems. For example, consider the marriage records of the current prime ministers of India and Pakistan, one an avowed Hindu, the other a Muslim of pious hue. Observe the hash they have made of their marriages. The first president of India said in his memoirs he didn't see his wife's face as they only met in the dark for years; such was the custom in his household. Before daybreak, Babu Rajendra Prasad would slip back into the men's quarters, quietly, in keeping with tradition.

Dawn/ANN.

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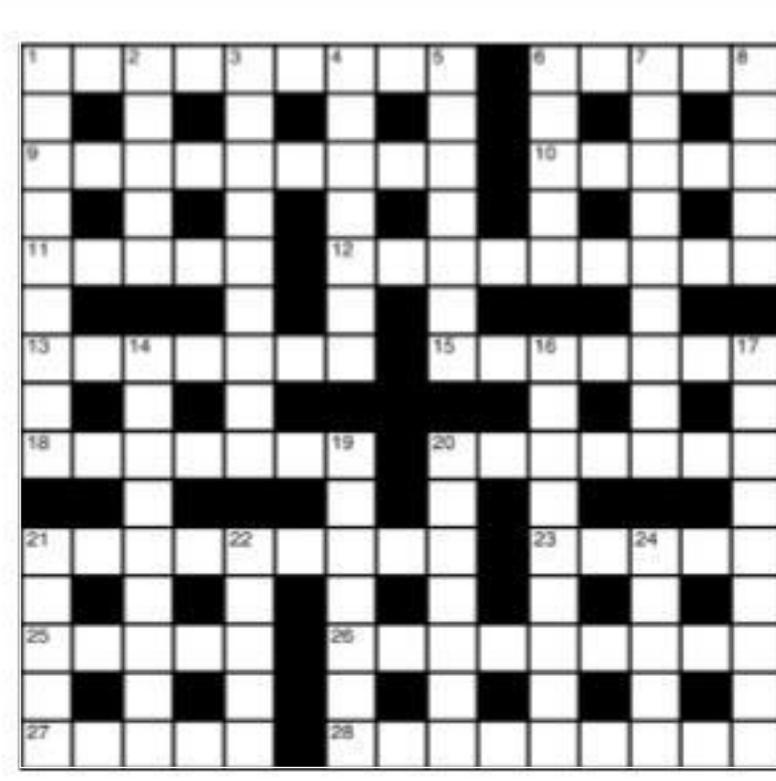
Calcutta is smoky and dusty enough at the best; how much worse it would be but for the work of the Smoke Nuisances Commission can be appreciated only by those who remember the state of things before the work of the department began to take effect. Nowadays the reduction of the smoke nuisance has been carried so far that, although complaints still have to be dealt with, the question is no longer a burning one – except literally – and the preventive work of the Commission has passed into the category of public functions which are taken as matters of course. From the report just gazetted it appears that nearly 10,000 observations of smoke emission were taken during last year; 3,288 factories were visited for instruction; the lowest average on record was obtained in the discharge of dense smoke; this reduction being ascribed largely to the employment of trained firemen and the use of improved installations; while a general reduction is noted in smoke nuisances of all kinds. Some measure of the improvement, of course, must be attributed to the extended use of electric power and gas; but for the greater part of the benefit the Calcutta public has to thank the work of the Smoke Commission and the co-operation of the owners and managers of factories in work which is economical from the industrial point of view as well as beneficial to the health and comfort of the community.

Ramchander Ganesh Despande, head clerk in the family allotments section of the office of the 3rd Sappers and Miners, Kirkee, was charged before Mr. French, Sessions Judge, and a jury, with misappropriation of sums due to relatives of men killed on active service amounting to about Rs 220. The Judge, in his charge to the jury, pointed out mistakes and corrections made in the books of account, which were badly kept. They had not heard that anyone had missed any money. The only reason why this alleged fraud came to light was a discrepancy between the amounts of money orders despatched and amounts alleged to have been due for despatch as pointed out by the Audit Office. The jury found accused not guilty and the Judge discharged him.

Bombay, Jan 19  
The Times of India, in a leading article, states that the evidence before the Railway Committee in Calcutta, though painting the position correctly, has failed to suggest any improvement. No one seems to have recognised that the financial and commercial interests of India have the slightest responsibility for the provision of railway money. The Government itself is very short of money, and the idea of a bumper railway budget for the coming year is a chimera. Our financiers and industrialists are not one whit better. They must realise that they cannot have the railway facilities they require without subscribing adequately to railway loans. It is not abuse, but constructive suggestions that are expected from witnesses before the Railway Committee.

In view of the financial position of the Loreto Orphanage, Entally, the Government of Bengal, appointed a Committee consisting of Mr. R. Clarke, Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, as chairman, Mr. P. Lovett and Mr. E.J. Robins, as members, and Mr. A. Mercer, Inspector of European Schools, Bengal, as member and secretary, to examine the affairs of the institution and to make proposals for its future conduct, showing what proportions of the cost should come from public revenues and private contributions, respectively. Owing to the continued illness of Mr. Mercer it was found to be subsequently necessary to appoint Mr. E.F. Oaten to take his place as member and secretary. The Government of Bengal are not now in a position to enter upon any undertaking with regard to such additional financial assistance.

An eloquent appeal on behalf of Indian women was made by Miss Maya Das, of the National Y.W.C.A., at the joint annual meeting of the National and Calcutta Young Women's Christian Associations held in Calcutta yesterday. Miss Maya Das urged the necessity of training young women for Y.W.C.A. work in the villages. When one remembers, she said, that there are nearly 200,000 women in India of whom only one per cent are educated, and that it is impossible for many to attend school. When one thinks of the lack of sanitation and of the many children who die because of the ignorance of the mothers, one cannot help but feel that this condition of affairs is a direct challenge to us.



**YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION**

O	H	C	A	P	T
CHARM	L	I	E	R	R
BAND	M	N	E	A	P
DELETE	O	P	I	B	
ASIA	S	W	R	M	E
L	I	S	U	N	
SUIT	T	R	I	D	O
L	A	F	P	O	S
R	N	S	Y	L	S

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)

ACROSS

- 1 I gag on a cored root vegetable (9)
- 6 Criminals purchasing island? (5)
- 9 I got the job! So at last tucked into a quiet beer and some drugs (9)
- 10 Coat boat in paint artfully at the bow (5)
- 11 Tense editor, after taking religious instruction, had a shot (5)
- 12 Stick around area to meet a bloke and a US highwayman (4,5)
- 13 Senior and half-cut wino drinking beer and port (7)
- 15 Flipping party time? Pops off to get drinks! (7)
- 18 With no goals, direct girl to sub American for European (7)
- 20 Go back out with foremost of Romeos for a start! (7)
- 21 Broken many bones? Certainly not! (2,5)
- 23 Son with affected mannerisms is a little rascal (5)
- 25 Managed to collar canine that's released bit of ghastly gas (5)
- 26 A bit cruel to get plastered in oil? (9)
- 27 Like the sound of Serpent in a childish tantrum? (5)
- 28 Odd sort of awful penis droop? Not!! (3,6)
- 29 Royal secret police allowed into three articles (9)
- 30 On the contrary, I love marijuana themes in literature! (5)
- 31 Not having a tot or two riled chef up (5-4)
- 32 Lake beside a port, time to get in! (7)
- 33 English soldier seen around section is simply ingenious (7)

DOWN

- 1 Royal secret police allowed into three articles (9)
- 2 On the contrary, I love marijuana themes in literature! (5)
- 3 Not having a tot or two riled chef up (5-4)
- 4 Lake beside a port, time to get in! (7)
- 5 English soldier seen around section is simply ingenious (7)
- 6 Cocaine high and drops of potent Armenian brew (5)
- 7 Old person realities sent off the rails (9)
- 8 Sting and Summers essentially invested small paintings (5)
- 14 After eating delicious starter, munched meal with one's drinks (9)
- 16 Give diet up, having eaten last of this? (9)
- 17 He's a spy in Barking that's both tough and useless (9)
- 19 Ring work after bit of spoilt seafood (7)
- 20 One soon to make a bloomer got up and sat on friend (7)
- 21 Bed woman, having had bottom pinched (5)
- 22 Butch Cassidy finally goes after chap heading for Louisiana (5)
- 24 Male idiot behind opening of Avengers Assemble (5)



If India has to grow at 9-10 per cent over a three-decade period, it must be open, it must be an integral part of the global economy.

AMITABH KANT  
NITI AAYOG CEO

## THUMBNAILS

**ICSI president:** Company secretaries' apex body ICSI on Monday said Nagendra D Rao has been elected as its president. Devendra V Deshpande has been elected as the vice-president, according to a release. They have been elected as president and vice-president of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) for 2021, with effect from 19 January 2021. Rao has more than 15 years of experience in the corporate sector. He specialises in corporate and securities laws, capital markets transactions, mergers and acquisitions, financial restructuring, among others.

PTI

**Anarock acquisition:** Homegrown property consultant Anarock has acquired society and apartment management platform ApnaComplex from Bengaluru-based NestAway Technologies for around Rs 100 crore. Anarock announced the deal late Monday, but did not disclose the deal value. Over 22,000 apartment societies are using the ApnaComplex platform in over 80 cities across India.

PTI

**Co-lending pact:** Fairfax and CDC-backed IIFL Finance on Tuesday said its wholly-owned subsidiary IIFL Home Finance Ltd and Standard Chartered Bank have entered into a co-lending arrangement for extending MSME loans. Under this partnership, IIFL Home Finance Ltd and the Standard Chartered Bank will co-originate these loans and the IIFL Home Finance Ltd will service the customers through the entire loan life-cycle, IIFL Finance said in a regulatory filing.

PTI

**BHEL awarded:** Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has won the coveted "ICAI National Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting" for the financial year 2019-20, said a Press release issued by the company. The award was received by Subodh Gupta, director (finance), BHEL, from Arjun Ram Meghwal, Union minister of state for parliamentary affairs and heavy industries & public enterprises, the release added.

SNS

**Shell unit:** Royal Dutch Shell's India unit on Tuesday announced the start of operation of its small-scale LNG supply with a truck-loading unit being inaugurated at its LNG import terminal at Hazira in Gujarat. Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the LNG truck-loading unit, the company and the oil ministry said in separate statements.

PTI

**BoM profit:** State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) on Tuesday reported a 14 per cent increase in net profit to Rs 154 crore for the third quarter ended December 2020, helped by a decline in bad loans. The Pune-based lender had posted a net profit of Rs 135 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal.

PTI

# Bulls make a comeback, Sensex soars 834 points

Investors return to buying mode amid expectations of fresh stimulus in the US and other economies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 19 JANUARY

**R**aversing two days of heavy losses, the Sensex posted its biggest jump in almost four months on Tuesday as investors returned to buying mode amid expectations of fresh stimulus in the US and other economies.

A recovering rupee and persistent foreign capital inflows further buoyed sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex soared 834.02 points or 1.72 per cent to close at 49,398.29 points. It was its biggest single-day gain since 25 September 2020, when it had climbed 835 points.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rallied 239.85 points or 1.68 per cent to finish at 14,521.15 points.

Bajaj Finserv was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, jumping 6.77 percent, followed by Bajaj Finance, HDFC, Larsen & Toubro, ICICI Bank, Sun Pharma and NTPC.

HDFC twins, Reliance

## BIGGEST JUMP IN FOUR MONTHS

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► The broader NSE Nifty rallied 239.85 points or 1.68 per cent to finish at 14,521.15 points.

Industries and ICICI Bank accounted for almost half of the benchmark's gains.

Only three Sensex components closed in the red - Tech Mahindra, ITC and Mahindra & Mahindra, shedding up to 0.54 per cent.

Global equities were on an upswing after US President-elect Joe Biden's nominee for treasury secretary, former Federal Reserve chair Janet Yellen, batttered for more measures to fight the recession and avoid an even worse downturn.

In testimony prepared for her confirmation hearing today before the Senate Finance Committee, Yellen said more aid is needed to get coronavirus vaccines distributed and help families struggling with job losses stay fed and housed.

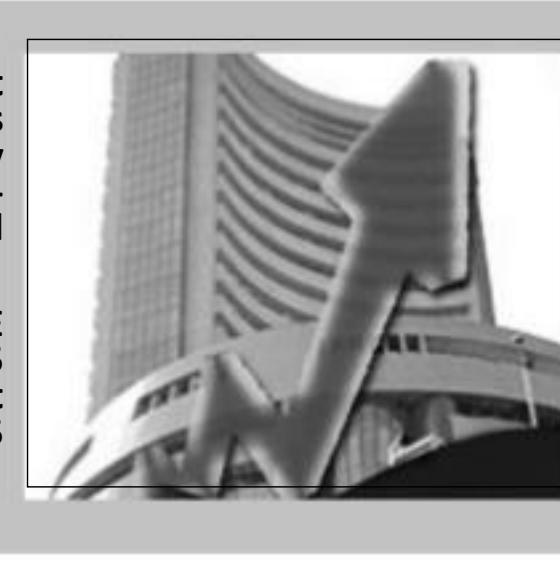
"Bulls took control after two days of massive sell-off, tracking positive cues from Asian markets and in expectation of a bigger US stimulus to keep the liquidity alive. Buying was seen across sectors with realty and PSU banks outshining."

"The current market will

get further boost by foreign inflow if additional US stimulus kicks in. However, recent volatility in the market has increased due to concerns over high valuations and bond yields, and investors should be watchful," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

All sectoral indices ended with gains. BSE realty, metal, power, capital goods, industrials and finance indices rallied up to 4.04 per cent.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices jumped up to 2.31 per cent.



## MP allowed to raise ₹1,423 cr through market borrowing

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Madhya Pradesh has been permitted to raise additional Rs 1,423 crore through market borrowing after the state implemented power sector reforms, said the finance ministry in a statement. The state has started direct benefit transfer (DBT) of electricity subsidy to farmers in one district of the state with effect from December 2020. Thus, the state has successfully implemented one out of the three stipulated reforms in the power sector.

Successful implementation of the reform has made the state eligible to mobilise additional financial resources equivalent to 0.15 per cent of its gross state domestic product (GSDP), reads the Press

release from the finance ministry.

Power sector reforms stipulated by the ministry of finance aim at creating a transparent and hassle-free provision of power subsidy to farmers and prevent leakages. As per the guidelines issued by the department of expenditure, the states undertaking reforms in the power sector are granted permission to raise additional financial resources of up to 0.25 per cent of the GSDP. This is linked to a set of 3 reforms in the sector: 0.05 per cent of GSDP for reduction in aggregate technical and commercial losses in the state as per prescribed targets. Another 0.05 per cent of GSDP is allowed for reduction in the gap between average cost of supply and average revenue

realisation (ACS-ARR gap) in the state as per prescribed targets. Finally, 0.15 per cent of GSDP of the state on introduction of direct benefit transfer (DBT) to all farmers in the state in lieu of free/ subsidised electricity. For this, the state government has to frame a scheme for transfer of cash and implement the scheme in at least one district by 31 December 2020.

The Centre had in May last year enhanced the borrowing limit of the states by 2 per cent of their GSDP. Half of this special dispensation was linked to undertaking citizen-centric reforms by the states.

The states get permission to raise additional funds equivalent to 0.25 per cent of GSDP on completion of reforms in each sector.

## Need to increase R&D investment: Trai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Increasing R&D investment to expand technology development capabilities and leveraging Indian IT industry's prowess to serve requirements of Indian and global telecom players can help in moving towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India), Trai chairman P D Vaghela said today.

Speaking at the 15th India Digital Summit, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) chairman P D Vaghela outlined some of the steps that can be taken to make "speedy progress and to make India self-reliant" in the telecom space.

"We need to increase investment in research and development (R&D); this is very important... To be self-reliant in the technology space, which is critical for economic and statistical perspective, we need to transform from consumer to producer of technology," he said.

"The commercial research innovations standardisation and product development need to be incentivised. Such innovation can also focus on meeting developing countries' requirement in the most

effective manner and this will open vast market for such products for India," he added.

Vaghela said India's IT industry capability can be leveraged to build, operate and maintain software products that can serve Indian as well as global telecom industry, at a reasonable price.

"We all know that the maximum value addition is in the technology development, designing of products and services over the life cycle. Keeping in view India's strength in these areas, global companies have already started to establish their R&D centres in India. India has potential to

be a global leader in telecom software development and servicing space," he added.

Government and regulators can play a major role in encouraging digital innovation and incentivising the development of digital technology for the benefit of society, he noted.

Vaghela said there is a need to push indigenous telecom products in India amid the booming growth in mobile and fixed-line broadband as well as rise of Industry 4.0 and digital automation.

"India has launched a series of market reforms in the last few years that form the foundation for enhancing India's appeal as a manufacturing base. With the skill base in India that includes telecommunication also and the scale of domestic market and technology orientation, India presents an attractive option for global manufacturers," he added.

Consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 2,221.25 crore in the quarter under review as against Rs 1,761.77 crore in the year-ago period, a growth of 26 per cent, it added.

Commenting on the company's performance, Ceat Ltd managing director Anant Goenka said: "This quarter's growth has been achieved on the back of

Ceate reports over 2-fold jump in profit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Tyre major Ceat Ltd today reported over two-and-a-half fold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 132.34 crore in the third quarter ended on 31 December 2020, riding on robust sales.

The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 52.5 crore in the year-ago period, Ceat Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

Consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 2,221.25 crore in the quarter under review as against Rs 1,761.77 crore in the year-ago period, a growth of 26 per cent, it added.

During the quarter, the company's continuous effort to judiciously manage cash helped in bringing down debt by Rs 260 crore, Ceat Ltd chief financial officer Kumar Subbiah said.

tured, and you can be only competitive if you can use the power of technology," he said.

Noting that India's digital divide is narrowing down, Kant said if you look at the huge growth in Unified Payments Interface (UPI), it has grown manifold.

On the production-linked incentive (PLI) plan, he said the scheme in electronics and mobile manufacturing has received very good response.

"Like mobile and electronic manufacturing, the PLI scheme for battery manufacturing will give a much-needed fillip to country's manufacturing," Kant said, adding India needs to get into sunrises areas of growth.

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has democratised access to financial services, the CEO added.

"India's poor people's access to the financial product is increasing due to the country's fintech revolution," he said.

Kant also pointed out that India is the vaccine capital of the world, as the country makes 70 per cent of the world's vaccine.

These startups will then get an opportunity to showcase their business proposition to partner VC firms Sequoia Capital India and Fireside Ventures and three of them will get a chance to win a total equity free grant of \$50,000 from Amazon.

Amazon will also host open virtual mentorship sessions focused on peer learning by inviting veteran entrepreneurs and members from its mentorship board for startups, to network and learn from their existing ecosystem.

"The adoption of technology and digital transformation has paved the way for India to be at the forefront of innovation, giving rise to some of the best startups in the world. There are many promising emerging brands that have the capability to become big and

go global.

"This is a timely initiative by Amazon which can prove to be a big stepping stone for startups to build their business and get access to global markets," Deepak Bagla, managing director and chief executive officer of Invest India, said.

Amit Agarwal, global senior vice-president and country head, Amazon India, said Amazon Global Selling is witnessing tremendous momentum with increasing interest from exporters across India.

"With Amazon Global Selling, we will continue to make exports simple and accessible to businesses of all sizes and fulfil our commitment of enabling \$10 billion in e-commerce exports from India by 2025," he added.

**Petrol, diesel continue to become dearer**

NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Petrol price today breached the Rs 85 a litre mark in the national capital and diesel neared record high after rates were raised for the second consecutive day. Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 25 paise per litre each, according to a price notification from oil marketing companies.

This took the petrol price in Delhi to Rs 85.20 per litre and to Rs 91.80 in Mumbai.

Diesel rate climbed to Rs 75.38 a litre in the national capital - just shy away from its record high - and to an all-time high of Rs 82.13 in Mumbai, the price data showed.

Petrol and diesel prices are at a record high in Mumbai, petrol price in Delhi is at an all-time high. Diesel price is just short of Rs 75.45 a litre record touched on 4 October 2018.

State-owned fuel retailers - Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd - had on 6 January resumed daily price revision after nearly a month-long hiatus.

Since then rates have gone up by Rs 1.49 a litre on petrol and Rs 1.51 in case of diesel.

This comes after international oil prices firm up on hopes of demand returning from the roll-out of coronavirus vaccines in different countries, including India.

When fuel prices had last touched record high on 4 October 2018, the government had cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 1.50 per litre in a bid to ease inflationary pressure and boost consumer confidence. Alongside, state-owned fuel retailers cut prices by another Re 1 a litre, which they recouped later.

## Tata Comm registers 5-fold jump in profit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Digital technology firm Tata Communications posted over a five-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 309.41 crore for the December 2020 quarter. The company had registered a profit of Rs 58.85 crore in the corresponding period of the preceding fiscal.

Its income from operations was almost flat at Rs 4,222.83 crore during the reported quarter compared with Rs 4,228.27 crore in the year-ago period, it said in a BSE filing.

In a statement, Tata Communications said the consolidated PAT (profit after tax) had grown 428 per cent

## P-notes investment at 31-month high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Investment through participatory notes (P-notes) in the domestic capital market rose to a 31-month high of Rs 87,132 crore at December-end, reflecting the bullish stance of FPIs.

P-notes are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to overseas investors who wish to be part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly. They, however, need to go through a due diligence process.

According to Sebi data, the value of P-note investments in Indian markets ~ equity, debt, and hybrid securities ~ increased to Rs 87,132 crore till December-end from Rs 83,114 crore at the November-end.

### BULLISH STANCE OF FPIs

► According to Sebi data, the value of P-note investments in Indian markets ~ equity, debt, and hybrid securities ~ increased to Rs 87,132 crore till December-end from Rs 83,114 crore at the November-end.

► This is the highest level of investment since May 83,114 crore at the November-end.

This is the highest level of investment since May 2018, when the fund inflow through this route stood at Rs 93,497 crore.

October 2020, although it had declined to Rs 69,82 crore in September after witnessing growth since March.

Prior to that, the investment level was Rs 74,027 crore in August, Rs 63,228 crore (July), Rs 62,138 crore (June), Rs 60,027 crore (May) and Rs



We know that people from Israel and India provided funds to bring Imran Khan to power

PAKISTAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT CHIEF FAZUL REHMAN  
OPPOSITION PARTIES PROTEST AGAINST DELAY IN FOREIGN FUNDING CASE OF PM KHAN'S PARTY

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY 2021

09

## Panel: China, WHO should have acted quicker to stop Covid-19

Ex-Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf & former New Zealand PM Helen Clark lead the panel

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
GENEVA, 19 JANUARY

A panel of experts commissioned by the World Health Organisation has criticised China and other countries for not moving to stem the initial outbreak of the coronavirus earlier and questioned whether the UN health agency should have labelled it a pandemic sooner.

In a report issued on Monday, the panel led by former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said there were lost opportunities to apply basic public health measures at the earliest opportunity and that Chinese authorities could have applied their efforts more forcefully in January shortly after the coronavirus began

Indian, international students ask China to permit them to return to re-join courses. Thousands of Indian and international students studying in Chinese universities, who are unable to return to the country due to Covid curbs, have appealed to the government to lift the travel ban and permit them to return to resume their studies. In an open letter posted on Facebook, the students said the Chinese government has suspended all resident permits and visas for international students from March last year. Over 4.40 lakh foreign students from various parts of the world studied in China, including about 25,000 from India.

sickening clusters of people.

The reality is that only a minority of countries took full advantage of the information available to them to respond to the evidence of an emerging pandemic, the panel said.

The experts also wondered why WHO did not declare a global public health emergency sooner. The UN health agency convened its emergency committee on January 22, but did not characterise the emerging pandemic as an

international emergency until a week later. At the time, WHO said its expert committee was divided on whether a global emergency should be declared.

One more question is whether it would have helped if WHO used the word pandemic earlier than it did, the panel said. WHO did not describe the outbreak as a pandemic until March 11, weeks after the virus had begun causing explosive outbreaks in numerous countries, meeting WHO's own definition for a flu pandemic.

WHO's top experts disputed how infectious the virus was, saying it was not as contagious as flu and that people without symptoms rarely spread the virus. Scientists have since concluded that it transmits even quicker than the flu and that a significant proportion of spread is from people who don't appear to be sick.

Over the past year, WHO has come under heavy criticism for its handling of the response to Covid. US President Trump slammed the UN health agency for colluding with China to cover up the extent of the initial outbreak before halting US funding for WHO and pulling the country out of the organisation.

An Associated Press investigation in June found WHO

repeatedly lauded China in public while officials privately complained that Chinese officials stalled on sharing critical epidemic information with them.

Although the panel concluded that many countries took minimal action to prevent Covid internally and internationally, it did not name specific countries. It also declined to call out WHO for its failure to more sharply criticise countries for their missteps instead of lauding countries for their response efforts. Last month, the author of a withdrawn WHO report into Italy's response warned his bosses in May that people could die and the agency could suffer catastrophic reputational damage if it allowed political concerns to suppress the document, according to emails obtained by the AP.

## Kremlin brushes off Western calls to release Alexei Navalny

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MOSCOW, 19 JANUARY

The Kremlin on Tuesday brushed off calls from US and European officials to release opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who was arrested after returned to Russia from Germany following treatment for nerve agent poisoning, calling the situation with Navalny an absolutely internal matter.

Statements have come from around the globe condemning the arrest and calling for the immediate release of Navalny, who blames his poisoning on President Vladimir Putin's government.

They add to the existing tensions between Russia and the West, with some EU countries suggesting the imposition of additional sanctions against Moscow.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Tuesday that we can't and are not going to take these state-

ments into account.

We are talking about a fact of non-compliance with the Russian law by a citizen of Russia. This is an absolutely internal matter and we will not allow anyone to interfere in it and do not intend to listen to such statements," Peskov told reporters.

Navalny was detained at passport control at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport after flying in Sunday evening from Berlin, where he was treated following the poisoning in August.

He was ordered to pre-trial detention for 30 days Monday during a court hearing that was hastily set up at a police precinct where Navalny was being held.

The UN human rights office has raised alarm over the arrest of Russian opposition activist Aleksei Navalny and called for his immediate release.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on Monday tweeted that it was "deeply troubled" by Navalny's arrest and called on the Russian government to respect his right to legal due process.

## Iran kicks off ground forces drill on coast of Gulf of Oman

TEHRAN, JAN 19

Iran's military kicked off a ground forces drill on Tuesday along the coast of the Gulf of Oman, state TV reported, the latest in a series of snap exercises that the country is holding amid escalating tensions over its nuclear program and Washington's pressure campaign against Tehran.

According to the report, commando units and airborne infantry were participating in the annual exercise, along with fighter jets, helicopters and military transport aircraft. Iran's National Army chief Abdolrahim Mousavi was overseeing the drill.

Iran has recently stepped up military drills as part of an effort to pressure President-elect Joe Biden over the nuclear deal. Biden has said the US could rejoin the multinational accord meant to contain Iran's nuke program.

On Saturday, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard conducted a drill, launching anti-warship ballistic missiles at a simulated target at a distance of some 1,800 km in the Indian Ocean, a day after the Guard's aerospace division launched surface-to-surface ballistic missiles and drones against hypothetical enemy bases in the country's vast central desert. Last Thursday, Iran's navy fired cruise missiles as part of a naval drill in the Gulf of Oman, under surveillance of what appeared to be a US submarine. PTI

### DIZZY HEIGHTS



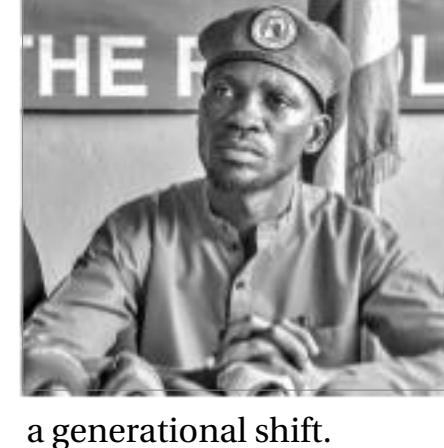
Nepalese climber scale K2 for first time in the winter. ■ IANS

## Despite election loss, Uganda's Bobi Wine wins growing power

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KAMPALA, 19 JANUARY

Ugandan presidential challenger Bobi Wine has emerged from last week's disputed election as the country's most powerful Opposition leader after his party won the most seats of any opposition group in the national assembly.

It's a major achievement for a party that's barely six months old and almost didn't make it on the ballot when it was accused by government officials of being an illegal entity. While longtime President Yoweri Museveni has been declared the winner of a sixth term, the rise of the 38-year-old Wine's party marks



a generational shift.

We set out to see change of leadership at all levels. We have not achieved the ultimate, but we are still on course. It's like felling a tree. You keep cutting, chipping away until the tree falls," said Joel Ssenyonjo, spokesman for Wine's National Unity Platform.

Removing Museveni

through voting, he added, is not easy, but it's not impossible. Wine, a singer-turned-lawmaker whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, now will decide who leads the opposition in Uganda's legislature after his party won at least 56 seats. That number could rise to 61 when final results are announced.

But the ruling National Resistance Movement party still has over 300 seats, an absolute majority that means Museveni can move ahead with his agenda without negotiating with the opposition.

Wine's party, however, also will lead the influential oversight committee that long were dominated by an oppo-

sition group led by Kizza Besigye, who sat out this election amid Wine's meteoric rise.

He has managed to write something new," Nicholas Sengoba, an analyst and newspaper columnist, said of Wine. "He has put a dent in the Museveni establishment. He has dented the narrative in Uganda that to be a national leader you must have a military background."

Museveni, a former guerrilla leader who has held office since 1986, faced arguably his greatest election challenge yet from Wine. The 76-year-old president was able to run for another term, allowing him to extend his rule to four decades, after lawmak-

## Massive car pileup on Japan highway

TOKYO, 19 JANUARY

One person was killed and at least 17 injured Tuesday in a massive pileup of at least 134 vehicles in blizzard conditions on a highway in northern Japan, officials said.

About 200 people were stranded in the pileup, which forced the closure of the Tohoku Expressway in Miyagi prefecture, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency said.

Public broadcaster NHK said highway authorities finished cleaning up the debris after about eight hours.

AP

## Hindu temple given protection in Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PESHAWAR, 19 JANUARY

Policemen were deployed on Tuesday to protect a Hindu temple in northwest Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, days after a leader of the minority community demanded protection for the place of worship fearing an attack by some mischievous elements who wanted to occupy its land.

The move comes after officials of the District Evacuee Property Trust Committee and District Revenue in a meeting with Deputy Commissioner, Abbottabad, on Tuesday held that Havelian temple in Abbottabad district is a historic religious structure and needs protection.

On the recommendations of the officials in the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Mughees Sanaullah directed deployment of police personnel at the temple site for its protection.

For decades a US ally on regional security, Museveni now finds himself increasingly at odds with an outside world he sees as hellbent on regime change. Wine has urged the international community, including the United States, to suspend the billions of dollars in foreign aid that he says props up a brutal regime. Museveni, in response, has called Wine a foreign agent and says he will not tolerate interference from the international partners whose money helps his government provide important public services.

On the recommendations of the officials in the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Mughees Sanaullah directed deployment of police personnel at the temple site for its protection.

On Sunday, Hindu community leader Haroon Sarab Dayal said the temple in Havelian city is an old structure and now the land mafia is out to destroy this heritage. "A handful of mischievous elements wanted to occupy the temple land in Havelian city to spread anarchism in the country," he said.

The officials also held that the lease owner of the temple could neither demolish nor make any alterations in it or use the structure for any commercial purpose. The officials informed the meeting that as per District Revenue Record, the temple existed at the land which was leased out to one Sardar Ramzan in 2013. Before that, the building was also used by other people for different purposes.

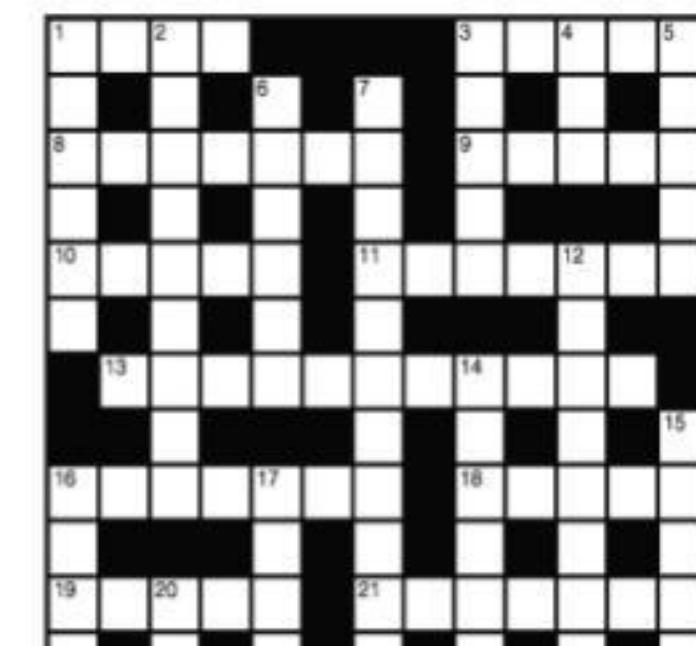
In December, a temple in Terri village in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Karak district was attacked by a mob after members of the Hindu community received permission from local authorities to renovate its decades-old building. The mob had demolished the newly constructed work alongside the old structure. The attack on the temple in Terri village by members of radical Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam party (Fazlur Rehman group) drew strong condemnation from human rights activists and the minority Hindu community leaders, prompting the Supreme Court to order its reconstruction.

Hindus form the biggest minority community in Pakistan. According to official estimates, 75 lakh Hindus live in Pakistan. However,

according to the community, over 90 lakh Hindus are living in the country.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



### ACROSS

- 1 Run quickly (4)
- 3 Beditting a monarch (5)
- 8 Drive back (7)
- 9 Spice (5)
- 10 Range (5)
- 11 Railway track support (7)
- 13 Separate (4,7)
- 16 Cheese (7)
- 18 Tusk material (5)
- 19 Large deer (5)
- 21 Blased (7)
- 22 Sacred water lily (5)
- 23 Otter's lair (4)
- 24 Gaucho, 11 Tipple, 13 Misde- meanour, 18 Runabout, 20 Inch, 21 Here, 22 Erse, 12 Armour, 14 Panner, 16 Snare, 17 Uncle, 19 One, 4 Edible tuber (3), 5 Passenger ship (5), 6 Even though (6), 7 Earthquake recorder (11), 12 Tilting train (9), 14 Gripping tool (6), 15 Small hole (6), 16 Desert animal (5), 17 Residue (5), 20 Frequently (Archaic) (3)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

- ACROSS 1 Seek, 11 Gaucho, 13 Tipple, 15 Misde- meanour, 18 Runabout, 20 Inch, 21 Here, 22 Erse, 12 Armour, 14 Panner, 16 Snare, 17 Uncle, 19 One, 4 Edible tuber (3), 5 Passenger ship (5), 6 Even though (6), 7 Earthquake recorder (11), 12 Tilting train (9), 14 Gripping tool (6), 15 Small hole (6), 16 Desert animal (5), 17 Residue (5), 20 Frequently (Archaic) (3)

By arrangement with The Independent

Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

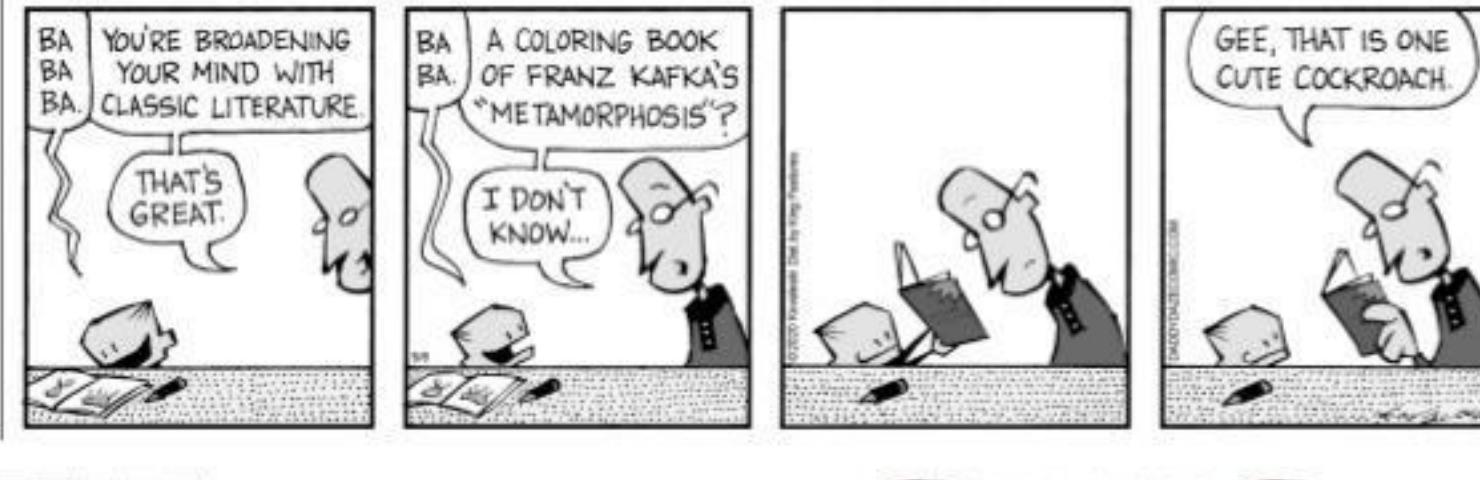
### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

#### RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800125151

SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

#### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

Haryana Roadways 23861262

Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403

Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

PAR SCORE 100-110

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

SCRABBLE® BRAND

© 2001 Hasbro Studios, Inc.

Instructions Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each rack.

Add points of each word, using scoring table.

Letter points are based on letter frequency.

Letter values are based on letter frequency.

Scrabble and Scrabble Tiles are registered trademarks. All rights in the game are owned in the U.S.A. by Hasbro Inc., and elsewhere by J.W. Spear & Sons Limited, a subsidiary of Mattel, Inc.

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD

OPPLUM, RICKETY, CAROTILD, PEWTER

PACK 1 - 9

RACK 2

Biden administration will engage the world  
'as it is', not 'as it was'US SECRETARY OF STATE-DESIGNATE ANTONY BLINKEN  
UNDERLINING AMERICA'S GROWING RIVALRY WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	01°C	-03°C S
LONDON	11°C	09°C H
DUBAI	21°C	14°C CL
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C S
NEW YORK	04°C	01°C C
MOSCOW	-13°C	-15°C H

S= sunny, CL= clear, H= hazy, R= rainy...

## THUMBNAILS



Mass-vaccination of healthcare workers takes place at Dodger Stadium, in Los Angeles. ■ AP

**Armed standoff in Ohio:** An Ohio city on Tuesday was mourning a police officer who died after an hours-long armed standoff ended in gunfire and also claimed the life of a suspect, police said. Toledo Police Officer Brandon Stalker, 24, was shot and killed when Christopher Harris, 27, emerged from a home with a firearm in both hands and fired shots in multiple directions. ■ AP

**US metal guitarist held:** A heavy metal guitarist who was photographed with the mob that stormed the US Capitol and is accused of spraying police officers with a pepper-based bear spray irritant has been arrested, the FBI said. Jon Ryan Schaffer has been charged with several felony counts. ■ AP

## Census Bureau chief to resign amid criticism over data

SAN FRANCISCO, 19 JANUARY

Facing criticism over efforts to produce citizenship data to comply with an order from President Donald Trump, US Census Bureau director Steven Dillingham said Monday that he planned to resign with the change in presidential administrations. Dillingham said in a statement that he would resign on Wednesday, the day Trump leaves the White House and President-elect Joseph Biden takes office.

Dillingham's five-year term was supposed to be finished at the end of the year.

The Census Bureau director's departure comes as the statistical agency is crunching the numbers for the 2020 census, which will be used to determine how many congressional seats and Electoral College votes each state gets, as well as the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal spending each year. Last week, Democratic lawmakers called on Dillingham to resign after a watchdog agency said he had set a deadline that pressured statisticians to produce a report on the number of people in the US illegally.

A report by the Office of Inspector General last week said bureau workers were under significant pressure from two Trump political appointees to figure out who is in the US illegally using federal and state administrative records, and Dillingham had set a Friday deadline for bureau statisticians to provide him a technical report on the effort. ■ AP

## Sky-high expectations from Joe Biden

Washington is bracing for dozens of consequential executive actions starting Wednesday and stretched over the first 10 days of Biden's administration

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 19 JANUARY

**B**ack when the election was tightening and just a week away, Joe Biden went big.

He flew to Warm Springs, the Georgia town whose thermal waters once brought Franklin Delano Roosevelt comfort from polio, and pledged a restitching of America's economic and policy fabric unseen since FDR's New Deal.

Evolving some of the nation's loftiest reforms helped Biden unseat President Donald Trump but left him with towering promises to keep. And he'll be trying to deliver against the backdrop of searing national division and a pandemic that has killed nearly 400,000 Americans and upended the economy.

Such change would be hard to imagine under any circumstances, much less now.

He's setting out with Democrats clinging to razor-thin House and Senate control and after having won an election in which 74 million people voted for his opponent. And even if his administration accomplishes most of its top goals in legislation or executive action, those actions are subject to being struck down by a Supreme Court now controlled by a 6-3 conservative majority.

Even so, the effort is soon underway. Washington is bracing for dozens of consequential executive actions starting Wednesday and stretched over the first 10 days of Biden's administration, as well as legislation that will begin working its way through Congress on pandemic relief, immigration and much more.

Has Biden promised more than he can deliver? Not in his estimation. He suggests he can accomplish even more than he promised. He says he and his team will do our best to beat all the expectations you have for the country and expectations we have for it.

Some Democrats say Biden is right to set great expectations while realising he'll have to compromise, rather than starting with smaller goals and having to scale them back further.

You can't say to a nation that is hungry, uncertain, in some places afraid, whose economy has stalled off... that you had to slim down the request of their government because you have a narrow governing margin, said former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick. Biden's one-time Democratic presidential primary rival.

New Presidents generally enjoy a honeymoon period that helps them in Congress, and Biden's prospects for getting one were improved by Democratic victories this month in two Georgia special Senate elections. He may have been helped, too, by a public backlash against the deadly, armed insurrection at the

## BIDEN TO PROPOSE 8-YEAR CITIZENSHIP PATH FOR IMMIGRANTS

Joe Biden plans to unveil a sweeping immigration bill on Day One of his administration, hoping to provide an eight-year path to citizenship for an estimated 11 million people living in the country without legal status, a massive reversal from the Trump administration's harsh immigration policies. The legislation puts Biden on track to deliver on a major campaign promise important to Latino voters and other immigrant communities after four years of President Donald Trump's restrictive policies and mass deportations. It provides one of the fastest pathways to citizenship for those living without legal status of any measure in recent years, but it fails to include the traditional trade-off of enhanced border security favoured by many Republicans, making passage in a narrowly divided Congress in doubt.

## BIDEN PICKS TRANSGENDER WOMAN AS ASSISTANT HEALTH SECRETARY

Biden has tapped Pennsylvania Health Secretary Rachel Levine to be his assistant secretary of health, leaving her poised to become the first openly transgender federal official to be confirmed by the US Senate. A pediatrician and former Pennsylvania physician general, Levine was appointed to her current post by Democratic Gov Tom Wolf in 2017, making her one of the few transgender people serving in elected or appointed positions nationwide. She won past confirmation by the Republican-majority Pennsylvania Senate and has emerged as the public face of the state's response to the pandemic.

## BIDEN PICKS CHOPRA, GENSLER FOR FINANCIAL OVERSIGHT ROLES

President-elect Joe Biden has chosen Rohit Chopra to be the director of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, tapping a progressive ally of Sen. Elizabeth Warren to helm the agency whose creation she championed. Biden announced the move Monday, along with his intent to nominate Gary Gensler, a former chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, as the next chair of the Securities and Exchange Commission. Gensler, a former Goldman Sachs banker, tightened oversight of the complex financial transactions that helped cause the Great Recession.

US Capitol by Trump supporters.

Biden's advisers have acknowledged they'll have bitter fights ahead. One approach they have in mind is a familiar one in Washington: consolidating some big ideas into what is known as omnibus legislation, so that lawmakers who want popular measures passed have to swallow more controversial measures as well.

Another approach is to pursue goals through executive orders. Doing so skirts Congress altogether but leaves the measures more easily challenged in court.

Trump made hefty use of executive orders for some of his most contentious actions, on border enforcement, the environment and more, but federal courts often got in the way. Biden's top priority is congressional approval of a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus plan to administer 100 million vaccines by his 100th day in office while also providing \$1,400 direct payments to Americans to stimulate the virus-hampered economy. That's no slam dunk, even though everyone likes to get money from the government.

The new president further wants to relax limits immediately on federal workers unionising, reverse Trump's rollback of about 100 public health and environmental rules that the Obama administration instituted and create rules to limit corporate influence on his administration and ensure

approving his top Cabinet choices and with conducting Trump's potential impeachment trial.

Nevertheless, the deluge is coming.

On Day One alone, Biden has promised to extend the pause on federal student loan payments, move to have the US rejoin the World Health Organisation and Paris climate accord and ask Americans to commit to 100 days of mask-wearing.

He plans to use executive actions to overturn the Trump administration's ban on immigrants from several majority-Muslim countries and wipe out corporate tax cuts where possible, while doubling the levies US firms pay on foreign profits. That same day, Biden has pledged to create task forces on homelessness and reuniting immigrant parents with children separated at the US-Mexico border. He'll plan to send bills to Congress seeking to mandate stricter background checks for gun buyers, scrap firearm manufacturers' liability protections and provide a pathway to citizenship for 11 million immigrants who came to the US illegally as children.

The new president further wants to relax limits immediately on federal workers unionising, reverse Trump's rollback of about 100 public health and environmental rules that the Obama administration instituted and create rules to limit corporate influence on his administration and ensure



the Justice Department's independence.

He also pledged to have 100 vaccination centres supported by federal emergency management personnel up and running during his first month in the White House.

Biden says he'll use the Defence Production Act to increase vaccine supplies and ensure the pandemic is under enough control after his first 100 days in office for most public schools to reopen nationwide. He's also pledged to have created a police oversight commission to combat institutional racism by then.

**Virus, economy swamp other priorities for US:** Containing the coronavirus outbreak and repairing the economic damage it has inflicted are the top priorities for Americans as Joe Biden prepares to become the 46th president of the United States, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Overall, 53 per cent of Americans name Covid as one of the top five issues they want the government to tackle this year, and 68 per cent mention in some way the economy, which is still reeling from the outbreak.

In an open-ended question, those priorities far outpace others, like foreign affairs, immigration, climate change or racial inequality. The findings suggest Biden's political fate is riding on his administration's response to the pandemic.

It's not going to be easy: Harris on challenges facing America

WASHINGTON, 19 JANUARY

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has acknowledged the challenges that lie ahead for Joe Biden when he will be sworn in as the 46th President of the United States on Wednesday, saying "it is not going to be easy."

Biden enters the White House on January 20 with the top challenge to lift the country from the devastation of a raging pandemic that has killed more than 398,000 Americans and thrown millions into economic distress.

We're going into Wednesday knowing that we're ready to do the work, and we've got a lot of work to do. It's not going to be easy, Harris told reporters at Martha's Table in Anacostia here on Monday, observing the National Day of Service.

Every year on the third Monday in January, Americans honour the slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., who in the 1950s and 1960s organised non-violent protests for Black equality and voting rights.

The holiday traditionally features people commemorating King's work by participating in community service projects.

However, both the pandemic and warnings of violence in cities across the country following the January 6 insurrection by pro-Trump supporters in the US Capitol affected the events this year.

"As we have discussed, Joe has outlined our plan for vaccinations, our plan for recovery, and in particular relief for working people, for families. And there is a lot to do.

"Some of them say that ours are ambitious goals, but we do believe with hard work and with the cooperation and collaboration of the members of the US Congress that we can get it done, Harris said in response to a question.

Harris, 56, will make history on Wednesday as the first female, first Black and first South Asian American vice president.

I think it's so important to remember that Dr. King was killed in large part, I believe, because he was on the verge of bringing together the civil rights movement around racial justice with the fight for economic justice, she said.

World

## New era begins



People hold signs as they assemble for a group photo following a vigil supporting a peaceful transition from President Donald Trump to President-elect Joe Biden in Olympia. ■ AP

**Inaugural event to celebrate resiliency of Black Americans:** The resilience, culture and heroism of Black Americans and the African diaspora will be the central theme of a virtual event that will celebrate the nation's diversity on the eve of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration. Vice President-elect Kamala Harris is slated to speak at Tuesday's event, We Are One, which will also honour the historic nature of her being the first Black and South Asian woman to become US vice president. Black voters nationwide helped deliver Biden's presidency, overwhelmingly supporting him from the start of his White House bid. Black-led organisations across the nation galvanised voters of colour and contributed to historic turnout in key battleground states. Tony Allen, CEO of the inaugural committee, said the programming will honour acts of resilience, heroism, and commitment to unity from Black, Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander communities "as the coalitions that make up our nation come together to celebrate a new chapter in our history."

**Top Indian Americans to address AAPI Inaugural Ball:** Several eminent Indian Americans including Congressmen and those set to occupy key positions in the incoming Biden Administration will participate and address the Presidential Inaugural Committee's official Asian American inaugural ball here on Tuesday. Asian American inaugural ball is one of the three additional events announced by the Presidential Inaugural Committee to celebrate and honour America's diversity in advance of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on January 20. We Are One is the other event hosted to honour and celebrate all within the Black Community and African Diaspora, featuring powerful speakers, inspiring stories, and entertaining performances. Latino Inaugural 2021: Inheritance, Resilience, and Promise is the third event being hosted by PIC in partnership with the Hispanic Federation and over 50 co-host organizations. To be hosted by IMPACT, a leading Indian American advocacy and political action committee, the Asian American inaugural ball will honour and recognize Biden and Harris. The event will feature remarks from AAPI organizers, political leaders, celebrities and musical, comedy, and cultural performances.

**Inauguration rehearsal evacuated after fire in homeless camp:** The U.S. Capitol complex temporarily locked down during a rehearsal for President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration after a fire in a homeless encampment roughly 1.5 km away sent a plume of smoke into the air and caused security concerns in an already jittery city. On Monday, the false alarm briefly interrupted the rehearsal for Wednesday's inauguration ceremony, a quadrennial exercise in which stand-ins take the roles of Biden and other VIPs and the US Marine Corps Band goes through its paces, including practicing The Star-Spangled Banner for Wednesday's performance by Lady Gaga. Rehearsal resumed not long afterward, accompanied by frequent passes by a helicopter patrolling the skies over the Capitol.

## Biden's nat'l security Cabinet nominees face Senate tests

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 19 JANUARY

President-elect Joe Biden's national security Cabinet may be bare on Day One of his presidency, but an inauguration-spur of Senate confirmation hearings suggests that won't be the case for long.

While the nominees to head the State Department, the Pentagon, Homeland Security and the intelligence community are unlikely to be confirmed by the time Biden takes the oath of office at noon Wednesday, some could be in place in those days.

The Senate typically confirms some nominees, particularly the secretaries of defense, on Inauguration Day, though raw feelings about President Donald Trump four years ago led to Democratic-caused delays, except for James Mattis at the Pentagon.

This year, the tension is heightened by Trump's impeachment and an extraordinary military presence in Washington because of fears of extremist violence.

Putting his national security team in place quickly is a high priority for Biden, not only because of his hopes for reversing or modifying Trump administration policy shifts but also because of diplomatic, military and intelligence problems around the world that may create challenges early in his tenure.

The most controversial of

before the Senate Armed Services Committee, but the panel will not be in position to vote until he gets the waiver. Republicans are expected to broadly support the Austin nomination, as are Democrats.

Biden's emerging Cabinet marks a return to a more traditional approach to governing, relying on veteran policymakers with deep expertise and strong relationships in Washington and global capitals.

The group may be Lloyd Austin,

the recently retired Army general whom Biden selected to lead the Pentagon.

Austin will need not only a favourable confirmation vote in the Senate but also a waiver by both the House and the Senate because he has been out of uniform only four years.

The last time a new president did not have his secretary of defense confirmed by Inauguration Day was in 1989. President George HW Bush's nominee, John Tower, had run into opposition and ended up rejected by the Senate several weeks later.

Also up for confirmation are Alejandro Mayorkas, Biden's nominee for secretary of the Department of Homeland Security; Biden confidant Antony Blinken to lead the State Department; Avril Haines to be the first woman to serve as director of national intelligence; and Janet Yellen as treasury secretary, another first for a woman.

Austin is testifying Tuesday

before the Senate intelligence committee.

## NEW DAWN



Flags are placed on the National Mall ahead of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, in Washington. ■ AP

## Trump lifts travel restrictions on Europe and Brazil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 19 JANUARY

Outgoing US President Donald Trump on Monday issued an executive order to lift travel restrictions on European countries and Brazil which his administration had imposed in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

Travel restrictions on several other countries including China and Iran remain in place. In an executive order,

Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, and Brazil, while leaving in place the restrictions applicable to China and Iran. A decision in this regard, he said, is being taken after the January 12 directive of the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requiring proof of a negative COVID-19 test or documentation of having recovered from COVID-19 for all air passengers arriving from a foreign country to the United States.

Trump said that EU, Britain, Ireland and Brazil will cooperate with the US in the implementation of CDC's January 12, 2021, order and that tests administered there will yield accurate results. However, the same cannot be said of China and Iran. Those jurisdictions' responses to the pandemic, their lack of transparency, and their lack of cooperation with the United States thus far in combating the pandemic, cast doubt on their cooperation in implementing CDC's January 12, 2021, order, Trump said.

S A V A N T H A N A R A Y A N A M

'Sleep that knits up the ravel'd sleeve of care... chief nourisher in life's feast... and, "downy sleep, death's counterfeit...", said William Shakespeare of the nature of sleep. Yet the nature of this state of being that all living things must have to sustain their wakeful hours has evaded understanding.

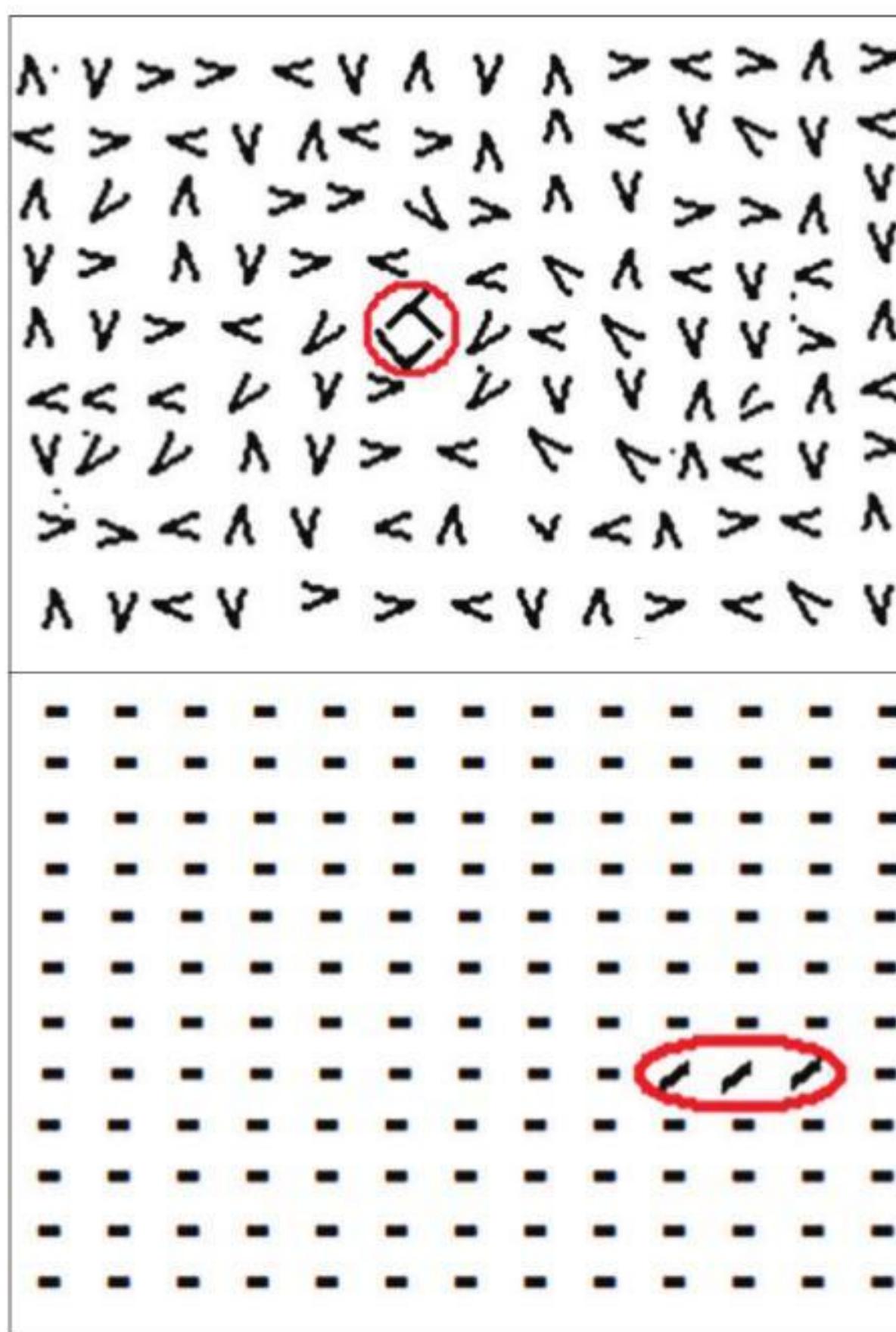
Christoph Nissen, Hannah Piosczyk, Johannes Holz, Jonathan G Maier, Lukas Frase, Annette Stern, Dieter Riemann and Bernd Feige, from the Universities of Bern, in Switzerland, of Surrey in the UK, and of Freiburg and of Applied Police Sciences, Villingen-Schwenningen, in Germany, write in the journal *Sleep* of the Sleep Research Society, of trials that show that sleep is a distinct state that affects the reorganisation of neurons in the brain in a way that mere restfulness cannot.

In another study published in the same month in the journal *Science Advances*, Hiroyuki J Kanaya, Sun-geon Park, Ji-hyung Kim, Junko Kusumi, Sofian Krenenou, Etsuko Sawatari, Aya Sato, Jongbin Lee, Hyunwoo Bang, Yoshitaka Kobayakawa, Chung-hun Lim, Taichi Q Itoh, from Kyushu University, Japan, Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology, South Korea and Agro-Paris Tech, Paris, go into the origin of the phenomenon of sleep – did it evolve as behaviour to help maintain the brain or was it there before the brain came to be?

The trials reported in the journal *Sleep* are related to the nature of learning, where neurons, or brain cells, consolidate connections which form during experience. Thus, if a response to a stimulus, out of possible responses, proves to be correct, the neuron circuit that corresponds to the correct response is strengthened and grows stronger with repeated use, while connections of incorrect responses weaken by disuse.

While sleep is seen to promote reorganisation of neurons, the paper says, it is not clear whether it is activity in the brain during sleep, or the lack of diverting stimuli during periods of sleep, that bring it about. Trials were hence designed to see if learning during a spell of activity was strengthened by a period of sleep, compared to the same period spent in normal activity, or in non-sleep inactivity, with minimal stimulation, so-called "passive waking".

The trials, called "texture discrimination tasks", were to identify patterns embedded in visuals that were flashed before participants. The participants had to first concentrate on the centre of the screen and then activate the first image. The first image was an array of randomly oriented "Vs", with a letter "L" or "T", at some angle of orientation, in the centre. This image remained for less than a third of a second, and the next image was shown. The second image was an array of horizontal dashes, except for a series of three diagonal



dashes, horizontal or vertical, somewhere off centre. This image stayed for a tenth of a second. The task was to identify the letter, "L/T" and then say whether the texture target was horizontal or vertical. There was immediate feedback on the "L/T" response, but not on the texture response.

This trial was conducted with 62 participants, who were trained during the morning, till they could get the answers right most of the time. The trial was then repeated later in the day, when the participants, in three groups, had spent the intervening period in (a) usual activities (b) sleep or (c) resting without activity in a darkened room. The principle was that the texture discriminating task was one where the learning that took place in the morning session would get consolidated, through "synaptic plasticity" or the formation of connections between neurons, during the period between the trials. Now, if there were differences in the learning of the three groups, it would reveal whether sleep, or passive wakefulness, made a difference.

The result was unequivocally that the group that had been asleep did better than the two others. There was, in fact, no difference between the

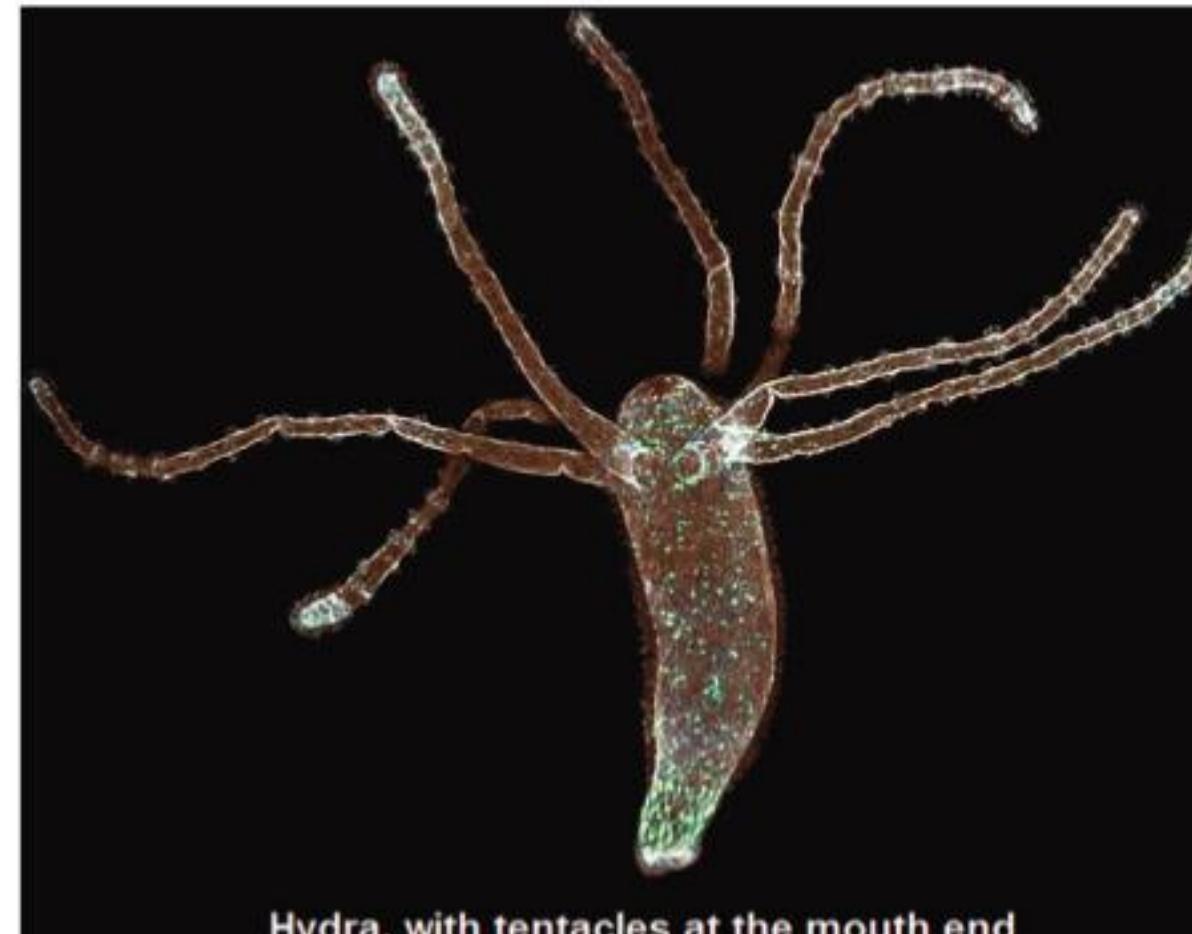
active group and the "passive waking" group. Which shows that the sleeping state is one that specifically leads to consolidating learning, and formation of memories, quite apart from other physiological effects of sleep, and in a way that is not possible just by being well rested.

The second paper, in *Science Advances*, is about how this role of sleep, in preserving or restoring the effects of experience on the brain, could have evolved. The paper notes that sleep or states exactly like sleep are seen in practically all animals – vertebrates, animals with shells, even in worms. How this spectrum of species, which have central nervous systems that range from rudimentary to complex, have the same mechanisms of sleep regulation, is still a mystery, the paper says. The authors hence consider a group of animals with complexity just below that of animals with central nervous systems. This is the category of cnidarians, a group of water-dwelling animals that consist of a non-living, jelly-like substance, sandwiched between two thin layers of tissue. These animals have just one orifice to take in food, which they capture with the help of stings that protrude from around the mouth.

The result was unequivocally that the group that had been asleep did better than the two others. There was,

# Helping the brain recover

**When did living things learn to sleep and how is it different from other states of restfulness?**



Hydra, with tentacles at the mouth end

The feature of interest, however, is that the body movements of these animals are controlled by a net of interconnected nerve cells, with no centralised brain or brain-like organ. The nerve net allows them to respond to the environment, that is food or chemicals, but not to make out where a stimulus has come from. An instance of cnidarians is the hydra, a one cm long, cylindrical creature, with the mouth at one end, which produces the same motor action regardless of where it receives a stimulus.

The paper says that the diffuse, nerve net probably represents the ancestral organisation of the nervous system. The interesting thing, however, is that cnidarian species (corals and jellyfish are other instances) display periodic suspension of activity, sometimes different daytime and night behaviour. These states, which can be considered sleep-like, are similar to those of animals which have a distinct central nervous system. The similarities for instance, are the reduced response to stimuli and the physiological effects of sleep-inducing drugs.

The authors considered the case of *hydra vulgaris* or the common hydra, one of the simplest cnidarians,

as the cnidarian model of sleep. The study was to photo-record the hydra's activity every five seconds, with a definition of what its quiescent or reduced activity state was, in terms of the level of activity. It was found that when hydra entered this state, they could be jerked out of it by a pulse of light. If they had been in the state for over 20 minutes, however, it took substantially longer for them to be aroused. The same reduced response was seen when hydra that had been in the quiescent state for more than 20 minutes were exposed to chemical feeding signals.

Further, hydra were seen to display day-night regularity in entering the sleep state, and other features, like similar genes that regulate sleep, the nature of nerve signals, and physiological changes, as found in other animals. What we find is evidence that sleep is a state that was in existence before the nerve activity was centralised in the brain. These observations of cnidarians "provide important insights into how ancestral sleep has evolved with developing central nervous systems and how sleep-regulatory pathways have been reorganised accordingly," the paper says.

The writer can be contacted at [response@simplescience.in](mailto:response@simplescience.in)

## PLUS POINTS

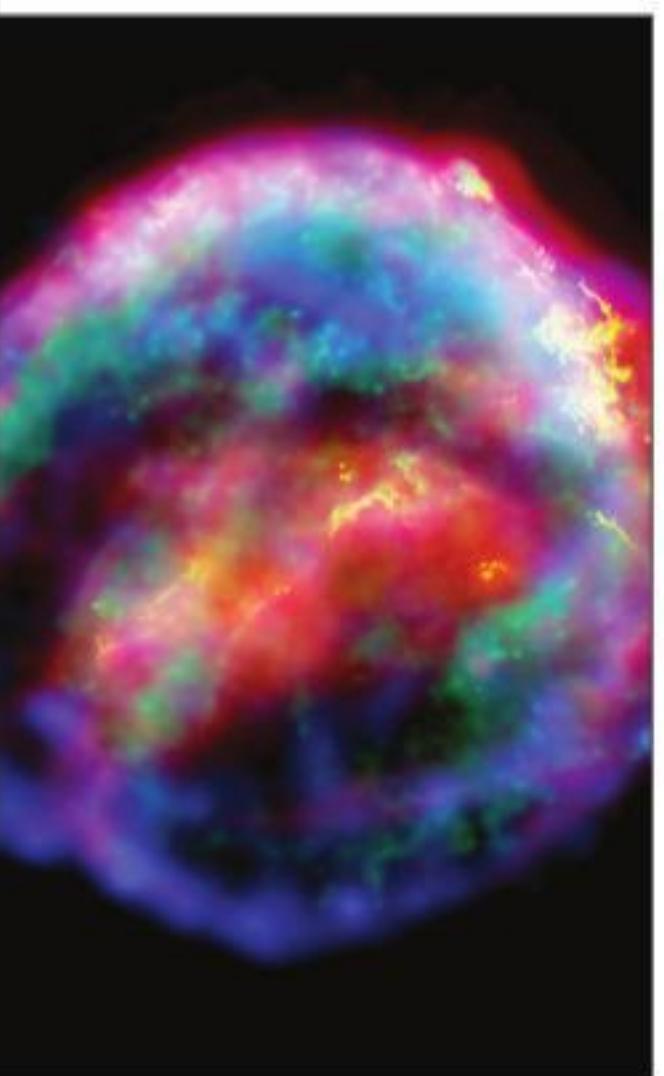
### Flavours of supernovae

Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Guwahati, in collaboration with researchers from Max Planck Institute for Physics, Munich, Germany, and Northwestern University, US, have revealed important clues to understand the death of massive stars and the problems with existing models. They found that all three species of the neutrinos from the supernovae are important, contrary to the common treatments with only two flavours.

The results of this crucial work have been recently published in the journal, *Physical Review Letters*. It has been carried out by Sovan Chakraborty, assistant professor, department of physics, IIT-Guwahati, along with research scholar, Madhurima Chakraborty, in collaboration with Francesco Capozzi, post-doctoral fellow, Max Planck Institute for Physics, and Manibrata Sen, post-doctoral fellow, Northwestern University.

The super explosions during the death of massive stars are considered to be the cradle for new stars and synthesis of the heavy elements in nature. At the end of their life, stars, especially massive ones, collapse resulting in an immense shock wave that causes it to explode, briefly outshining any other star in its host galaxy. The study of supernovae and the particles they release helps us understand the universe because almost all matter that makes up the universe is a result of these massive explosions.

During the core collapse supernova explosion, neutrinos are created in several particle processes. Due to their neutral nature and extremely weak interaction with stellar matter, neutrinos



escape and carry 99 per cent energy of the collapsing star. Thus, tiny neutrinos are the only messengers with information from the deepest interiors of the star. The Nobel Prize for Physics in 2002 was shared by Masatoshi Koshiba for the detection of neutrinos from the Supernova SN1987A at the Kamiokande neutrino detector situated in Japan.

Supernovae are the only natural source where neutrinos and antineutrinos of all three species (electron, mu and tau "flavours") are produced in substantial amounts. This creates additional complexities. However, existing supernovae models predicted that the mu and tau neutrinos, and antineutrinos have very similar properties and are considered a single species. This simplified the supernova neutrino problem and most studies are done under the assumption that all types behave the same way when ejected from the star's dying core.

Chakraborty said, "Our information is crucial for the reason that in the extremely dense supernova core, neutrinos interact with other neutrinos and may interchange flavours. This conversion may happen rapidly (in nanosecond time scale) and flavour interchange can affect the supernova process as different flavours are emitted with different angular distributions. These 'fast' conversions are nonlinear in nature and are not confronted in any other neutrino sources but supernovae. We, for the first time, did a non-linear simulation of fast conversion with 'all' the three neutrino flavours."

This becomes possible as new simulations show the presence of muons in the supernovae and in turn produce asymmetry between muon neutrinos and antineutrinos, taken to be zero otherwise, implying three flavour effects. Capozzi said, "The models used in our research work too have some simplifications, more generic studies are being done by our team and other competing groups. The clearer answers will need more precise muon supernova simulations, which are appearing to be one of the most promising solutions to the problems of core collapse mechanism".

Meanwhile, these new results give a clear message that the differences between the three flavours of neutrinos are all relevant, and ignoring the presence of any gives us an incomplete picture of fast flavour exchange. Chakraborty said, "Three flavour studies are essential as fast oscillations may actually influence the solution to the question – why and how some massive stars die as supernovae and some don't."



## BIJU DHARMAPALAN

The globe has become one intricate web where problems, afflictions and sufferings are the same for everyone. In order to address the challenges faced by humanity we require collaborations between all nations. In cases where we need collaboration for the sake of humanity, scientists and policymakers must come together to address a specific problem. Therefore, the concept of science diplomacy is gaining importance in diplomatic circles these days. Increasingly, the world requires effective partnerships among scientists, policymakers and diplomats.

The pandemic has necessitated the importance of science diplomacy. Every country across the globe, irrespective of their political affiliations, has come forward to tackle this menace. There were also concerted efforts between nations in developing vaccines and life-saving medicines. The pandemic has shown that science is for global public good but our current international science-policy interface structures and institutions are inadequate to address the challenges facing human and planetary health. The pandemic has exacerbated profound geopolitical shifts, created new tensions, and catapulted science and health diplomacy to the

front pages. The crisis is forcing us to rethink, reimagine, and reconstruct how we live, communicate and work.

A crucial task in a post-Covid world will be to examine the connections between science, policy and society, as well as our relationship with Nature. Building science diplomacy systems and structures that can prevent or effectively respond to the next global crisis requires broad-based creative coalitions between the global scientific community, governmental and intergovernmental institutions, industry and philanthropy.

While Covid-19 discoveries are currently the top priority of the global scientific enterprise, issues pertaining to Nature, food, energy and non-infectious diseases also persist. Here a few areas where the world needs greater cooperation.

\* Food and agriculture constitute a priority area where nations should work together. Many countries are badly affected by malnutrition problems where molecular breeding and gene modification technologies should be incorporated to maintain food security. Providing food to every human is the fundamental duty of every country and only through scientific collaboration can it be achieved.

\* Environmental issues affecting one part of the globe, can influence

another part also. The common adage, "think globally act locally" is highly relevant in many problems pertaining to Nature. A flood in Bangladesh would also badly affect India. Similarly, global warming may cause the melting of polar ice caps and its effect may be felt in islands like the Maldives or Lakshadweep. People affected by natural disasters like cyclones, floods or droughts outnumber those displaced by war.

According to one estimate, by 2050, more than one billion people may get displaced by natural disasters.

\* Exploitation of natural resources is rampant as nations are competing for natural gas and oil, water and forest products. Providing potable drinking water to its citizens is the top priority of each nation. It is also estimated that there is a vast resource of natural gas and oil in the polar caps. Similarly, glaciers are rich sources of potable water. The judicious use of such resources needs collaboration between all nations.

\* Oceans, which harbour a rich biodiversity, are getting polluted by the dumping of waste. Dumping waste in one part of the ocean will badly affect marine resources in another. Only through active dialogue between scientists and policy makers can this practice be prevented.

\* In the world today, knowledge

## THE NECESSITY FOR SCIENCE DIPLOMACY

**It provides instruments that allow policymakers to better decide between competing collaborative research for the benefit of humanity**

has become a shared resource. Due to the pandemic, information sharing become openly accessible with many journals removing the paywall from their websites. Digital educational resources like *cursera* have also been opened for all during the lockdown period. People have understood the value of knowledge sharing and many countries are providing scholarships for students to go and learn. In all diplomatic offices now, there is a special wing for education and scholarships.

\* When scientists come together for complex multi-national projects in astronomy or physics, their nations devise diplomatic agreements on management and financing. Especially in extra planetary space research, we need stringent international rules and regulations. Countries are vying to build space colonies but the rockets and satellites we put out there also create lots of debris, which in the long run may affect human survival, even on Earth. With space travel and tourism set to become active in a couple of decades, we need more regulations to control pollution in space. At present, the need for science diplomacy in space research is growing as more countries are strategically incorporating science into their foreign policy.

But fragmented governmental responses in many countries have revealed "catastrophic failures of the science-policy interface". What lessons can we learn about how to effectively incorporate scientific advice in national and international policy decision-making for future trans-boundary crises? How and where have scientists been effectively

engaged in national and international policy structures? How do we train and deploy the next generation of science diplomats to anticipate and better manage future crises? These are questions worth our time.

Notably, the next generation of scholars are promulgating the need for responsible innovation focused on how regions and nations can gain access to scientific datasets, and if the access can actually be of importance in shaping societal and developmental challenges. Science diplomacy can have an oversized impact in achieving the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals, the need for human and planetary health, and calls for racial justice to rebuild a foundation of diversity, equity and inclusiveness.

The recently published *Madrid Declaration on Science Diplomacy* has highlighted that it "has long been a tool to develop bilateral and multilateral relationships, (its) definition and applications (...) broadened considerably in recent years. This conceptual broadening coincides with the growing understanding that science and technology underpin so many of the challenges and opportunities that current societies face, whether as a driver or a potential solution."

Science diplomacy is a device to propel scientific collaborations across borders. It pays greater attention to societal and global challenges by providing instruments that allow policymakers to better decide between competing collaborative research for the benefit of humanity.

The writer is a science communicator and research scholar, CSIR-NISCAIR, New Delhi

**MESSI SUSPENDED**

The Spanish soccer federation suspended Lionel Messi (photo, left) for two matches on Tuesday after he hit an opponent in an incident away from the ball in the Spanish Super Cup final. Messi was facing a suspension of up to 12 matches for swinging his arm at an Athletic Bilbao player at the end of the team's 3-2 loss on Sunday.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

**THUMBNAILS**

**BCCI bonus:** The BCCI on Tuesday announced a Rs 5 crore bonus for the Indian cricket team after the Ajinkya Rahane-led side won the fourth and final Test against Australia to clinch the series 2-1 and retain the Border-Gavaskar trophy.



**Ponting shocked:** A "shocked" former captain Ricky Ponting finds it difficult to comprehend how an "A team" from India beat Australia in the Test series in their own backyard but admitted that the visitors deserved the win.

**Churchill win:** Clayvin Zuniga's 85th-minute strike scripted Churchill Brothers' 1-0 win over Punjab FC in an I-League match here on Tuesday. The Goan side dominated the match both in terms of possession and chances created and the Punjab FC defence was under constant threat.

**Australian Open:** Two players are among the three latest COVID-19 cases that have emerged from testing conducted on passengers who arrived on charter flights bringing people to Melbourne for the Australian Open. Tournament director Craig Tiley said the players weren't considered to be contagious.

**India top WTC standings**

DUBAI, 19 JANUARY

The stunning three-wicket victory over Australia at the Gabba, that resulted in a phenomenal series win, propelled India to the top of ICC World Test Championship standings on Tuesday.

The victory Down Under handed India 430 points, putting it ahead of New Zealand (420) and Australia (332).

"After the hard-fought win at The Gabba, India move to the No.1 spot in ICC World Test Championship standings. Australia slip to No.3," the ICC tweeted.

India have played 13 matches in five series, winning nine and losing three Tests. The team has got 71.1% of the total possible points.

England and South Africa are at the fourth and fifth spots respectively in the standings, updated after the fourth Test at the Gabba here.

India also replaced Australia at number two in the ICC Test Team Rankings after the Test series triumph.

New Zealand is on top with 118.44 rating points, ahead of India (117.65) and Australia (113). PTI

**Sindhu, Srikanth make impressive starts; Sameer stuns world no 10 Lee at Thailand Open**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BANGKOK, 19 JANUARY

P V Sindhu and Kidambi Srikanth notched up straight-game wins, while Sameer Verma (in photo) shocked world no 10 Lee Zii Jia as Indian shuttlers made impressive starts at the Toyota Thailand Open Super 1000 tournament here on Tuesday.

A week after being sent packing by Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt in the first event of the Asia leg, world champion Sindhu showed great discipline and focus to see off world no 12 Busanan 21-17 21-13 in the women's singles opener.

In men's singles, former world no 1 Srikanth, who had withdrawn ahead of the second round last week due to a calf muscle pull, seemed to have recovered completely as

**Magnificent Pant powers team to series win after Gill-Pujara show**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BRISBANE, 19 JANUARY

**A**n Indian cricket team saddled with broken bones and battered bodies showed a never-seen-before zeal to retain the coveted Border-Gavaskar trophy with a historic three-wicket win over Australia in the fourth and final Test here, successfully chasing a 328-run target to seal the four-match series 2-1.

A minefield of talent called Rishabh Pant (89 not out off 138 balls) channelled his inner 'Mad Max' to scare the daylights out of the Australians with his breathtaking strokeplay, ending the home team's 32-year-old unbeaten run at the 'Fortress Gabba'.

"It is the toughest tour ever. Nothing surpasses this. After 36 all out, this is unreal," India coach Ravi Shastri said, referring to the opening Test debacle.

"I looked good because everyone contributed," added the reticent stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane.

The result has the potential to end Tim Paine's reign as Australia captain having lost back-to-back home series against India.

The highlights package of Pant's battle with Nathan Lyon can be enjoyed repeatedly in times to come as he demolished the 100+ Test man in company of debutant Washington Sundar (22), who hooked the world's best fast bowler, Pat Cummins, for a six.



No one moved from their seats as Pant cut, drove, and paddle-swept to make a statement to his detractors while gifting India one of their finest overseas wins during the dying moments of the final session with an off-driven boundary.

While Shubman Gill (91 off 146 balls) announced his arrival on the global stage, Cheteshwar Pujara (56 off 211 balls) surpassed all the pain barriers en route his slowest Test fifty that held the

game in balance for Pant to launch a final assault.

The Australian team wouldn't feel too good about not being able to win a Test match with an opposition that was finding it difficult to field a fit first XI a day prior to the Test match.

Add to it, the visitors were also left quite hurt by the racial slurs directed at the likes of Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah by the crowd during the Sydney Test.

The series will be remembered for ages and the impact that Ajinkya Rahane's team had on the cricketing fraternity and the fans in general will be written in golden words when a fresh history of Test cricket after 2000 is written.

In terms of relevance, a series win without Virat Kohli, Mohammed Shami, Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah not being available at various points, is zillion

times more significant than the 2-1 win in 2018-19 when the opposition didn't have Steve Smith and David Warner in its ranks.

First time, people celebrated draws, became empathetic to players with limited abilities and believed in their team.

The stands were near-about empty at the Gabba thanks to the COVID-19 crowd restrictions but make no mistake that Test cricket seemed well and truly

alive and kicking.

With its beautiful ebbs and flows, the fifth day was witness to three separate schools of batsmanship, so very dissimilar to each other.

Gill, who is now going to be the "Real Deal", was free-flowing in his stroke-making with his "beside the line of the ball" techniques as he rode the bounce to hammer home the advantage and briefly make India favourites to win the battle.

The sixes of Mitchell Starc -- a slash over backward point and a thump over deep mid-wicket -- will be the ones for the keeps. The disdain while thrashing the Australian bowlers would have made even Sachin Tendulkar and Virat Kohli proud.

The duo, during its 114-run stand, showed that very contrasting styles can co-exist without conflict even as fans of both genres argue who has the more appropriate approach for the format.

Even Pant with his cavalier ways would have added his two cents to the debate on various styles.

But for the uninitiated, the three distinct schools can be suitably de-constructed -- Pujara's was more of investing in an LIC policy with safe returns while Gill's approach, with his collar-up, was akin to mutual funds and Pant would most likely play his game in high-stakes stock market where winner takes it all but at times at a heavy price.

Gill and Pujara showed that there are multiple ways to skin a cat.

If Pujara was ready to duck, sway and cop bodyblows off Josh Hazlewood and Cummins, showing the art of survival, Gill, on his first tour of Australia, was ready to be the intimidator by bringing the pull shot out of his repertoire.

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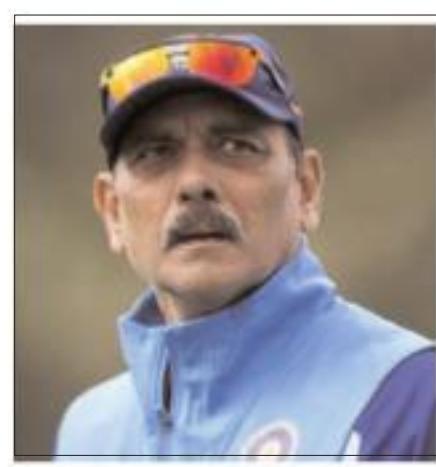
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**SCOREBOARD**

AUSTRALIA 1ST INNINGS 369		
INDIA 1ST INNINGS 336		
AUSTRALIA 2ND INNINGS 294		
INDIA 2ND INNINGS (TARGET: 328)		
R Sharma: c Paine b Cummins	7	
S Gill: c Smith b Lyon	91	
C Pujara: lbw b Cummins	56	
A Rahane: c Paine b Cummins	24	
R Pant: not out	89	
M Agarwal: c Wade b Cummins	9	
<b>TOTAL:</b> (97 Ov, RR: 3.39)	<b>329/7</b>	
<b>BOWLING:</b> M Starc 16, 0, 75, 0		
J Hazlewood 22, 5, 74, 1	P Cummins 24, 10, 55, 4	C Green 3, 1, 10, 0
N Lyon 31, 7, 85, 2	M Labuschagne 1, 0, 4, 0	

**Coach Shastri gets 'emotional', speaking about 'greatest series of all'**

AGENCIES



Ravi Shastri claims to be anything but an emotional person.

As a 22-year-old captain of the India U-25 team back in 1984, he had stopped the team manager from telling rookie Mohammed Azharudin about his grandfather's ill health to ensure that the player, who was on the verge of breaking into the Indian team did not leave a match and hamper his chances.

He is a 'khaadoos' (resilient in Marathi) Mumbaikar who will hardly get mushy.

But that was before Tuesday when he watched Rishabh Pant take a lap of honour with the national flag, hand it over to a proud Mohammed Siraj and then to Shardul Thakur.

"I got emotional. I am not someone who generally has tears in his eyes and even I got emotional," the India head coach, still trying to soak in what his wards had achieved, confessed to a quote-hungry media after his team of mostly greenhorns outfoxed Aus-

tralia 2-1 in a Test series. "I had tears because this is unreal. What these guys have pulled off will go down in history as one of the greatest series ever played. When you look at the COVID situation and state of injuries and then to show the stomach for a fight, after being bowled out for 36 is unimaginable," said the veteran of 80 Tests.

Known for his one-liners, Shastri was still gathering his thoughts after what unfolded here. A mammoth target of 328 was chased down without too much fuss by a fearless bunch of youngsters. "This is the toughest tour ever. Nothing comes closer to this. This surpasses all," he said. For all the vicious trolling

he encounters and the flak he has faced for backing his team in adverse time, the 2020-21 series win in Australia belongs to Shastri as much as it belongs to Ajinkya Rahane.

Does he feel under-appreciated when players get all the credit? Finally, the in-your-face nonchalance came to fore as he spoke in Mumbai Hindi. "Coach ka kaam hota hai ladko ko mentally prepare karne. Unka jo mindset hain usko clear karne ke liye. Jaachit (zyada in Hindi) complication ka zaroorat nahi aur game simple rakhna toh kaafi kaam hota hai (A coach's job is to prepare the players mentally and work on their mindset. Don't over complicate things and it will work).

"If you look at the India bowling attack that beat Australia in 2018-19, there was not a single bowler playing in that last game. It was important to keep the self belief going and Ajinkya did a great job, by being calm and composed taking everything in his stride," the coach said.

Just like Rome wasn't built in a day, this Indian team, that is regularly winning Test matches overseas, wasn't built overnight.

"It is not easy to go out with a bowling attack that is three Test matches old. It's no joke and then to marshall the resources was an outstanding achievement and it's the self belief that this team has. People think it has come overnight, it doesn't come overnight.

Very few know that it was Shastri, who decided that net bowler Washington Sundar will

replace the injured Ravindra Jadeja in Brisbane. A truly inspired call in building a team in the most adverse circumstances.

"We were left with no choices. We had no one left in the squad when final Test started," Shastri admitted that the likes of Bumrah and Ashwin were in no condition to play.

"If you look at the India

bowlng attack that beat Australia in 2018-19, there was not a single bowler playing in that last game. It was important to keep the self belief going and Ajinkya did a great job, by being calm and composed taking everything in his stride," the coach said.

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**Kohli returns for England Test series along with Hardik Pandya and Ishant Sharma**

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 19 JANUARY

Virat Kohli returned to lead India against England in the upcoming home Test series while the selectors also recalled all-rounder Hardik Pandya and pacer Ishant Sharma to bolster the squad, announced by the BCCI on Tuesday.

Kohli, who headed back to India on a paternity leave after the Adelaide Test, was named in the 18-man squad along with pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who missed the final Test in Brisbane against Australia due to an abdominal strain.

He is an apt replacement for Ravindra Jadeja.

Ajinkya Rahane, who led India in three Tests in Australia after Kohli's departure, was named as the vice-captain.

Expectedly, the selection panel retained youngster Shubman Gill and Washington Sundar, rewarding them for their excellent performance in Australia.

Pacer Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur, whose all-round ability helped India immensely in Brisbane, also kept their places along with Mayank Agarwal, who struggled for runs.

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who missed the Brisbane Test due to back injury, has also been named

Patel, a left-arm spinner and useful batsman down the order, to the squad as he would be more effective to counter England on Indian pitches.

The 26-year-old Patel is yet to make his Test debut while he last played for India in T20Is in February 2018 against South Africa. He has also played 38 ODI matches.

He is an apt replacement for Ravindra Jadeja.

The four-Test series will be followed by a five-match T20I series and three-match ODI rubber that will conclude on March 28 in Pune.

K S Bharat, Abhimanyu Easwaran, Shahbaz Nadeem, Rahul Chahar and Priyank Panchal have been named as standby players.

**The Squad:** Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Mayank Agarwal, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Wriddhiman Saha, Hardik Pandya, KL Rahul, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Siraj, Shardul Thakur, R Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Washington Sundar and Axar Patel.

**Mohammedan SC hold TRAU FC to 2-2 draw**