



YEAR OF
THE DRAGON



'POLICE MUST
SERVE DEPRIVED'



BIDEN TAPS VIVEK
MURTHY AS
SURGEON GENERAL



THE STORY OF
WILLIAMSON
AT HIS BEST

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 28 and 10 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 51%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 28.8°C (+4) Min: 08.0°C (-1)
SUN RISES 07:00 hrs SUN SETS 17:24 hrs
MOON RISES 21:50 hrs MOON SETS 11:46 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Chiefs of the Army, Naval and Air Staffs Gen MM Naravane, Adm Karambir Singh & Chief Air Marshal RKS Bhadauria pay homage to the fallen heroes at National War Memorial on Friday. IANS

Delay in commuting Rajanya death sentence: The Supreme Court on Friday questioned the Centre over delay in sending proposal to the President for commuting the death sentence of Balwant Singh Rajanya, convicted in the 1995 assassination case of former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh. A bench headed by Chief Justice Bobde noted that a letter was sent from the Ministry of Home Affairs to Punjab chief secretary on 27 September last year saying a proposal would be sent to the President.

P5

US approves sale of military equipment to India: The US has approved the sale of \$90 million worth of military hardware and services to India in support of its fleet of C-130J Super Hercules military transport aircraft. This proposed sale will support the foreign policy and national security of the US by helping to strengthen the US-Indian strategic relationship and improve the security of a Major Defence Partner, the Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) of the Department of Defence said on Thursday.

Return to positive growth in Oct-Dec: RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 4 DECEMBER

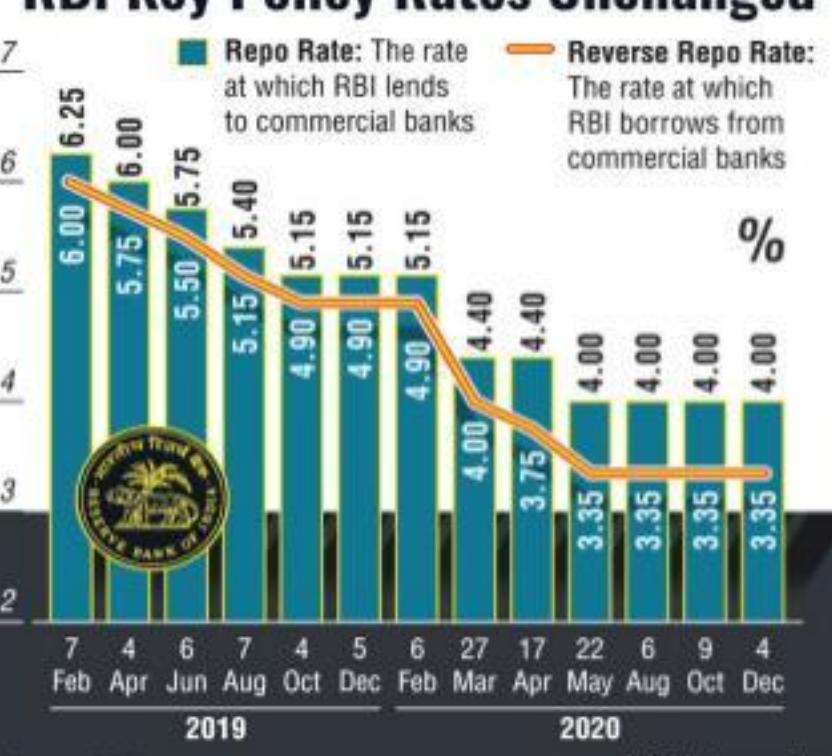
Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday left interest rates unchanged for the third straight time amidst persistently high inflation and said the economy was recovering fast and would return to positive growth in the current quarter itself.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) unanimously decided to keep the benchmark repo rate at which RBI lends to commercial banks at 4 per cent. Since January, RBI has reduced that rate by 115 basis points before hitting the pause button in August on concerns on inflation.

The reverse rate, or the rate at which banks lend to the central bank, was kept unchanged at 3.35 per cent.

The MPC "decided to continue with the accommodative stance of monetary policy as long as necessary

RBI Key Policy Rates Unchanged



at least through the current financial year and into the next year," Governor Shaktikanta Das said. The central bank's stance is "to revive growth on a durable basis, and mitigate the impact of

Covid-19 while ensuring that inflation remains within the target going forward," he added. Das said inflation continues to be sticky.

Consumer-price growth or the headline CPI inflation,

at 7.6 per cent in October, was well above the upper end of the RBI's 2-6 per cent target band and it expected the outlook for inflation to worsen.

RBI sees price gains in the fiscal third quarter at 6.8 per cent and easing a bit to 5.8 percent in January-March. Supply-side factors, such as unseasonal rains, labour shortages, higher services prices, higher commodity prices and higher taxes have contributed to a spike in both headline and core inflation. "Our paramount objective is to support growth while ensuring financial stability is maintained and preserved at all times," Das said.

India entered a technical recession last week as it was the first time in decades that India's economy saw two consecutive quarters of contraction. The GDP, he said, will grow by 0.1 per cent in the October-December quarter and by 0.7 per cent in the following three months.

India summons Canadian top diplomat over Trudeau's remarks

NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

India today conveyed to Canada its strong sense of outrage over comments made by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other important leaders in support of the ongoing farmers' protests over farm laws.

"The Canadian High Commissioner (Nadir Patel) was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs today and informed that comments by the Canadian Prime Minister, some Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament on issues relating to Indian farmers constitute an unacceptable interference in our internal affairs," an official statement said.

"These comments have encouraged gatherings of extremist activities in front of our High Commission and Consulates in Canada, that raise issues of safety and security," the statement added.

DETAILS ON PAGE 5

Hyderabad civic polls: BJP makes deep inroads

ANINDITA CHOWDHURY
HYDERABAD, 14 DECEMBER

In a big jolt to Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, his Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) failed to get a majority in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections, with the BJP making massive inroads in the state capital taking advantage of anti-incumbency, dismal performance by Congress and shifting of voters from decimated a TDP to BJP.

The BJP's gains have sealed its status as the major Opposition party in Telangana and the party is all set to pose a stiff challenge to the TRS in the next

Assembly election in the state.

Though TRS has fallen short of a majority on its own, along with AIMIM it will have a shot at retaining the board.

Out of 150 seats, the results of 146 have been declared so far, out of which the TRS won 56, BJP 46, the AIMIM 42 seats. The Congress won only 2. Congress PCC president Uttam Kumar Reddy finally resigned following the party's dismal performance in the civic elections as well as the Dubba bypoll.

A majority of the voters from Seemandhra but settled in Hyderabad who once used to vote for TDP seemed to have shifted to BJP.

The TRS was also badly hit in areas ravaged by floods, particularly in LB Nagar and Uppal. While the wife of the TRS MLA in Uppal lost in Habsiguda to the BJP, in LB Nagar zone most of the seats went to BJP.

The attempt by TRS to woo voters by distributing Rs 10,000 as flood relief also did not work in the elections. The failure of TRS to retain the 100 seats it had won in 2016 will also cast a shadow on its working president and municipal affairs minister KT Rama Rao, considered to be a dynamic young leader after he was appointed second in command in the party by his

father after the victory in the 2018 Assembly elections, overlooking nephew T Harish Rao.

"The result is not what we expected. TRS is short by 25 seats but we are still the single largest party. TRS lost 10-12 divisions (wards) with extremely narrow margin of 100 or 200 votes," said KT Rama Rao, the TRS working president.

"We will certainly address the issues as to why the TRS did not get the desired results," said Mr Rao in a very short press conference.

However, Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM retained its seats although it could not increase the num-

ber of wards.

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar claimed "moral victory" and demanded the chief minister's resignation. "A person with no respect for public judgement does not have the right to continue as the CM," he said.

The day began in a dramatic fashion with BJP moving High Court against an order of the State Election Commission which allowed counting of ballots stamped with other marks instead of the designated cross-arrow mark prescribed by the commission.

The High Court suspended the order of the state election commission.

Farmers harden stand, call for Bharat bandh on 8 Dec



Mamata extends support to farmers
KOLKATA, 4 DECEMBER

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee today spoke over the phone to various farmer groups agitating at Singhu on the Delhi-Haryana border to express her solidarity with the farm laws passed by the Centre and assuring them of her party's support.

Trinamul MP Derek O'Brien, who was dispatched by Miss Banerjee to meet the agitating farmers and spent almost four hours with them, facilitated the interactions over the phone.

On Twitter, Miss Banerjee posted: "14 years ago on 4 December 2006, I began my 26 day hunger strike in Kolkata, demanding that agricultural land cannot be forcefully acquired."

"I express my solidarity with all farmers who are protesting against draconian Farm bills passed without consultation by the Centre." The CM, in a meeting today instructed her party members them to protest against the "anti-farmers" laws.

IS IT OUR FAULT?

The only allegation against Sahara India Pariwar is that our repayments to the esteemed investors are getting delayed. Of course we are also paying the interest of delayed period.

Nobody is writing the reason.

The reason is -

Owing to the embargo imposed for the last 8 years by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, any money generated through selling or mortgaging our assets of the entire group (including Co-operatives) or from joint ventures will be deposited in the Sahara-SEBI account, as per the directives of Hon'ble Supreme Court. Out of this, we cannot use even a single rupee for organizational work. Not even for repayment to the esteemed investors.

On the other hand, till date, approximately ₹22,500 crore including interest (which will surely come back to us as per Hon'ble Court's order) has been deposited in the Sahara-SEBI account. Whereas, despite giving four rounds of advertisements in 154 newspapers by SEBI in the last 8 years across the country, SEBI has repaid only ₹106.10 crore to the esteemed investors (means only 0.5% payment has been done) and there is no claimant anymore.

Now Sahara should not be required to deposit more money in the Sahara-SEBI account. The embargo on us should be lifted now and the order of verification should come. But all these decisions will be taken by the Hon'ble Supreme Court. On the other hand, due to COVID-19 for the last 10 months, we haven't been able to get a date from the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

We hope that we will soon get a date and everything will be good.

We are working on various sources of money. Everybody's money is totally safe. You are getting the interest of the delayed period.

Do have some patience. We shall all emerge victors by 31st March 2021.



Delhi govt increases DA for its workers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the labour portfolio, announced that the Delhi government, as part of its "pro-poor and pro-labour" welfare initiatives, has enhanced monthly Dearness Allowance (DA) for its unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and other category workers.

However, for regular government employees, in consonance with the directions of the Union finance ministry, DA points have remained frozen from January 2020 to June 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 on the economy.

In a statement, Sisodia said that DA for workers placed in the bottom of the hierarchy cannot be frozen. These



workers are generally provided only the minimum wage, especially during the coronavirus-caused crisis. Accordingly, the new minimum wages after including DA will be applicable to unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled categories in all scheduled employments. These revised wages will be applicable from October 1, 2020, as Sisodia has directed to

ensure payment to all workers and employees at an increased rate.

For unskilled workers, the wages have been fixed at monthly Rs 15,492 (daily Rs 596), for semi-skilled workers it is Rs 17,069 (daily Rs 657)

and for skilled workers it is fixed at Rs 18,797 (daily Rs 723).

Additionally, the minimum wage rates for clerical and supervisory employees

have also been increased. Of these, those having non-matriculation qualification will get monthly wages of Rs 17,069 (Rs 657 daily), matriculates but non-graduates to get monthly Rs 18,797 (daily Rs 723), and graduates and above to get monthly Rs 20,430 (daily Rs 786).

Sisodia pointed out that the labour department fixes DA after adjustment of the average All-India Consumer Price Index numbers.

He said that DA rates are revised twice a year — in April and October — every year. "Due to the prevailing Covid-19 situation and economic hardships, DA could not be revised in April this year, but the price hike of that period has been taken into account while revising the allowance now," Sisodia added.



These laws were passed not to help the farmers but were done to help the multinational and corporate houses.

TMC MP KAKOLI GHOSH DASTIDAR

ON THE FARM LAWS AND FARMERS' PROTESTS AGAINST THE CENTRE

Capital records 4,067 new virus cases from 85K tests

If positivity rate remains below 5 per cent for five consecutive days, then Delhi could be considered 'successful' in combating Covid surge: Satyendar Jain

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

Delhi today recorded 4,067 new coronavirus (Covid-19) cases, which took its caseload to 5,86,125, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital reported 73 fresh Covid deaths, which pushed its toll to 9,497, the health bulletin said.

Today's fresh Covid cases were detected out of a record 85,003 tests including 40,191 RT-PCR tests — the city's highest in a day so far — with the positivity rate dipping to 4.78 per cent.

Delhi's tally of active coronavirus cases dropped to 28,252 from yesterday's 29,120, the bulletin stated. The recovery rate rose to 93.55 per cent from yesterday's 93.37 per cent.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said if the Covid positivity rate in the city stays below 5 per cent for five consecutive days, it would mean Delhi has been successful in combating the coronavirus surge.

Jain also told reporters that



there was "enough resources for the application as well as storage of vaccine" and mohalla clinics, polyclinics, dispensaries and hospitals will facilitate the application.

"The positivity rate has become less than 5 per cent as compared to the surge since November 7 which is a sign of relief as it points to perpetual declining of the effect of the pandemic in Delhi," Jain said.

"If this continues for five

5 per cent.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 82 Covid fatalities.

The Covid positivity rate in Delhi has sharply dropped in the last one week, dipping from 8.65 per cent on 26 November to 4.78 per cent today, even as the count of containment zones has grown in this period, according to official data.

The positivity rate has been steadily dropping since 26 November till date, except on 29 November when it marginally rose to 7.64 per cent as compared to 7.24 per cent on 28 November, as per the official figures released by the Delhi health department.

The positivity rate was 8.65 per cent on 26 November when 5,475 fresh cases were recorded, and 8.51 per cent on 27 November when 5,482 cases were reported.

On November, the rate again dropped to 7.35 per cent, down to 6.85 per cent on 1 December and 5 per cent on 2 December. Delhi's coronavirus positivity rate was 15.26 per cent on 7 November. There has been thus a reduction of nearly 70 per cent in it since then.

Delhi govt asks healthcare facilities to submit healthcare workers data for Covid vaccination

PTI

NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

The Delhi government has begun the process of enrolment of healthcare workers of different hospitals, nursing homes and other facilities for COVID-19 vaccination.

The Delhi government invites all those remaining healthcare facilities to submit the names of healthcare workers in their institutions, nursing homes, clinics and OPDs, it said.

Healthcare workers include medical and paramedical staff, supporting security and administrative staff of all allopathic, dental, AYUSH, physiotherapy clinics, diagnostic laborato-

ries, radiology centres and other healthcare settings, the notice said.

According to Union Health Ministry officials, the anti-coronavirus vaccine, once available, would be distributed under a special COVID-19 inoculation programme, using processes, technology and network of the existing Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP).

The government has initiated preparations for introduction of COVID-19 vaccine upon its availability and as part of it, one of the activities is creating a database of healthcare workers who will be pri-

oritised for coronavirus vaccine.

Also, the Centre in a letter to states and union territories has said MBBs and BDS doctors as well as interns, staff nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives and pharmacists would be considered as potential vaccinators, for carrying out the drive, provided that they are actively involved in day-to-day provision of clinical care and have experience in administering injections.

Delhi recorded 3,734 fresh COVID-19 cases on Thursday with over 70,000 tests being conducted for the second consecutive day, even as the positivity rate dipped to 4.96 per cent, authorities said.

Delhi govt sets up platform for implementing EV policy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

The Delhi government today launched the Delhi EV Forum as a platform for continuous engagement with stakeholders in the electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem for successful implementation of its EV Policy. On behalf of the Delhi government, the Dialogue & Development Commission (DDC) will host the Delhi EV Forum with the support of the RMI India.

The Delhi government notified its landmark electric vehicle (EV) policy on 7 August 2020, aimed at having an EV market share of 25 per cent across all new vehicle sales in

Delhi by 2024. The policy lays out a comprehensive strategy to enable rapid transition to EVs in the national capital, centered around five key pillars — targeted financial incentives, non-financial incentives, enabling charging infrastructure, raising public awareness and building a green economy.

Speaking on the occasion, DDC Vice-Chairperson Jasmine Shah said, "Realising Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's vision to make Delhi the EV capital of India requires participation of all stakeholders — OEMs, fleet operators, charging station energy operators, experts and various government agencies. The

Delhi EV Forum will provide the platform for much-needed conversations among all the stakeholders."

Since the launch of Delhi's EV policy, the DDC has received "enthusiastic response" from several stakeholders — EV manufacturers, fleet operators keen to launch complete EV fleets in Delhi, charging station operators and others.

The first meeting of the Delhi EV Forum may be held on December 18, aimed at meeting some broad objectives like understanding on-the-ground challenges towards the deployment of EVs and charging infrastructure and identifying potential solutions, a government official said.

Delhi's air quality still 'very poor'

PTI

NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

The city's air quality index (AQI) was 364 at 9 am. The 24-hour average AQI was 341 on Thursday, 373 on Wednesday, 367 on Tuesday, 318 on Monday and 268 on Sunday.

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

The predominant wind direction will be easterly and the maximum wind speed 10 kmph on Friday, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The minimum temperature was 8 degrees Celsius on Friday and the maximum is expected to settle around 27 degrees Celsius, the weather department said. The minimum temperature this season has remained 2-3 degree Celsius below normal in the absence of a cloud cover on most days, according to IMD officials.

Calm winds and low tem-



Delhi continues to reel under smoggy weather conditions. On Friday.

DEEPAK

peratures trap pollutants close to the ground, while favourable wind speed helps in their dispersion.

There is a possibility of the air quality reaching the "severe" category between December 4 and December 7, it had said earlier. The city's ventilation index -- a product of mixing depth and average wind speed is likely to remain in the "very poor" category till Saturday.

is the vertical height in which pollutants are suspended in the air. It reduces on cold days with calm wind speed.

A ventilation index lower than 6,000 sqm/second, with the average wind speed less than 10 kmph, is unfavourable for dispersal of pollutants.

Delhi govt increases DA for its workers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

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However, for regular government employees, in consonance with the directions of the Union finance ministry, DA points have remained frozen from January 2020 to June 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 on the economy.

In a statement, Sisodia said that DA for workers placed in the bottom of the hierarchy cannot be frozen. These

workers are generally provided only the minimum wage, especially during the coronavirus-caused crisis. Accordingly, the new minimum wages after including DA will be applicable to unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled categories in all scheduled employments. These revised wages will be applicable from October 1, 2020, as Sisodia has directed to

ensure payment to all workers and employees at an increased rate.

For unskilled workers, the wages have been fixed at monthly Rs 15,492 (daily Rs 596), for semi-skilled workers it is Rs 17,069 (daily Rs 657)

and for skilled workers it is fixed at Rs 18,797 (daily Rs 723).

Additionally, the minimum wage rates for clerical and supervisory employees

TENDER

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that I Smt. Manjeet Kaur W/o Late Shri Manohar Singh resident of 79, Paschimi Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi have lost my original property documents being a) Relinquishment Deed dated 25 February 2019, registered as document no. 2175, Book No. 1, Volume No. 24177 at pages 162 to 166 on 26/02/2019 in the office of Sub Registrar-II, Basai Darapur, Delhi and b) Substitution Letter dated 4th June 2019 issued by L&DO in respect of property bearing No. 30/1 East Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008. I have already lodged police complaint bearing lost property registration no. 0005/2020 dated 25-09-2020 with Police Station, Vasant Vihar, District South West, New Delhi in this regard. Any person finding the said documents should contact Manjeet Kaur, W/o Late Shri Manohar Singh, R/o 79, Paschimi Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi having Mobile No. 981023123/9711123123.

Any person dealing with the said property shall be dealing at its own risk, as the said property is mortgaged with Union Bank of India (earlier Andhra Bank), located at M-35, Connaught Circus, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.

JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
Sealed tenders are invited for Tender No.: JU/NIT/PTG/01/20-21 for Printing of University Diary & Calendar for 2021.
Details are available on the website at www.jadavpur.edu.in under tender link.

SEALLED tenders are invited via NIT, No. 23 to 27 for various developmental works (Tied) under 15th FC of 2020-21. The last date of application: 18-12-2020 up to 2.00 p.m. Details can be obtained from the office notice board.

Sd/-
Executive Officer
Fakalata Panchayat Samity

TENDER
Notification — Sealed quotations are hereby invited from the bona fide firms / SHGs / parties for supply of Food materials and lease out of mango and litchi orchard. For details please visit the KVK website (<https://www.maldavkvn.in/>) notification.html.

Sd/-
Sr. Scientist & Head-Malda KV

LEGAL NOTICES

COURT NOTICE
U/O 5 RULE 20 CPC IN THE COURT OF SH. Anteepur Singh, Civil Judge (Junior Division), Gurugram

RAKESH JOHAR
vs.
GENERAL PUBLIC CCR No: HRGR02-003254-2020

Next Date :22-12-2020
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO: GENERAL PUBLIC - GURUGRAM HARYANA

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 22.12.2020 at 10.00 a.m.

For details log on to https://highcourtcd.gov.in/?rs=1&rs=district_notice&district=Gurugram

Dated this day of 03.12.2020
2020
Civil Judge Junior Division Gurugram

IN THE COURT OF SH. HARSHVARINDER S.
(Order 5 Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

ADJ-02, Dwarka Courts, Room No. 605, 6th Floor Dwarka Court Complex New Delhi,

PUBLICATION NOTICE PROPOSED DEFENDANT Suit No. CS: 641/2017 Pyare Lal Bhat and Anr.

— Plaintiff Versus Ram Mohan Chauhan and Ors. — Defendant

To, Shri Harmander Singh, s/o Sh. Gurbhachan Singh, r/o 6/7, 3rd Floor, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 07-12-2020 at 10.00 a.m. the day fixed in the matter, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 15-10-2020.

ADJ-02, Dwarka Courts, Dwarka Court Complex New Delhi, Seal of the Court

KOLKATA
Statesman House, 4, Chowringhee Square Kolkata-700 001



The President will inaugurate a cultural programme here on December 19, on the 60th anniversary commemoration of the Goa liberation

PRAMOD SAWANT
GOA CHIEF MINISTER

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 05 DECEMBER 2020

03

Capt sabotaging farmers' agitation, alleges Sukhbir

The SAD chief guns for the Punjab CM, alleging that he is being used by the Centre to 'weaken and vilify' farmers' stir against controversial farm laws by linking it with threats to national security



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 4 DECEMBER

The Shiromani Akali Dal president, Sukhbir Singh Badal, on Friday asked Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh "to stop his dangerous efforts to sabotage the farmers' agitation by linking it with threats to national security".

The Akali leader asked the Punjab CM to share with



the people the specific grounds or intelligence on the basis of which he has "suddenly woken up" to the threat to national security and that too when the "farmers battle of life and death" has reached a crucial stage.

In a statement, Badal charged that Amarinder was "clearly dancing to someone else's tune to paint the farmers' genuine apprehensions and grievances, Capt Amarinder has chosen to warn the poor farmers against

continuing with their peaceful, democratic agitation.

"At the same time, he has tried to set the whole country against the farmers' cause. This is clearly a part of Centre's design to use him to weaken support for the farmers," said the Akali leader.

Badal claimed that instead of telling the Narendra Modi government to address the farmers' genuine apprehensions and grievances, Capt Amarinder has chosen to warn the poor farmers against

ticular is about to happen, Amarinder immediately gets restless and plays the national security card as an excuse to try to sabotage it," he charged.

The SAD chief also alleged that Capt Amarinder had done the same thing to "sabotage" Kartarpur Sahib corridor and even now, the CM is backing the "oppressor, misusing the national security card to vilify and weaken the farmers' movement".

He pointed out that the farmers had been protesting in Punjab for months before they took their battle to Delhi. In all these months, not even flower vases were broken by farmers nor a single incident indicating threat to security, he said.

On the contrary, said Badal, the farmers have been setting noble and glorious examples as they have braved vicious police assaults against them with commendable restraint and magnanimity. But Amarinder has no qualms of conscience in describing these noble and peaceful farmers as "security threats to the nation", he claimed.

National unity paves way for devp: Dattatraya

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 4 DECEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatraya on Friday said that national unity means feeling of loyalty and fraternity towards the nation and that this unity paves the way for development.

The Governor was presiding over the 7th Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Lecture on "Ethical Foundation of Nationalism" organized by Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla.

He said that Rabindranath Tagore was not only the doyen of Indian writers, poets and thinkers, but also a visionary who foresaw a rising India and contributed to nation building in many remarkable ways. He has been synonymous with high ethical standards and the pioneering spirit of civilization, development and philosophical humanism.

He said that national integration is the bond and togetherness between people regardless of their caste, creed, religion or gender. He said national integration helps to keep the country unified and strong from within despite the diversities.

"I believe that this sense of national unity should always prevail in everyone. This is not just a situation arising out of speech or in emergency, but it is an awakening feeling in the soul which should last forever," said Dattatraya.



The Governor said that the nation is rising in stature in various fields - be it economic, academic, geo-political influence, defence, sports, science, IT and space technology and we were proud of being the world's largest and the most vibrant democracy of about 133 crore aspirational Indians representing a vast diversity of religions, regions, castes, cultures and traditions.

He said that the fundamentals of Indian economy were strong and India continues to be among the fastest growing major economies of the world. He said that India has improved its ranking in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Ranking and was placed at 63rd place among 190 nations.

Dattatraya said that IIAS is the premier institution for higher learning and research and added that the Institute has managed the pandemic as well as the academic challenges very well. He also appreciated the Institute for the theme of the lecture and said that it not only generates positive thoughts and feelings about the inherent strength of our nation, but reminds us of the glorious past and the need to strive further continuously for building a bright, prosperous and inclusive India.

Cong playing petty politics over Covid:
HP minister

Leader of opposition Mukesh Agnihotri is often making absurd comments on the steps taken by the government to contain the spread of virus and has no concern for the safety of people. Congress leaders are busy competing with each other and continuously trying to attain media mileage," he said.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 4 DECEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Education Minister Govind Singh Thakur said here on Friday that the leaders of Congress Party were playing petty politics on the Covid-19 issue since the beginning of the pandemic.

"Leader of opposition Mukesh Agnihotri is often making absurd comments on the steps taken by the government to contain the spread of virus and has no concern for the safety of people. Congress leaders are busy competing with each other and continuously trying to attain media mileage," he said.

The Education minister said that chief minister Jai Ram Thakur has taken effective steps to contain the spread of the virus. He has been regularly monitoring the Covid-19 situation in the State till grass root level.

The minister said the state government is giving top priority to the safety of people from the virus and opposition leaders should support the decision taken by the government.

He said keeping in view the sudden increase in the number of covid patients, the state government has taken strict decisions to prevent the spread of the virus.

The state government has decided that no political function would be held in the State till 15th December and only virtual programmes would be conducted.

Not more than 50 persons have been allowed in any kind of social, cultural and political functions to break the cycle of this virus. To control the further spread of virus, random sampling would be done of infected person in primary stage.

HP govt blames public laxity for rise in coronavirus cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 4 DECEMBER

The Himachal Pradesh government on Friday said there was currently no plan to start the Covid-19 test for the people visiting HP.

An official spokesman said that most of the Covid-19 cases reported over the last two months have increased due to laxity adopted on the part of general public, particularly during the social gatherings such as marriages etc.

He said that the state government has now asked all the Deputy Commissioners to strictly follow the condition of maximum fifty persons in any such events.

He said that the state government has also sus-

pended all its public functions keeping in view a spike in the number of covid cases. He said that all the government functions were being held virtually and there too the limit had been fixed for maximum 50 persons only.

The spokesman said the government had also decided to take stern action against those not using face masks in public places. He said that action was also being taken against those responsible for inviting social gatherings that exceeds the laid down limit.

He said that the chief minister is himself monitoring the Covid-19 situation in the state.

The spokesman said that the government had also directed all the senior Doc-

tors to visit Covid wards of hospitals to ensure proper treatment of covid patients. He said that temporary manpower was also being hired to ensure adequate numbers of staff for proper treatment of covid patients. He said that steps were also being taken to involve private hospitals and laboratories for testing and treatment of patients.

He said that an effective mechanism has also been evolved to provide proper treatment and care to covid patients undergoing treatment at their homes.

He said that the government has also decided to regularly make telephone calls to covid patients undergoing home treatment for giving morale boost to them.

After dip due to pandemic, Haryana revenue collection nears normalcy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 4 DECEMBER

Following a steep fall in collections through stamp duty and registration fee in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, revenue collections through these means are now picking up in Haryana and nearing the normal level.

The additional chief secretary and financial commissioner, revenue and disaster management department, Sanjeev Kaushal, on Friday said revenue collection through stamp duty and registration fee between 1 April and 30 November, 2020 surpassed the earnings in the same period in 2019. This apart, more than two lakh deeds were registered in the state between 1 April and 30 November, 2020.



Kaushal said total revenue of Rs 1,949.75 Crore was earned through registration of 2,41,302 deeds between

April and November this year. This includes Rs 440.13 Crore earned through registration of 44,787 deeds in November.

Similarly, the state earned revenue of Rs 248.89 Crore in September through registration of 25,928 deeds, and Rs 479.46 Crore in October through registration of 59,023 deeds.

Kaushal said following the Covid-19 outbreak in March this year, a dip of about 45.21 per cent was registered in the period between April and October, 2020, as compared to the same period last year.

Income amounting to Rs 2,027.24 Crore was generated this year which was Rs 1,672.89 Crore less than the Rs 3,700.13 Crore collected during the same period last year.

The department generated Rs 6,100.27 Crore in income in 2019-20, he added.

Delhi riots: Police carried out 'insidious' prosecution, JNU student tells court

PTI
NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

The submissions were made before Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat during hearing of her bail plea in the case related to larger conspiracy in the communal violence.

has allegedly put selective messages from the WhatsApp chats of police officials to prove their purpose and chosen not to put on record the messages where they are aware that another kind of protests or march was ongoing by pro-CAA protesters.

The police have submitted screenshots of WhatsApp group where police is closely monitoring the movement of the 300 women who came from Jahangirpuri and allegedly precipitated the riots. Police has deliberately declined to place on record messages from 12:39 pm to 12:49 pm with a view to paint an incomplete picture.

Police suppressed the messages that were actually talking about the violence which started at Maupur.

This is mischievous. This is insidious. They are hiding these messages, Pujari alleged.

Pointing to a message by a police official in the group that stone pelting had almost stopped and the situation was under control, he said it was the prosecution's own case. This is not a case where a woman needs to be in jail in terrorist charge, Pujari alleged.

Instead of showing these messages, the police chose to

demonstrate one message to prove that women from Jahangirpuri had caused the violence, Pujari alleged.

He further said that as per the documents in the charge sheet, police was strictly motioning the movement of the busses carrying these 300 women and if they had carried any weapon or committed violence, then the police could have tried to arrest them then and there.

Pujari noted that one of the chats by the police also read that the women protesters who went from Jahangirpuri to Shaheen Bagh to Jafrabad have returned to their houses in Jahangirpuri.

Further, anywhere where Kalita was sitting, the police was present there. If these allegations of women being led by Kalita, throwing chilli powder and acid bottles were true, not at one point of time did the police try to stop them? All of the Delhi police cannot be scared of these 300 women and let them commit violence. In this plaint of the Delhi police, not charge sheet, how are they even relying on incomplete documents? The larger question is why are they doing that?

We have all these lofty sayings that liberty of an individual is sacrosanct, where is the liberty going when you are looking at these kinds of allegations. The women have returned home peacefully and this was the prosecution's own case. This is not a case where a woman needs to be in jail in terrorist charge, Pujari argued.

Natasha Narwal and Gulfisha also members of Pinjra Tod are accused in the case.

Kalita at not point of time would consider fomenting a communal violence when she was in the middle of the people from the opposite community.

The police's allegation is not that she instigated the women from her own community. An argument can never be that she would sit in the middle of another community antithetical to her and instigate the other community against her own community, Kalita's lawyer argued.

Natasha Narwal and Gulfisha also members of Pinjra Tod are accused in the case. Pinjra Tod (Break the Cage) was founded in 2015 with an aim to make hostels and paying guest accommodations less restrictive for women

HP pensioners asked to submit annual life certificate

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 4 DECEMBER

This certificate was to be submitted in present format signed by Bank Manager and counter signed/attested by Gazetted government servant of that state or central government.

government has implemented Jeewan Pramaan for online verification of pensioners through Aadhaar based biometric authentication. Life certificate generated through Jeewan Pramaan can be sent to treasury and pensioners will not be required to visit treasury for verification.

In view of this and present Covid-19 situation, all pensioners are requested to use digital life certificate based on Aadhar Biometric Authentication through Jeewan Pramaan website (jeewanpramaan.gov.in) for Life Certificate verification in order to avoid visit to treasury. The pensioners will have to send the hard copy of Jeewan Pramaan certificate so generated to the concerned treasury by post.

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures

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 • JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
 • NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
 • LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

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Stubble burning has stopped but Delhi's air pollution situation remains serious

UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER PANKAJ JAVADEKAR

10 TDP MLAs suspended from AP Assembly

AMARAVATI, 4 DECEMBER

Ten MLAs of the Telugu Desam Party were suspended from the Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly for the fifth consecutive day on Friday, the last day of the winter session, on the charge that they disrupted the proceedings of the House.

Burevi turns into deep depression

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 4 DECEMBER

Heavy rains lashed Chennai, central and southern districts of Tamil Nadu, as Cyclonic storm 'Burevi', which weakened into a deep depression, remained stationary during the past two four hours near Ramanathapuram. After nearly four decades, rain water entered Chidambaram Sri Natarajar temple. Cuddalore

district, where Chidambaram is located, received extremely heavy rain of 27 cm till 8.30 am this morning.

The Tami Nadu weather blogger Pradeep John said that the depression is still located near Pamban-Rameswaram belt and has been in that area for past one day and will continue to remain there for one more day.

A bulletin issued by the Regional Met office in Chen-

nai said the deep depression over the Gulf of Mannar close to Ramanathapuram district coast remained stationary during the past three hours and lay centered about 40 km southwest of Ramanathapuram, 70 km south west of Pamban and 160 km northeast of Kanniyanumkunram.

It is very likely to weaken further into a depression with a wind speed 45-55 kmph during next 12 hours.

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Phone: 0164-2756347, E-mail: se-hq-p-lehra@pspcl.in
GSTIN 03AAFCP5120Q1ZC

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Tender Enquiry No. 1263/O&M/PC-2174 Dated: 03-12-2020.
Short Description: Procurement of M.S. ERW & G.I. Pipes.
Quantity: As per NIT.
Last date & time for downloading of documents: 06-01-2021 up to 11:30 a.m.

Last date & time for receipt of e-tenders: 07-01-2021 up to 11:30 a.m.
Last date & time for opening of e-tenders: 13-01-2021 at 12:00 noon.

Tender specification can only be downloaded from website: <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

Details regarding E-Tendering is available on website: WWW.pspcl.in.
Note: In case of any difficulty regarding uploading of the tender the prospective bidders are requested to get clarification from this office (Intending Officer: 96461-20640) and/or Ms. GePNIC Contact number: 0172-2970263, 0172-2970284, 0120-4001002 well in time. All the prospective bidders are requested to get their digital signatures well in time so as to submit tenders through e-tender.

Note: It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on website: <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

Superintending Engineer/HQ
for Chief Engineer/O&M
GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat

GHTP-58/2020

**NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY STORE DEPT.
SUPPLY OF STORES ITEMS
"THROUGH E-PROCUREMENT TENDERS"**

Tender Notice No.: S/2020/34 Date: 03.12.2020
The Principal Chief Material Manager, North Western Railway, headquarter 4th floor, Near Jawahar circle, Malviya Nagar, Jaipur-302017 for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open E-tenders on www.ireps.gov.in site as follows. All the E-tenders will be closed at 14.25 hrs.

No.: 128-W/280/e-Tender Notice/NIT/31/2020-21/W-3 Dated : 04.12.2020
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 2721/20

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

The Dy. Chief Engineer/Constituted, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India invites open e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:-

1. Name of work and location Balance work of Additional holding line between Anand Vihar & Chandernagar station in c/w Development of new coaching terminal at Anand Vihar Railway Station (Phase-II) (Fourth call).

2. Completion period of the work 06 (Six) months from the date of issue of acceptance letter.

3. Approx. Cost of work Rs. 58.25 Lakh (Rupees Fifty eight lakh & twenty five thousand only)

4. Earnest money amount (to be deposited Online) Rs. 1,16,500.00 (Rupees One lakh sixteen thousand five hundred only)

5. Date, Time for submission of e-tender and opening of tender Tenders may be uploaded upto 11:30 hrs. on 28.12.2020 on IREPS web site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. The bidders can only participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11:30 hrs. on 28.12.2020.

6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e. www.nrailways.gov.in. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

No. 220-Acs/1/1166/Holding Line Date: 04.12.2020 2715/20
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate tenders are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Hamirpur Division HPPWD., Hamirpur in form No. 6 & 8 on behalf of Governor of H.P. for the following works from the contractors of appropriate class enlisted with HPPWD. The tender shall be opened in the presence of the contractors / firms or their representative who wish to be present.

TIME SCHEDULE OF TENDER:-

1. Date and time of receipt of application for tender form:-
2. Date and time of issue of tender form :-
3. Date and time of receipt of tenders:-
4. Date and time of opening of tenders:-

The request for issue of tenders should be on the PRESCRIBED APPLICATION FORM which can be obtained from the office of undersigned and tenders will be issued to only those contractors who qualify the criteria after the scrutiny of application forms by the Committee constituted for this purpose.

Sr. No. **Name of Work** **Estimated cost** **EMD** **Time Limit** **Cost of tender** **Eligible class of contractor**

1. Construction of link road to village Naikin Km 0/0 to 0/900. (SH:- P/L 80mm thick interlocking concrete block pavement at RD 0/540 to 0/640 under MMGSY).	238551.00	4,800.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
2. Nadaun Beta Amrit road Km: 0/0 to 2/0. (SH:- C/O Rain Shalter at RD 0/0)	164814.00	4300.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
3. Construction of link road Jagrial to Daryl Km 0/0 to 1/500. (SH:- Construction of Hume pipe culvert at RD 0/540, 0/910 and construction of retaining wall in different RDs and formation cutting etc.). Under OTMPN.	325067.00	6500.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
4. Repair and maintenance of Prisoner's Barrack toilets at District Jail Hamirpur.	156147.00	3,300.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
5. A/R & M/O to Chief Office building at Hamirpur.(SH:- C/o PCC Retaining wall at RD 0/028 to 0/035 edge wall at RD 0/048 to 0/048 to 0/089 stair case 0/048 to 0/056 & 0/060 to 0/073 for approach path to Chief Office Hamirpur).	143404.00	2900.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
6. Construction of link road from Burnwar to Khagjal via Bara Colony Km 0/0 to 2/0. (SH:- Providing metal framing from RD 1/0 to 1/250) under OTMPN Head.	345481.00	7,000.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
7. Restoration of road damages caused due to laying of OFC on Bus Stand Nadaun to CHC Nadaun Km: 0/0 to 0/600. (SH:- Prov. And laying GSB and Cement concrete at RD. 0/0 to 0/300	191047.00	3,900.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
8. Missing CD on Balu Gasota road Km: 0/0 to 1/200. (SH:- C/O Roller compacted Pavement at RD: 0/105 to 0/135 and 0/155 to 0/200).	119032.00	2,400.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
9. A/R & M/O Bus Stand to C.H.C. Nadaun Km: 0/0 to 1/0. (SH:- C/O U-Shape drain with M.S. grating at RD. 0/545 to 0/561)	151381.00	3100.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
10. Restoration of rain damages on Jai Sapper Neri road Km: 0/0 to 5/500. (SH:- Providing and laying wet mix macadam and 25mm thick SDBC in Km. 1/0 to 3/0 in various RD's)	346757.00	7000.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
11. Restoration of rain damages on Bara Sandhara Paltan road Km: 0/0 to 6/500. (SH:- Improvement of damaged road at various RD's)	446762.00	9000.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
12. A/R & M/O link road to village Kuhar Km: 0/0 to 3/0. (SH:- C/O U-Shape drain and edge wall at Km. 131081.00 to 2,700.00 One Month	131081.00	2,700.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
13. Construction of Conference Hall at 8th Circle, HPPWD, Hamirpur. (SH:- Site development and construction of Breast wall).	264019.00	5,300.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
14. A/R & M/O Treasury Office Building at Hamirpur. (SH:- Construction of boundary wall, gate and providing and laying 60mm thick interlocking paver block in courtyard). (Deposit work)	326927.00	6,800.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
15. Improvement of Black spot on Hamirpur Sujanpur road Km 0/0 to 2/600. (SH:- Widening of road side by laying of paver blocks for pedestrians in km 0/220 to 0/495).	296572.00	6000.00	One Month	350/-	Class D
16. Improvement of Black spot on link road to village Badroli Km 0/0 to 2/0. (SH:- Construction P.C.C. Retaining wall at RD 1/255 to 1/267 and edge wall).	239652.00	4800.00	One Month	350/-	Class D

1. The earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Time deposit account in any of the post office in HP / FDR of any Bank duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Hamirpur Division, HPPWD. Hamirpur must be accompanied with the application for receipt of tender form along with cost of form. Tender application received without earnest money will be rejected.

2. The contractors / firms should possess the following documents (photo copy to be attached with application for obtaining the tenders documents):

(i) Latest enlistment / renewal orders with application for obtaining the tenders documents.

(ii) GST Number issued by the Sale Tax Department.

(iii) PAN (Permanent Account Number) issued by the Income Tax Department.

Should contain scanned copies of EPF issued from competent authority.

3. The Executive Engineer, Hamirpur Division HPPWD., Hamirpur reserves the right to reject any tender without assigning any reason(s).

4. The Cess Charges @ 1% will be deducted from the gross amount of work done by the Contractor.

5. The work will be completed by the contractor with in the stipulated period.

6. The contractor / firms are required to insert the rate of each item in words as well as in figures failing which Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/rejects any offer all tender.

7. The tender shall be issued to only those contractor / firms who are eligible, suitable and competent.

8. The tender forms shall be issued to eligible contractors depending upon their past performance and work experience which shall be duly evaluated by the technical evaluation committee.

9. The Contractor/firm having necessary documents and past adequate experience shall be preferred.

10. The Contractor who has failed to start/Complete the work in hand with in reasonable time shall not be issued tender forms.

11. A contractor enlisted in a particular class shall be eligible to tender for his own class and one step below.

12. Only one No. tender form will be issued to the eligible contractor.

13. If 28.12.2020 happens to be holiday the tender shall be opened on next working day at 11.00.

14. GST will be deducted as per rates fixed by the Govt.

15. The tender shall be issued to only those contractor / firms who are eligible, suitable and competent.

16. The tender shall be issued to eligible contractors depending upon their past performance and work experience which shall be duly evaluated by the technical evaluation committee.

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18. The tender forms shall be issued to eligible contractors depending upon their past performance and work experience which shall be duly evaluated by the technical evaluation committee.

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20. A contractor enlisted in a particular class shall be eligible to tender for his own class and one step below.

21. Only one No. tender form will be issued to the eligible contractor.

22. If 28.12.2020 happens to be holiday the tender shall be opened on next working day at 11.00.

23. GST will be deducted as per rates fixed by the Govt.

24. The tender shall be issued to only those contractor / firms who are eligible, suitable and competent.

25. The tender shall be issued to eligible contractors depending upon their past performance and work experience which shall be duly evaluated by the technical evaluation committee.

26. The Contractor/firm having necessary documents and past adequate experience shall be preferred.

27. The tender forms shall be issued to eligible contractors depending upon their past performance and work experience which shall be duly evaluated by the technical evaluation committee.

28. The Contractor who has failed to start/Complete the work in hand with in reasonable time shall not be issued tender forms.

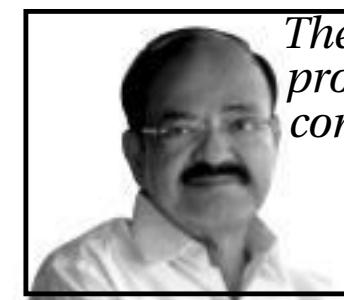
29. A contractor enlisted in a particular class shall be eligible to tender for his own class and one step below.

30. Only one No. tender form will be issued to the eligible contractor.

31. If 28.12.2020 happens to be holiday the tender shall be opened on next working day at 11.00.

32. GST will be deducted as per rates fixed by the Govt.

33. The tender



The SAARC grouping can become an effective and vibrant network to promote prosperity and well-being of a vast population of the region if all the countries come together sincerely to stamp out the scourge of terrorism

VICE PRESIDENT M VENKAIAH NAIDU

AT A VIRTUAL EVENT TO LAUNCH A COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP TO HONOUR FORMER PRIME MINISTER LATE I K GUJRAL.

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 05 DECEMBER 2020

THUMBNAILS



Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Administrator and BBMP Commissioner launch the Covid awareness campaign "3W's" to reduce the risk of COVID-19 at BBMP office, in Bengaluru on Friday. **IANS**

Maoist killed in encounter: A Maoist was killed in an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Bijapur district on Friday, police said. The skirmish took place in a forest under Gangaloor police station area, where joint teams of security forces were on an anti-Naxal operation, inspector general of police said. **PTI**

Civic staffer held in Thane: A civic employee in Maharashtra's Thane city has been arrested by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 10,000 from a real estate agent, an official said. The ACB's Thane unit caught Hemant Gaikwad while accepting the bribe from the complainant. **PTI**

PNB scam: A special CBI court here on Friday rejected the bail plea of Vipul Chitalia, vice president of the Gitanjali Group of Companies arrested in the Punjab National Bank scam. Chitalia, who was arrested in 2018 by CBI, had filed a bail application for the second time. Special CBI judge V C Barde rejected the application. **PTI**

Farm laws: India unhappy with Canada PM's remark

Trudeau had joined other Canadian leaders, particularly those belonging to Sikh community

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

India today conveyed to Canada its strong sense of outrage over comments made by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other important leaders in support of the ongoing farmers' protests over farm laws.

The Canadian High Commissioner (Nadir Patel) was summoned to the Ministry of External Affairs today and informed that comments by the Canadian Prime Minister, some Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament on issues relating to Indian farmers constitute an unacceptable interference in our internal affairs," an official statement said. It said such actions, if continued, would have a seriously damaging impact on ties between India and Canada.

These comments have encouraged gatherings of extremist activities in front of our High Commission and Consulates in Canada that raise issues of safety and security. We expect the Canadian government to ensure the fullest security of Indian diplo-



matic personnel and its political leaders to refrain from pronouncements that legitimise extremist activism," the statement added.

Trudeau had joined other Canadian leaders, particularly those belonging to the Sikh community, to express concern over the farmers' protests, stating these concerns had also been conveyed to the Indian government.

He made the remarks while participating in a Facebook

interaction organised by Canadian MP Bardish Chagger to mark the 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji. He was joined by Canadian ministers Navdeep Bains, Harjit Sajjan and members of the Sikh community.

"I would be remiss if I didn't start by recognising the news coming out of India about the protest by farmers. The situation is concerning and we're all very worried about family and friends," Trudeau said.

"I know that's a reality for many of you. Let me remind you, Canada will always be there to defend the right of peaceful protest. We believe in the importance of dialogue and that's why we've reached out through multiple means directly to the Indian authorities to highlight our concerns," he said, adding it was important to remember Guru Nanak's teachings of compassion, equality and selfless service, which were central to both Sikhism and Canadian values. Others from Canada to have expressed concern over the farmers' protests include politicians from the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party (NDP).

India had reacted sharply to these remarks with MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava saying they were unwarranted, especially when pertaining to the internal affairs of a democratic country. He also said it was best that diplomatic conversations were not misrepresented for political purposes, as was done by the Canadian leadership.

Terrorists shoot, injure JKAP candidate during DDC elections

JAMMU, 4 DECEMBER

In the first such incident in the ongoing 3-phase election for District Development Councils (DDCs) and local bodies across Jammu and Kashmir, terrorists on Friday shot and injured a candidate of the J&K Apni Party (JKAP) in the Kokernag area of south Kashmir's Anantnag district. The attack came during polling for the third phase of these elections.

The injured candidate, Anees-ul-Islam, is contesting DDC election from the Sangam block of Anantnag.

The terror attack came around the noon when the candidate received injury on his arm after which he was rushed to the hospital. His condition is stated to be stable. JKAP in Kashmir is considered friendly towards BJP. The injured candidate had recently joined the JKAP Security forces, including the Army, CRPF and J&K Police, immediately cordoned the area and launched search for terrorists.

Reacting to the terror attack, NC leader Omar Abdullah tweeted: "Elections have always brought out the worst in those forces who have remained inimical to peace in Kashmir".**SNS**

PAGD causing anxiety among their supporters

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 4 DECEMBER

lah was given free hand to allocate seats to the PAGD constituents to contest. However, the BJP has expelled several activists who were contesting the elections as rebel.

NC, PDP, Communist Party of India (M), Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference and Awami National Conference are constituents of the PAGD. Congress had initially become partner in the alliance but has created confusion during these elections by pitting its own candidates particularly in south Kashmir. A senior PDP leader had recently expressed his annoyance publicly against the party not getting its due share of seats particularly in the north Kashmir.

Concerned over the issue, Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone is also spokesman of the PAGD, said that the "local level bickering is a luxury which we just can't afford. The top leadership will have to intervene. We are facing a test. He said although the PAGD has emerged as the voice of the people, but the election is an acid test for the Gupkar alliance. On the ground, the leaders of respective constituents are behaving as if it is like previous times, as if nothing has changed and as if nothing has been eroded.

BTC elections to be held on 7 & 10 December

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
GUWAHATI, 4 DECEMBER

The first phase of Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) elections is scheduled for 7 December where 21 seats in the districts of Baksa and Udaguri will go for polling. The campaigning for the first phase polls will come to an end tomorrow. The second phase of polls will take

place on 10 December when 19 seats under the districts of Chirang and Kokrajhar will go for polling. The counting of votes will take place on 12 December.

Meanwhile, around 24 lakh voters are ready for exercising their franchises to elect 40 representatives in the council covering four districts of western and central Assam. Former student leader turned politician

Pramod Boro led United Peoples Party Liberal (UPPL) has been contesting in all 40 seats. Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) and Bodoland People's Front (BPF), both are allies in the State government in Dispur, but decided to nominate candidates separately in the polls.

On the other hand, the Congress and All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) have

gone for pre-poll seat sharing with an aim to increase their visibilities in the council. Various rallies were jointly addressed by Assam Congress chief Ripun Bora and AIUDF chief Badrudin Ajmal. BPF chief Hagrama Mahailary, which ruled BTC for 15 years, along with other leaders like Rihan Daimary, Pramila Rani Brahma, Chandan Brahma, etc are organizing

poll-rallies in various localities.

State chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal, State minister Himanta Biswa Sarma with Assam BJP president Ranjit Kumar Dass, the saffron party's national general secretary Dilip Saikia with other local leaders have campaigned for their candidates in different constituencies.

HAPPY MOMENT



Newly commissioned officers at their Passing out parade at Air Force Technical College, Jalahalli in Bengaluru on Friday. **IANS**

Twist in Bihar tale: BJP slams CM over law & order situation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, 4 DECEMBER

Barely a fortnight after he took oath as the chief minister of Bihar for the fourth consecutive term, Nitish Kumar has been facing problems from unexpected quarters—his own ally BJP!

Even as the main Opposition RJD goes on mounting heavy attacks on the present NDA regime over sudden spurt in criminal incidents across the state, the BJP too has publicly questioned the Nitish Kumar government for failing to restore law and order situation in the state. Strangely, the person raising fingers over the law and order situation is none other than state BJP president Sanjay Jaiswal.

"While on way to Patna from Betia, I encountered a group of villagers blocking the road. They told me that incidents of theft have become an order of the day but when they informed the local Turkaula police station in-charge, he threatened to arrest them," Jaiswal mentioned in his Facebook post.

The BJP president said



few days back, the people were repeatedly talking about the 'Jungle Raj' at their election rallies. Now a virtual Goonda Raj has taken over in the state.

Hundreds of murders are taking place everyday yet why the 'Maharaja of Jungle Raj' is silent? asked Bihar opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav. He alleged the loot, kidnapping and murders had become an order of the day since the 'criminals are enjoying the patronage of the ruler'.

Criminal incidents have registered a sudden jump in recent weeks with kidnapping become a matter of concern. One such incident which deserves special mention here is the kidnapping of a female doctor Dr Daisey Jaiswal who was kidnapped with her car in Madhubani district in the November end.

The doctor was on way to her home in Sitamarhi district when two kidnappers abducted her at gun-point. They had demanded a ransom of Rs 20 lakh in lieu of her release.

Rajoana case: SC asks Centre about delay in sending proposal to Kovind

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

The Supreme Court Friday questioned the Centre over delay in sending proposal to the President for commuting the death sentence of Balwant Singh Rajoana, convicted in the 1995 assassination case of former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde asked the Centre to apprise it as to when the authorities concerned will send the proposal to the President under Article 72 of the Constitution.

The article deals with power of President to grant pardon, suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases.

The apex court noted that a letter was sent from the Ministry of Home Affairs to Punjab chief secretary on September 27 last year intimating that a proposal would be sent to the President to commute the death sentence of Rajoana.

The bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, asked Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj, appearing for the Centre, as to why the proposal has not been sent till now.

By the letter dated September 27, 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has written to the Chief Secretary, Government of Punjab/ Gujarat/ Haryana/ Karnataka/ NCT of Delhi that on the occasion of commemoration of 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, special remission and release of prisoners are proposed, the bench noted in its order.

In particular, the said letter states as follows: It has been decided that 8 Sikh prisoners be given special remission under Article 161 of the Constitution and released from prison. The proposal for commutation of death sentence to life imprisonment of one prisoner is to be processed under Article 72 of the Constitution of India. The State

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde asked the Centre to apprise it as to when the authorities concerned will send the proposal to the President under Article 72 of the Constitution. The article deals with power of President to grant pardon, suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases

Government/Union Territory Administration concerned and Centre-State Division of Ministry of Home Affairs are requested to take all required action in this regard', the order said.

Rajoana, a former Punjab Police constable, was convicted for his involvement in an explosion outside the Punjab civil secretariat that killed Beant Singh and 16 others on August 31, 1995.

The top court was hearing Rajoana's plea seeking commutation of death sentence to life term on the ground that he has been in jail for 25 years.

During the hearing conducted through video-conferencing, the bench told Nataraj that Rajoana has not filed any appeal in the apex court in the matter.

Someone at your end is highly misconceived about pendency of appeal, the bench told Nataraj.

On a query made by the court, K M Nataraj, Additional Solicitor General appearing on behalf of the Union of India stated that the proposal has not been sent in view of the pending appeals of the co-accused in this court. It is not denied that the petitioner has himself not filed any appeal against his sentence. Therefore, there is no question of awaiting the outcome of any appeal pending before this court, the bench noted in its order.

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Public Notice

Regarding self-declaring of East Delhi Municipal Corporation as "Garbage Free City"

General public and all concerned are hereby informed that East Delhi Municipal Corporation is fully committed towards achieving of set objectives of 'Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban'.

East Delhi Municipal Corporation is constantly striving for self-declaring the city as "Garbage Free City" and achieving it, formally under the Swachh Survekshan 2021 (Clean Survey 2021) organized

by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

If any person notices any problems related to litter lying in the open, please register your information, advice, complaint, suggestion and objections etc. with East Delhi Municipal Corporation through Executive Engineer (Project Implementation Unit) of East Delhi Municipal Corporation on email eepuedmnc@gmail.com within 15 days' time period after the publication of this information.

East Delhi region will be self-declared as "Garbage Free City" by the Municipal Corporation after the end of the said time period.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
R.O. No. 69/DPI/EDMC/2020-21
EDMC'S CITIZENS HELPLINE NO. 155303

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one female Namely: Manju, W/o Shyam Prakash, R/o: H.No. 146-A, Street No. 07, A Block, Rajeev Nagar, Budh Bazar Road Harsh Vihar, Delhi, has been kidnapped from her house since 12.10.2020, from the area of P.S. Harsh Vihar, Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 45-A, dated 12.11.2020

has been registered at P.S. Harsh Vihar, Delhi. The description of the kidnapped female is as under: Age: About 35 years, Height: 5', Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Medium, Wearing: Green colour suit-salwar and yellow colour slipper in her feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the female but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this female kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail Id - cib@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/426/NE/2020 Ph.: 011-22342073, 8750870734

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of the following Special Trains will be revised as under:

Revised Timings of 02431 Thiruvananthapuram Central - Hazrat Nizamuddin Rajdhani Special Superfast Train

Train No.: 02431	ARR.	DEP.	STATIONS
	04:14	04:15	KASARAGOD
	23:48	23:50	THRISUR
	22:20	22:25	ERNAKULAM JN

Revised Timings effective from : 02431 from Thiruvananthapuram Central on 31.12.2020.

Revised Timings of 02691 KSR Bengaluru - New Delhi Rajdhani Special Superfast Train

Train No.: 02691	ARR.	DEP.	ST
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Year of the Dragon

As 2020 wheezes its way out, perhaps it is time to reflect on how it has transformed the world and altered dynamics between the world's nations. Laid low by the consequences of a deadly virus that was first reported at about this time last year in China, and convulsed by a bitter election fought in the United States whose effects will really begin to be felt with the change of guard early in 2021, the world's economies have gasped for breath, with no ventilators around to rescue nations hit by increasing joblessness, fall in demand and disrupted supply chains. But as former German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer notes in a recent essay, the year has belonged to China and will mark the transition from a "US-dominated 20th century to a China-dominated 21st century". This might not have seemed as likely ten or eleven months ago when China, locked in a bitter and damaging trade war with the United States, reported the first outbreak of the virus and in subsequent weeks when the numbers of cases and deaths appeared to gallop in Wuhan. At that time, commentators had speculated on the likelihood of challenges to President Xi Jinping's leadership for life, of the churning within the Chinese Communist Party and of the possibility of a popular backlash to the harsh containment measures put in place by Beijing. As the year draws to a close, Mr Xi remains firmly in control, and may well have smothered any dissent there might have been. China's economy has bounced back, recording GDP growth while its rivals wallow in despair. The virus has been largely contained in China, and rare is the day when more than a handful of cases are reported.

But China's greatest gain lies in the manner in which it has managed to assert its position globally, despite the accusations it faced around the world. Ignoring international criticism, it launched decisive actions to quell unrest in Hong Kong. It aggressively targeted its territorial claims and while it may not have achieved all it wanted, either with India or with Taiwan, it has kept the pot boiling to keep both on the defensive. It has dealt ruthlessly with those who challenged it, principally Australia, whose products face increasing difficulty in accessing Chinese markets and which has just been arrogantly and officially told to "correct its mistakes". And as Fischer notes, describing the development as the difference between reality and reality TV, "in November, China mounted something of a geopolitical coup with the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, a new trade agreement that will put it at the centre of the world's largest free-trade area." All these developments suggest that even if the virus was not a Chinese creation, as has been alleged by many around the world, the global outbreak has been used by Beijing to stamp its authority on the world. Truly, this has been China's year.

Indic voice

The shambles which is the United Nations with its in-built hypocrisies and behind-the-scenes puppeteers was clinically exposed by India at the UNHQ on Thursday. Fostering of a culture of peace and condemnation of violence against religious groups, the Indian First Secretary to its UN Mission told the General Assembly, cannot be restricted to Abrahamic faiths. "This august body fails to acknowledge the rise of hatred and violence against Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism... India agrees fully that anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and anti-Christian acts need to be condemned and we firmly condemn such acts... (but) UN resolutions on such important issues speak only of these three Abrahamic religions," he said while referring to the UN draft resolution on the Freedom of Religion or Belief. An Indian representative, for perhaps the first time from a global platform, queried this selectivity in a sober, historically accurate and effective manner. It was about time someone called out the double standards of the mutually beneficial global talk-shop for warring Abrahamic traditions in their avatars as post-World War II nation-states that the UN has essentially become. These countries, it ought to be kept in mind, are not too different - with honourable exceptions - from the religious monarchical states that fought the viciously violent Crusades in the medieval era. It ought to be a matter of pride for every Indian that it was our representative at the UN who belted the cat, as it were.

But this is just the beginning and those with a sense of history would do well not to get carried away. The political and by extension media narrative is already indulging in juvenile one-upmanship by focussing on the specifics which were cited by India at the UNGA merely as illustrations which do not in any way constitute the definitive stand of the Indian State. So, while it is true that Pakistan's move to hand over the decision-making role in the management of the Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara to non-Sikhs, the Taliban's blowing up of the Bamyan Buddhas, the ethnic cleansing of Hindus from Kashmir and the rising tide of Hinduphobia particularly but not exclusively in South Asia are all contemptible, that is not the full story. It is a mindset that needs to change. And that is a process, not an event. For example, those who (rightly) lionise a towering intellectual such as Edward Said for his pathbreaking academic work in explaining the fault lines between the Islamic and Judeo-Christian traditions, or East and West, fail to even recognise arguably the most seminal philosophical work of the 20th century in locating the Indic dharmic traditions' encounters with Abrahamic religions by the brilliant academic SN Balagangadhara. Last but not least, the normalisation of the nomenclature 'religion' to define Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and followers of other non-Abrahamic traditions needs to be resisted with far greater intellectual force than has been hitherto exhibited.

Political Pardons

Political pardons cannot be a tool of self-protection or for furthering a partisan purpose – they should remain a progressive tool for the larger good of society, civic evolution and societal heal, depending only on the circumstances, sensitivities and implications involved



Political pardons can be necessary, controversial or even regrettable, depending on the manner, circumstances and the overarching intent that accompany them. The noble belief of deeper healing was inherent in Nelson Mandela's famous Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which implicitly sought a spirit of forgiveness, restoration and healing through the debris of a wounded nation. Post-apartheid South Africa had embarked upon a systemic amnesty where the deal for truth was a sacrifice by way of confession and forgiveness by the perpetrator and the sufferer, respectively.

No such spirit prevailed in the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's ironfisted reign in Iraq. Saddam's removal had paved way for the majority Shias to reassess themselves against the minority Sunnis who composed the bulk of Saddam's earlier Baathist government - the sectarian fault-lines deepened, and revenge and mayhem became the norm. New Shia-dominated leadership freed incarcerated Shias from jails, whilst targeting the Sunnis with attacks, abductions and incarcerations. Two different nations, two different instincts in play and two different outcomes - South Africa has moved on, and Iraq continues to simmer in violence.

Political pardons don't always succeed, as intended or postulated. Besieged Afghan President, Ashraf Ghani, had overcome his initial reluctance to pardon hardcore members of the dreaded Taliban as a goodwill gesture to draw the grouping into negotiations for peace. Taliban was expected to reciprocate the move by responding with its own release of prisoners held by it and shunning violence. It did neither, though it did enter negotiations, albeit it drove its own regressive and intransigent demands.

Within months of the political pardon, Afghanistan today is

caught in a vortex of unimaginable violence and desperation, with the Taliban increasing its brutality and ground-surge to unprecedented levels.

Similarly, the ill-intended facade of political pardons in the ensuing African conflict of Ethiopia's civil war, was almost predestined to fuel more violence. In 2018, Ethiopia's newly elected Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed was endearing himself to the Western media by making the right noises about reforms, ending the bloody war with neighbouring Eritrea, as also releasing political prisoners in the ethnically divided Ethiopia. The West was mesmerised by the new hope in Abiy and within a year of his tenure, the Ethiopian Prime Minister was surprisingly given the Nobel Peace Prize. What outsiders had missed was the ethnic selectivity in issuing political pardons - those sharing Abiy's own ethnic roots were granted the bulk of political pardons. The diminishment of one ethnicity at the cost of pardoning and privileging the other is at the root of the ensuing civil war that threatens to tear up the Horn of Africa.

Popular accounts of the legendary ruler Prithviraj Chauhan's multiple pardons to the Ghurid invader, Muhammad Ghor, and its consequences are part of Indian folklore. Later, India's spiritual consciousness was influenced my Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts that 'the weak can never forgive, forgiveness is the attribute of the strong' - implicitly insisting on pardon as a socio-moral tenet. Constitutionally, the President of India was bestowed pardoning powers

under Article 72 which expressively states, "The President shall have the power to grant pardons, reprieves, respites or remissions of punishment or to suspend, remit or commute the sentence of any person convicted of any offence where the sentence is a sentence of death".

Beyond legality, the Indian Presidential 'power to pardon' is about jurisprudential, societal and moral fine combing that seeks to probe the exactitude and rigour of the 'rarest of rare cases', which led to the said judicial conviction. Complexities of pardon are multifold, as exemplified by the publicly posited pardon by the family of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to Nalini (key conspirator in his assassination who is still in jail), as it must also account for the raw sentiments of the families of the 14 policemen killed in the same attack. The curious case of

clemency to the former National Security Advisor and retired Lt Gen, Michael Flynn, has reignited the debate of political pardons - not for the legality of the same but owing to the possible morality and intent surrounding the action.

Under the US constitution, the President's clemency power extends to all federal criminal offenses and therefore Donald Trump's questionable intent in earlier acts of pardoning hate provocateurs and military dervelicts aside, he was within his legal remit to do so. However, Flynn's case has dark potentialities of a possible quid pro quo that is linked up to the current White House incumbent's own vulnerabilities.

Flynn had pleaded to his

guilt about his contacts with the Russians in the run-up to the 2016 US Presidential elections and was embarrassingly convicted. Trump had tried desperately and systematically to protect Flynn and have the charges against him dropped.

When Trump failed procedurally to release Flynn through others, he ultimately decided to invoke his Presidential power of pardon, weeks before he is eased out of the White House. The emerging picture suggests that Flynn had not lied to protect himself but to ostensibly protect Trump, and this act of pardon was partly a reward for his loyalty and perhaps more disturbingly, driven by murkier instincts of protecting those who still have Trump's post-White House fate, in their hands.

Conversely others like the former attorney and one-time 'fixer' of Trump, Michael Cohen, who too was mired and convicted in Trump's Russian dalliances but had thereafter stopped lying about their past to the obvious discomfiture of the President, has been denied any similar pardon. All eyes are now on Paul Manafort who had chaired Trump's Presidential campaign in 2016 and was also indicted and convicted by the Special Counsel of Investigation.

Seemingly Manafort like Flynn, had lied and remained tightlipped to Trump's advantage. Should he too be granted a Presidential pardon in the last days of Trump in power, the question of intent and morality surrounding political pardons will resurface.

Political pardons cannot be a tool of self-protection (a la Donald Trump) or for furthering a partisan purpose - they should remain a progressive tool for the larger good of society, civic evolution and societal heal, depending only on the circumstances, sensitivities and implications involved.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Unanswered courtship

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit here last week was viewed as aimed at strengthening ties between South Korea and China ahead of the launch of a new US administration in January.

His trip to Seoul, the first since December 2019, came as US President-elect Joe Biden has made clear his intent to rebuild a network of America's alliances to reassess its global leadership and keep China's growing assertiveness in check. The Chinese top diplomat might have been pleased by the eagerness of a whole range of South Korean leaders to meet with him. Or he might have taken it for granted, given South Korea's care not to anger its largest economic partner and desire to secure Beijing's support for its push for inter-Korean reconciliation at the risk of weakening its traditional alliance with the US.

During his three-day stay here, which followed a trip to Japan, Wang met President Moon Jae-in, National Assembly Speaker Park Byeong-seug and top ruling party officials as well as his South Korean counterpart Kang Kyung-wha. He gave an unambiguous signal that South Korea should stand by China or at least remain neutral between the world's two mightiest countries when asked by a reporter whether his latest trip here might be put in the context of an escalating Sino-US rivalry.

"The US is not the only country in this world," Wang said, adding there are some 190 independent countries, including China and South Korea.

He was lavish in his rhetoric to emphasize the importance of strengthened ties between South Korea and China but failed to commit to substantial measures to carry forward bilateral cooperation.

In his meeting with Kang, Wang touted the "robustness" and "vitality" of China's relations with South Korea, stressing his trip here, which he said came at a time when the coronavirus pandemic has yet to end, illustrates how much Beijing values the bilateral partnership. But he gave no clear way to Seoul's wish list.

Wang said Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to Seoul would take place "as soon as conditions are ripe" in a repeat of Beijing's position that Xi can make the planned trip after the COVID-19 pandemic is contained. The Moon administration has wanted the Chinese leader to visit here within this year. He hoped for a continuous communication when asked to lift China's continued restrictions on Korean cultural content that were imposed in an apparent reprisal for Seoul's 2016 decision to allow the US to deploy an advanced missile defense system here in response to growing military threats from North Korea.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry drew attention to a "10-point" agreement reached at the meeting between Wang and Kang. But the accord contains no substantial measures to move forward bilateral partnership, just calling for superstitious steps like promoting anti-coronavirus cooperation and establishing a committee for the long-term development of mutual relations.

H The Korea Herald
stantial measures to carry forward bilateral cooperation.

SIR, This is to compliment Subrata Mukherjee for the incisive article, "A journalist of courage and deep conviction" (Perspective, 3 December). He has focused on the legendary journalist Robert Fisk who held British and Irish citizenship. During his career he developed strong, dauntless and impartial views. He was especially critical of the United States' foreign policy in the Middle East and the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians, to the commendation of many commentators.

NOTABLE TRIBUTE

SIR, This is to compliment Subrata Mukherjee for the incisive article, "A journalist of courage and deep conviction" (Perspective, 3 December). He has focused on the legendary journalist Robert Fisk who held British and Irish citizenship. During his career he developed strong, dauntless and impartial views. He was especially critical of the United States' foreign policy in the Middle East and the Israeli government's treatment of Palestinians, to the commendation of many commentators.

He was an international correspondent who covered civil wars in Lebanon, Algeria and Syria, the Iran-Iraq conflict, the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Islamic revolution in Iran, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, and the US invasion and occupation of Iraq. Real journalism is a simple business, but extremely difficult to do well. Its purpose is to find out significant news as fast as possible, disregard all efforts by governments and armies to suppress it, and pass that information to the public so that they can judge what is happening in the world. This is what Fisk did and did it better than anyone else. Fisk regarded himself as a pacifist and a non-voter. He believed that journalism must "challenge authority, all authority, especially so when governments and politicians take us to war".

Yours, etc., Narayan Chandra Ghosh, Madanpur, 3 December.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Some thoughts on banking

SIR, Devendra Saksena has discussed thoughtfully in the article 'Full Circle' (4 December) the likely consequences of allowing large businesses to open banks as recommended by the Internal Working Group of RBI (IWG). Certain points in the article, however, merit scrutiny. In consonance with the title of his article, Saksena has observed, "should the recommendations of the IWG be accepted, banking would come full circle, from its nationalisation fifty-one years ago." The implied meaning is that if the IWG recommendations are implemented, it would undo nationalisation of banks. The intent of the IWG report, as

available from newspaper reports, is far from it. It has nothing to do with existing banks. The recommendation is simply about opening of new banks by corporate houses.

Saksena feels opening of smaller banks would be advantageous for easy control. This is a pragmatic suggestion. "The directors of such banks should be finance professionals." However, the government thinks otherwise.

Often the experts on banking are not consulted. Abrupt decisions are taken by the politicians and bureaucrats. In the matter of demonetization in 2016, even Reserve Bank of India,

controller of the banking system in India, was not consulted. In the recent past, diametrically contrasting with Saksena's suggestion, most nationalised banks were merged, making huge entities. Gain through such measure eludes public perception. But the damage can be gauged. All those banks had distinct methods of internal working. It is proving difficult for the staff to adapt to the systems of the respective banks within which they have been merged.

Yours, etc., Sanjit Ghatak, Narendrapur, 4 December.

MONSOON FLOWS

SIR, I refer to "China to build major hydropower project on Brahmaputra river: Report".

India is deeply concerned over China tapping water sources in Tibet. Three major Indian rivers rise in Tibet - the Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra. Despite its reputation as the "water tower of Asia", most of the Himalayas' high-altitude cities already struggle with water shortages in the

dry season. Climate change, glacier melt and shifting rain patterns have compounded population pressures.

The recent muscular diplomacy by China be it in the South China Sea or the downstream flows towards nations of the Mekong River is leading to needless stress. As the downstream nation, India is likely to be at the mercy of China and water flows from these rivers could become a genuine threat to national security.

Glacial melt is an important source of water but in the case of Brahmaputra or for that matter the Ganges monsoon flows are equally important.

The Southwest monsoon produces copious downpours from May to September and we often read about floods in the region during this period. Given the precipitation, runoff and sediment flows, it is unlikely that any intervention on the Brahmaputra in the Tibetan Himalaya can cause any substantial harm for downstream countries like India and Bangladesh, irrespective of Chinese intent. Although glacial melt

is important, climate change studies suggest that it is likely to decrease over the next few decades and whether China diverts or builds dams would be beside the point. Like the rivers of South India which are monsoon dependent India should plan to conserve the monsoon flows by building large dams to conserve its water resource. India needs to manage its own resources and improve the lives of its citizens with or without cooperation for China.

Yours, etc., H N Ramakrishna, Bengaluru, 3 December.



'Police must serve deprived'

A noted social activist, **AMOD KANTH** had a remarkable career as an IPS officer in Delhi and other states of the country. His last two significant assignments were in Goa and Arunachal Pradesh as Director-General. He founded an NGO, Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre Society, which works for protection, development and rehabilitation of marginalised children and women. It runs various programmes relating to street and working children, child protection and juvenile justice, prevention of trafficking of children and women, and skills and vocational training. A recipient of the President's Police medal for meritorious service, Kanth is currently also serving as a member-coordinator of the NITI-CSO Standing Committee of the NITI Aayog. In an interview with **RAKESH KUMAR**, Kanth shares his thoughts on a range of issues besides touching upon his latest book, a memoir about his stint as an IPS officer. Excerpts:

Q. Could you outline the work and objectives of Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre Society?

The organisation came into existence in 1988. It was purely on the call of duty because at that time I happened to be a Deputy Commissioner of Police in Delhi. In the 80s, Delhi had several law and order problems and there were many serious crimes and counter-terrorism activities. That was the time when many children were lost and found. Adults could have been taken care of easily but not the children, who came into the care of Delhi Police. Daily we used to get 30 to 40 missing children in our police stations. But we didn't have any facilities. Therefore, it was a necessity to create a programme in which these children could be cared for. This is how Prayas came into existence.

One day, there was a big fire in Jahangir Puri's slum area. Then LG of Delhi H L Kapur asked me to accom-



pany him to the site. I had nothing to investigate there but I came across a large number of children who had become homeless after their huts were gutted. That gave me another reason and a big opportunity to start Prayas. The idea of Prayas was to look after children who went the wrong way, children who were neglected and those who needed care and protection.

Q. How do you look at the evolution of Prayas over the last three decades?

Today, Prayas is one of the largest voluntary organisations in the country as it employs a pool of professionals — social workers, health workers and community workers. We have 200 centres in 10 states including Delhi, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andaman and Nicobar Island, and directly serve 50,000 marginalised children. We also have 38 home shelters which include juvenile

homes, homes for homeless children and homes for homeless people. We also have a health programme, child protection programme, skill development programme and a large scale disaster management programme.

Q. What are the challenges that the voluntary sector is currently facing in India?

Today, the voluntary sector is at a crossroads. A lot of new rules and regulations like FCRA are introduced every other day. Let me tell you, during the Covid time, these voluntary organisations did a very good job. Throughout this period, I was myself on the field. We provided meals to 1.65 lakh people during the Covid time and also gave shelter to 25,000 children and adults in shelter homes. We were running a primary health centre and a quarantine centre in Arunachal Pradesh and Bihar

Around 3,000 Prayas workers, working in different capacities are on the frontline. However, the voluntary sector is facing a lot of problems in terms of funding and support from the government. I think we should take care of this sector.

Q. You have just written the first volume of your memoir, 'Khaki in Dust Storm-Police Diaries Book-1', about your journey as an IPS officer through the tumultuous period between 1980 and 1991. How would you describe it and what compelled you to write this book?

Throughout my career, I had a habit of writing a diary. During my tenure, I had a chance to handle many high profile cases. This first volume which starts from the 1980s, talks about those times. According to me and some media also, the 1980s was the most violent decade of the country after Partition. This was the time when extremism and terrorism grew exponentially. We seriously faced internal problems in Punjab. In 1984, after Operation Blue Star and Indira Gandhi's assassination, a riot took place in Delhi. In this book I have talked about the developments which led to Operation Blue Star, situation after assassination of Indira Gandhi and the 1984 riots. At that time, I was DCP of Central Delhi, which was the most sensitive district in Delhi. Riots were better controlled, if not entirely controlled in my area. We took several strict measures to control the riots like opening fire on mobs and conducted lots of inquiries. The Ranganathan Commission report also appreciated our district's work. After a year, in 1985, transistor bomb blasts took place in Delhi and adjoining areas. It was the time when several assassinations took place in the country. Then Delhi also had a major drug problem. Overall, this volume is about the tumultuous experiences I encountered as an IPS officer in the 1980s.

Q. Delhi Police has come under a

cloud for its inept handling of the February 2020 Northeast Delhi riots. It was accused of even being complicit in it. What is your take on this matter? And, with your experience of policing during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, do you see any parallels between them?

A. First of all, we can't compare the two situations. When the 1984 riots took place, Delhi Police were extremely ill equipped. Then, Delhi Police had only 30 to 40 mobile vans in the entire city. Also, the manpower was small. Not only this, even Delhi had a leadership crisis. Overall, Delhi Police was in bad shape those days. Now, Delhi has more than 4,000 mobile vans. The 1984 riots took place in the entire city of Delhi but riots in 2020 took place only in one area. More than 700 cases were registered in 2020 riots while in the 1984 riots not many cases were registered. Also, investigations are being carried out here in Delhi riots. Therefore, it is not right to compare the two cases.

Q. What is your prescription for reforming police in the country?

A. The Indian Police Act 1861 is a direct outcome of India's First War of Independence in 1857, called the Sepoy Mutiny. This law was made to serve the British Empire. Unfortunately, till date, conventional policing in India is being managed through the 1861-vintage Indian Police Act and the troika of criminal laws, i.e. CrPC, IPC and Evidence Act. These laws do not support the police as a service meant for the poor and the socially deprived, children, women, disabled, elderly, and the like. There is a trust deficit between police and people, and it is a big problem. Therefore, community oriented policing should be there. Deprived people like women, kids, disabled people, Dalits, poor and backward should be given utmost priority by policemen. These people require service, not the rich or politicians.

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The Editor of the China Medical Journal regrets that no expert psychologist, alienist, or even well-qualified practitioner, has ever made a full, unprejudiced, and scientific study of the physical and mental phenomena of the malady known as demoniacal possession. This condition is exceedingly common in China, and the Chinese belief in it is a serious obstacle to public health and sanitation. All epidemics of disease are attributed to the direct agency of evil spirits, and the only recognised method of combating them is by propitiating the demons by offerings, incantations, and charms. A story is told of a medical missionary in China who gathered his servants together one day and gave them a lecture on sanitation. At the close of the lecture an intelligent Chinaman remarked that the foreigners seemed to be just as worried about bacteria as the Chinese were about demons, and in his opinion there was not much to choose between these different enemies of mankind. The belief in demoniacal possession is a great hindrance to the progress of scientific medicine among the Chinese. Only a little over here per cent of the students at present studying in China are studying medicine. The Chinese student knows very well that in cases of serious illness his countrymen will prefer to spend their money on the demons rather than on the doctors.

NEWS ITEMS

BERLIN NIGHT CLUB

The police of Berlin have just made the remarkable discovery that the Government premises, which in the day time are the headquarters of the Coal and Fuel Control Department have, through the criminal ingenuity of the caretaker, Otto Busdorf, been used for months past as one of the gayest and most reckless of night clubs. The Government canteen for the use of the Government clerks had been turned into a bar and when the police made their raid they found champagne was being sold to a miscellaneous gathering of women and gamblers at four hundred marks a bottle. All the "guests" were arrested and among them was a notorious thief, on whom some pound 3,000 worth of stolen property, jewellery, and notes was found.

AN ACCOMPLISHED SWINDLER

Numerous German towns have been victimised to the total extent of some three hundred millions of marks at normal exchange by a stylish personage who called himself "Count Sternberg," but gave it out privately that he was a son of the late Empress Elizabeth of Austria, and a brother of Crown Prince Rudolph, who was not really dead but living in voluntary exile. In general he let it be known that his own fortune amounted to 1000,000,000 marks, and that when his naturalisation as a German citizen was completed, he would come into full use of it. He managed to get people to believe in him, subscribed generously to charities, and entertained on lavish lines. He borrowed enormous sums and bought four fine estates, as well as a famous health resort.

FERGUSON COLLEGE STUDENTS

A meeting of the students of the Fergusson College was held at Vaidikashram quarters, where after a long discussion, it was resolved that the students completely realise the importance of national education and also believe that a general strike of students is desirable and possible. However, in view of making the movement stronger, it has been decided that the college authorities should be informed of their strong desire to receive national education at their hands, that they should secure the consent of parents during the coming vacation, and that they should represent their views at the All India College Students Conference and decide the future course afterwards. Those resolutions quiet the situation, at least for the present.

BRITISH PRISONERS IN RUSSIA

It is announced that in view of the proposed Russian trade agreement, a representative group of British merchants, whose funds and goods have been seized by the Soviet Government, have taken legal advice with regard to their position in the event of the export of Russian merchandise to this country being permitted. These British merchants are not prepared tamely to submit to goods stolen from themselves, and other goods for that matter, being sold by the Soviet Government in this country while their just claims are entirely ignored. Meanwhile new obstacles to the conclusion of the agreement have arisen. Although it has been announced that the Baku prisoners have been released and are now safe, there is convincing evidence that Lenin and his friends are not completing the return of captives.

The chair, the noose and gas

AUSTIN SARAT



methods began in earnest.

The first of those alternatives was the electric chair. At the time it was adopted, it was regarded as a truly modern instrument of death, a technological marvel in the business of state killing. Hailed by penal reformers as a humane alternative to hanging, the electric chair was first authorized in 1888 by New York state following the report of a commission that concluded, "The most potent agent known for the destruction of human life is electricity... The velocity of the electric current is so great that the brain is paralyzed; it is indeed dead before the nerves can communicate a sense of shock."

Yet, right from the start, electrocution's potency was a problem. Its first use in the 1890 execution of convicted murderer William Kemmler was horribly botched. Reports of the execution say that "After 2 minutes the execution chamber filled with the smell of burning flesh." Newspapers called the execution a "historic bungle" and "disgusting, sickening and inhuman."

In spite of the Kemmler debacle, the electric chair quickly became pop-

ular, being seen as more efficient and less brutal than hanging. From the start of the 20th century until the 1980s, the number of death sentences carried out by this method far outstripped those of any other method.

But electrocutions continued to go wrong, and eventually several dramatic botched executions in Florida helped turn the tide. Included were two executions, one in 1990, the other in 1997, in which the condemned inmates caught fire.

By the start of the 21st century, states all over the country were abandoning the electric chair. As Justice Carol W. Hunstein of the Supreme Court of Georgia explained, "Death by electrocution, with its spectre of excruciating pain and its certainty of cooked brains and blistered bodies," was no longer compatible with contemporary standards of decency.

One alternative to electrocution was the gas chamber, but it too has its own history of problems. First adopted in Nevada in 1922, executions using lethal gas were to take place while the condemned slept. Death row inmates were supposed to be housed in airtight, leak-proof prison cells, separate from other prisoners. On the day of the execution, valves would be opened that would fill the chamber with gas, killing the prisoner painlessly.

This plan was soon abandoned because officials decided it would be impractical to implement it, and states constructed special gas chambers fitted with pipes, exhaust fans and glass windows on the front and back walls for witness viewing. But deaths by lethal gas were never pretty or easy to watch.

Inmates regularly fought against breathing the gas as it entered the chamber. They convulsed, jerked, coughed, twisted and turned blue for several minutes before they died.

Far from solving the problems associated with hangings or electrocutions, lethal gas introduced its own set

of horrors to the institution of capital punishment. In fact, by the end of the 20th century, 5 per cent of executions by lethal gas had been botched.

As a result, states used gas as the sole method of execution only from 1924 to 1977, and it was last used in 1999. By then, the gas chamber had become a relic of the past because of its inability to deliver on its promise to be "swift and painless" and its association with the Nazi use of gas to kill millions during the Holocaust.

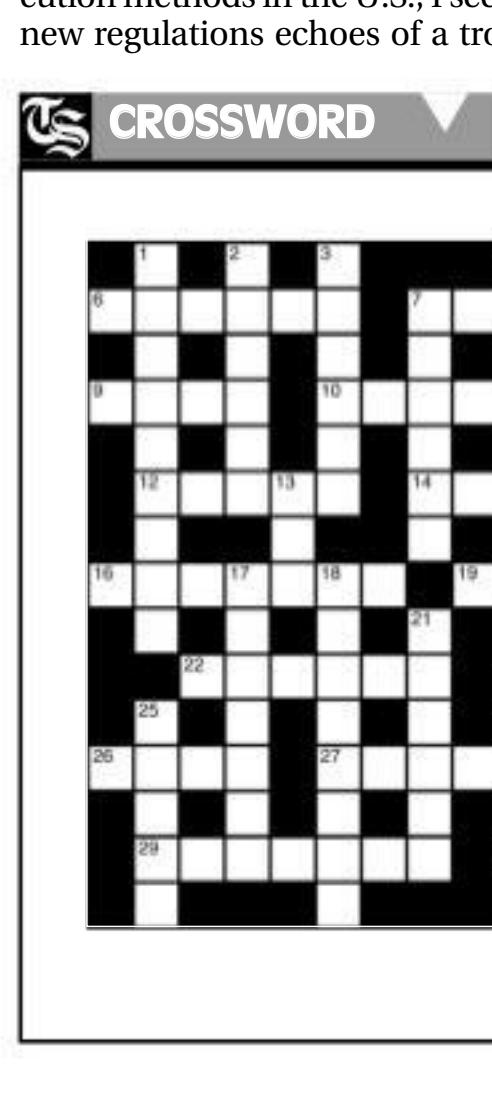
Finally, the firing squad. Of all America's methods of execution, it has been least often used. From 1900 to 2010, only 35 of America's 8,776 executions were carried out using this method, and since 1976 just three people have faced a firing squad, with the last one carried out in Utah in 2010. Critics point out that because death by guns evokes images of raw, frontier justice in a society awash in gun violence, this method mimicked something that the law wished to discourage. Nonetheless, Utah revived the firing squad in 2015 due to challenges to the state's lethal injection protocol.

While it has some contemporary proponents who claim it is the least cruel of all execution methods, the history of the firing squad is marked by gruesome mistakes when marksmen missed their target. In the 1951 execution of Eliseo Mares, for example, four executioners all shot into the wrong side of his chest, and he died slowly from blood loss.

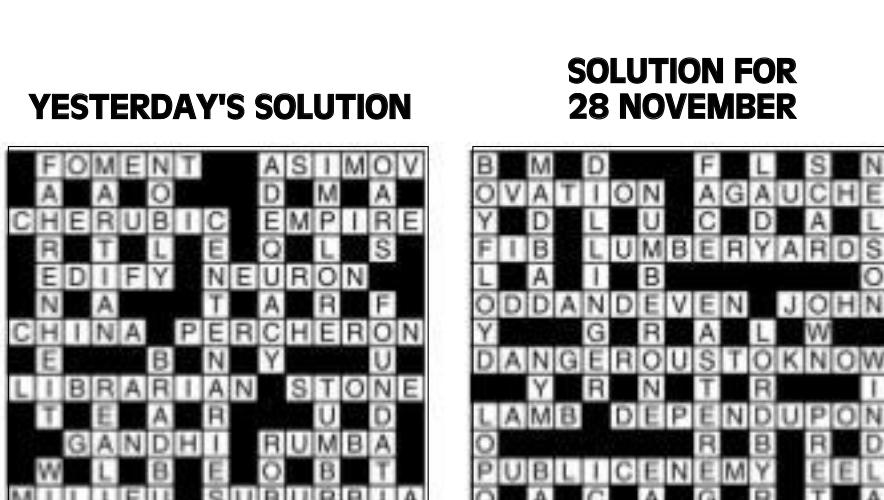
While Trump's Department of Justice is now holding out the prospect of using these previously discredited methods of execution, it cannot erase the cruelty that marks their history. That history stands as a reminder of America's failed quest to find a method of execution that is safe, reliable and humane.

The writer is Associate Provost and Associate Dean of the Faculty and Cromwell Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Science, Amherst College. This article was published on www.theconversation.com

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



SOLUTION FOR 28 NOVEMBER

ACROSS

- 6 Illustration features mainly, type of skin disease (6)
- 7 Pile on to player (7)
- 9 Group must accept it's wrong — send rude message... (4)
- 10/29... after we slyly condemned those challenging government (not right) (5,7)
- 11 Fresher's explanation ultimately ignored but it does hold water (4)
- 12 Breaks code of silence over government's wrongdoings (5)
- 14 Top amongst German aircraft (6)
- 16 Dissolved substances — use lots at work (7)
- 19 Sank independent filmmaker (7)
- 22 See 1 Down

DOWN

- 23 Dispatch note to Cons (5)
- 26 Recalled Bill's privileged start in life? (4)
- 27 Writer and others cycling round Spain (5)
- 28 Anarchy in port the conclusion of Brexit? (4)
- 29 See 10
- 30 What's not close for travelling? American islands (6)
- 1 Retirement official — fancy resistance's given way (6)
- 8 What flipping blockhead put in order for Murdoch publication? (3,4)
- 13 Secure though not all together (3)
- 15 I bar canoe rolling as exercise (9)
- 17 Weaken nun — wise move (7)
- 18 Old master with stock found in Charlie's place? He'll have questions to answer (8)
- 20 Long jumper doesn't want strong field (3)
- 21 Linesmen producing copper during toss-up (6)
- 23 Drama over — avoid having to leave North Island (6)
- 24 Spanish lecturer's undressed in lounge (6)
- 25 Will it stop houses going up though? (5)

NO 28155



Allowing corporates to promote banks is not the RBI's view, and RBI will take a decision on it and other suggestions made by an internal panel

SHAKTIKANTA DAS
RBI GOVERNOR

THUMBNAILS

63 Moons Tech to challenge Sebi order: 63 Moons Technologies on Friday said it will challenge the order passed by markets regulator Sebi with respect to the company providing Straight Through Processing (STP) services. On Thursday, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said that 63 Moons has been offering STP services without its approval and allowed the company to provide such services for three more months to clients in order to avoid any possible disruptions for securities market participants.

Vedanta rating: Moody's Investors Service has downgraded the corporate family rating of Vedanta Resources Limited to B2 from B1 citing persistent weak liquidity and high refinancing needs. Moody's has also downgraded the ratings on the senior unsecured bonds issued by Vedanta Resources (VRL) and those issued by Vedanta Resources Finance II Plc (VRF) and guaranteed by VRL to Caa1 from B3.

Ficci president: Media executive Uday Shankar has been named as the president-elect of industry chamber Ficci for the year 2020-21. Shankar will be succeeding Sangita Reddy, president, Ficci, and joint managing director, Apollo Hospitals Group, during Ficci's 93rd annual general meeting (AGM) scheduled to be held on 11, 12 and 14 December 2020.

Oppo after-sales service: Smartphone maker Oppo has been ranked as the No.1 brand in customer satisfaction for after-sales. The research conducted across top six metro cities found that Oppo leads in after-sales service experience with 93 per cent of the respondents rating their experience as "very good" or "excellent". Waiting time was the lowest among Oppo customers with about half of the respondents being attended within just 15 minutes of their arrival, the report said.

SNS

Ikea second store: Leading home furnishings retailer Ikea will open its second store in the country at Navi Mumbai on 18 December. The over five lakh sq ft store would be the second store for Ikea in India after Hyderabad, where it had opened its first store in August 2018. In a bid to provide a safe shopping experience during Covid times, the Swedish retailer is taking extra precautions for its new store located on the Thane-Belapur Road, it said.

PPI

BMW launch: BMW Group India announced the launch of the new BMW 2 Series Gran Coupé "Black Shadow" edition on Friday. Locally produced at BMW Plant Chennai, the exclusive edition is available at shop.bmw.in from 7 December 2020 onwards, according to a release.

SNS

RBI tells banks not to make dividend payment for FY20

The apex bank said it is imperative that banks continue to conserve capital to support the economy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 4 DECEMBER

In view of the economic shock caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) today asked scheduled commercial banks and co-operative banks not to make any dividend payment for the financial year ended March 2020.

In view of the ongoing stress and the heightened uncertainty on account of the pandemic, RBI said it is imperative that banks continue to conserve capital to support the economy and absorb losses, if any.

The decision is based on review of the September quarter financial performance of banks.

In response to the pandemic, RBI has focused on resolution of stress among borrowers, and facilitating credit flow to the economy, while ensuring financial stability, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said.

"In continuation of this effort and to help banks con-

In response to the pandemic, RBI has focused on resolution of stress among borrowers, and facilitating credit flow to the economy, while ensuring financial stability... In continuation of this effort and to help banks conserve capital, while creating room for fresh lending, it has been decided after a review that commercial and co-operative banks will retain the profits and not make any dividend pay-out from the profits pertaining to financial year 2019-20

SHAKTIKANTA DAS
RBI GOVERNOR

serve capital, while creating room for fresh lending, it has been decided after a review that commercial and co-operative banks will retain the profits and not make any dividend pay-out from the profits pertaining to financial year 2019-20.

Guidelines on the above measure will be issued shortly.

In April, RBI had announced that scheduled commercial banks (SCBs)

and cooperative banks shall not make any dividend pay-outs from profits pertaining to the financial year ended 31 March 2020, until further instructions, which shall be reassessed based on financial results of banks for the quarter ending 30 September 2020.

Unlike banks, RBI said, currently there are no guidelines in place with regard to distribution of dividend by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs).

"Keeping in view the increasing significance of NBFCs in the financial system and their interlinkages with different segments, it has been decided to formulate guidelines on dividend distribution by NBFCs. Different categories of NBFCs would be allowed to declare dividend as per a matrix of parameters, subject to a set of generic conditions. A draft circular in this regard will be issued shortly for public comments," he said.

RBI further said the ombudsman mechanism instituted by the Reserve Bank is an alternate grievance redress mechanism.

RRBs: The RBI on Friday allowed regional rural banks (RRBs) to access the liquidity adjustment facility, marginal standing facility and call or notice money market, aimed at facilitating better liquidity management for these lenders. At present, RRBs are not permitted to access the liquidity windows of the RBI as well as the call or notice market.

Budget to be growth oriented, says RBI Govt

MUMBAI, 4 DECEMBER

With the Budget-making exercise in full swing, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das today said Budget 2021-22 is expected to be prudent and growth oriented. In view of unprecedented pandemic and its impact on the economy, the government has maintained fiscal prudence in the response to deal with the crisis.

"Naturally when we are recovering from a massive damage which pandemic has brought on the Indian economy, the Budget has to be growth oriented. And also, let us keep in mind that during this year also, all the fiscal measures which the government has announced, I think has been very well calibrated, very well targeted, and they have been very prudently drawn out," he said.

Move to improve security of digital payment channels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 4 DECEMBER

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das today said the central bank will be introducing digital payment security control directions for regulated entities.



the systemically important bank over the last two years.

The digital banking app of the country's largest lender SBI was also facing service outages on Thursday, the second time in a week that the bank was struggling with the service.

On Thursday, Das said preservation of financial stability and depositors' interest is the uppermost priority on the RBI's agenda and cited the rescues of Yes Bank and Lakshmi Vilas Bank as efforts in the same direction.

These directions will contain requirements for robust governance, implementation and monitoring of certain minimum standards on common security controls for channels like Internet and mobile banking, card payments, etc, Das said.

Draft directions on the same will be issued soon for public comments, he added.

The announcement comes a day after the RBI temporarily barred largest private sector lender HDFC Bank from selling new credit cards or launching new digital banking initiatives, taking a serious view of service outages at

cessary pre-requisite for fostering the growth recovery."

"Given the inflationary challenges, it is no surprise that the RBI MPC has kept the policy repo rate unchanged at four per cent. However, we must applaud the MPC for staying on course with regard to accommodative interest rate stance," Assocham secretary-general Deepak Sood said.

The growth projections by RBI, such as positive growth in second half of FY2021 and revised real GDP contraction at 7.5 per cent, are inspiring and will build confidence in the economic and business activities going forward, PHDCCI president Sanjay Aggarwal said.

"Going ahead, we expect accommodative stance to continue at least in next financial year and there is further cut in repo rate if inflation comes down," he added.

RTGS to be made available 24X7 soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 4 DECEMBER

In a business friendly move, the RBI today said that the Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS) system, used for large value transactions, will be made available round-the-clock in the next few days. In December 2019, the National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT) system was made available on a 24x7x365 basis.

Currently, RTGS is available for customers from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm on all working days of a week, except second and fourth Saturdays of every month.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said RTGS system will soon be made available 24x7 in the next few days... with this enablement, it is proposed to reduce settlement and default risk in the system by facilitating

settlement of AePS, IMPS, NETC, NFS, RuPay, UPI transactions on all days of the week instead of five days earlier."

This will make the payment ecosystem more efficient, he added.

In order to expand adoption of digital payment in a safe and secure manner, he said, it has been decided to enhance the limits for contactless card transactions and e-mandates for recurring transactions through cards and UPI from Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 from 1 January 2021. This will depend on mandate and discretion of customers, he said.

Contactless card transactions and e-mandates on cards (and UPI) for recurring transactions have enhanced customer convenience in general while benefiting from increased use of technology, the statement said.

Rate status quo to aid economic recovery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

Corporate India and experts today said the RBI's decision to hold interest rates will support economic recovery in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and that they expect the central bank to maintain an accommodative stance in the near future.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) today left interest rates unchanged for a third straight meeting as inflation stayed stubbornly high, and said the economy was recuperating fast and would return to positive growth in the current quarter itself.

The benchmark repurchase rate will be maintained at 4 per cent, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) retained its accommodative stance, signalling its intentions

INDUSTRY VIEW

It has been the right decision by RBI, given that adequate thrust on nurturing the growth impulse is required. Industry is also buoyed by RBI's willingness to use all instruments at its disposal to ensure availability of adequate liquidity in the financial markets. This is a necessary pre-requisite for fostering the growth recovery.

CHANDRAJIT BANERJEE
DIRECTOR-GENERAL, CII

to cut interest rates whenever the situation eases.

A spike in consumer prices forced RBI to pause after cutting rates by 115 basis points this year.

"There has been a substantial upgrade to the overall growth forecast for the second half of the current

There has been a substantial upgrade to the overall growth forecast for the second half of the current fiscal. This is encouraging but given the stress the economy had faced on account of Covid-19, we anticipate that policy support, both from the RBI and the government, will be required well into the next year.

SANGITA REDDY
FICCI PRESIDENT

fiscal. This is encouraging but given the stress the economy had faced on account of Covid-19, we anticipate that policy support, both from the RBI and the government, will be required well into the next year," Ficci president Sangita Reddy said.

Chandrajit Banerjee, direc-

tor General, CII said: "It has been the right decision by RBI, given that adequate thrust on nurturing the growth impulse is required. Industry is also buoyed by RBI's willingness to use all instruments at its disposal to ensure availability of adequate liquidity in the financial markets. This is a nec-

DBS gets ₹2,500 cr capital from parent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

range of products and services, including access to the full suite of DBS digital banking services which have won multiple global accolades, DBS Bank India added.

Earlier last month, the RBI placed crisis-ridden LVB under a moratorium and announced its merger with DBIL.

LVB was looking to raise capital for a long time and had also entered into an agreement with non-banking lender Clix Group for an amalgamation in June this year, but the deal could not get through.

Before this, LVB had tried to forge a merger with realty player Indiabulls Housing Finance, which was rejected by the RBI.

LVB is the second private sector bank after Yes Bank which has run into rough weather during this year.

Iron ore mine issue in K'taka resolved: NMDC

NEW DELHI, 4 DECEMBER

State-owned NMDC today said that the long-pending issue of Donimalai iron ore mine in Karnataka has been resolved and an agreement has been reached to extend the lease of the block.

In November 2018, NMDC Limited had informed about suspending operations at the mine in Karnataka following a decision of the state government to impose 80 per cent premium on the iron ore sales from the mine.

The long-pending issue of Donimalai iron ore mine (ML No.2396), which was suspended since November 2018, has finally concluded through the endeavour of the government. Exercising the power conferred to GOI (Government of India) under section 31 of the MMDR Act, 1957, the GOI reached an agreement with Government of Karnataka and ministry of steel to extend Donimalai iron ore lease," the miner said in a statement. In the statement, the company did not divulge any further information.

Sharing the details about the mine, NMDC said it has total a concession area of 597.54 hectare (ha) and estimated resource of 149 million tons (MT).

The resumption of operations shall increase the annual iron ore production in the country by 7 million tons per annum (MTPA), it said.

Also, based on the existing high price of ore, it is expected the operationalisation of the mine would contribute a total of around Rs 1,100 crore to the state exchequer per annum.

The mine shall offer direct employment to thousands of people, including the contract labour and create indirect employment opportunities for lakhs of people.

Sensex closes above 45,000-level for first time

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 4 DECEMBER

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty touched a new high of 13,280.05 during the session, before finishing 124.65 points or 0.95 per cent higher at 13,258.55 points - its record closing high.

Rate-sensitive banking, financial, realty and auto stocks rallied after the policy announcement.

ICICI Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 4 per cent, followed by UltraTech Cement, Sun Pharma, Bharti Airtel, HUL, SBI, L&T, Axis Bank and IndusInd Bank.

On the other hand, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Tech and HDFC were among the laggards.

The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) "decided to continue with the accommodative stance of monetary policy as long as necessary - at least through the cur-

rent financial year and into the next year," Governor Shaktikanta Das said.

The central bank's stance is "to revive growth on a durable basis, and mitigate the impact of Covid-19 while ensuring that inflation remains within the target going forward," he added.

According to Gaurav Dua, SVF head-capital market strategy and investments at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, growth remains high on the priority of RBI.

"The commentary is dovish in spite of the elevated level of inflationary pressure. It essentially means the liquidity situation would be comfortable and interest rates likely to remain soft in the near term. However, we see limited scope for further easing of interest rates by banks to borrowers, given the tapering of growth in retail deposits and

rising credit demand in the economy," he noted.

Overall, the policy outcome is supportive for equity markets in general and interest rate sensitive sectors and economic recovery plays in particular, he added.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul ended on a positive note, while Tokyo was in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were trading with gains in early deals.

Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude futures advanced 1.81 per cent to \$49.59 per barrel.

The rupee snapped its two-day losing streak to close 13 paise higher at 73.80 against the US dollar today as the Reserve Bank of India main-

MARKET WATCH

► After touching a record intra-day peak of 45,148.28 points, the 30-share BSE index ended 446.90 points or one per cent higher at 45,079.55 points.

► Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty touched a new high of 13,280.05 during the session, before finishing 124.65 points or 0.95 per cent higher at 13,258.55 points ~ its record closing high.

► The rupee snapped its two-day losing streak to close 13 paise higher at



This legislation lives up to our founding principles by ending nationality discrimination in legal immigration

US SENATOR MIKE LEE

WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	30	25 H
HONG KONG	19	12 CL
TOKYO	13	7 H
LONDON	7	3 H
DUBAI	28	21 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	18	9 CL
NEW YORK	11	6 H
MOSCOW	-4	-6 H

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

THUMBNAILS



A young girl washes a pillow in flood water near ruins of houses at a neighborhood affected by the flood in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia on Friday. ■ AP

Massive pedophilia case: A French retired surgeon accused of sexually abusing over 300 young children over decades, primarily his patients in their hospital rooms, has been sentenced Thursday to 15 years in prison in the first trial of what may be the largest-ever pedophilia case in the country. Le Scouarnec has been charged in October on accusations of sexually abusing a total of 312 people. ■ AP

Lanka prison riot probe: The Sri Lankan police investigating the deaths of at least 11 inmates in a prison riot in the country has said it will also probe the alleged excessive use of medicinal drugs by the prisoners that may have made them violent. ■ PTI

Anthony Fauci apologises for implying UK 'rushed' Covid vaccine approval

LONDON, 4 DECEMBER

Dr Anthony Fauci, America's top infectious diseases expert, has apologised after his remarks created a bit of a stir here for implying that the UK's regulator had rushed the process when it became the first country to approve the Pfizer/BioNTech for rollout.

In an interview with the BBC, Fauci stressed that his remarks had been misconstrued as criticism of the UK's vaccine approval process, in which he has a great deal of confidence. "I have a great deal of confidence in what the UK does both scientifically and from a regulator standpoint," he said.

On Wednesday, when the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) announced its decision, Fauci told Fox News that the UK did not review the vaccine "as carefully" as US health regulators but admitted that the US would quickly also be in a position to approve a vaccine.

He later told CBS News that the UK had "rushed" the approval, but on Thursday seemed to backtrack and said there was "no judgment on the way the UK did it".

"Our process is one that takes more time than it takes in the UK. And that's just the reality. It did not mean to imply any sloppiness even though it came out that way," he told the BBC. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) plans to meet on 10 December to discuss approval for the UK-approved vaccine and will meet again on 17 December to discuss a second vaccine Moderna.

Dr Fauci had described the US FDA's approval process, slower than the UK, as the "gold standard". On Thursday he clarified, saying the US does "things a little differently" than the UK.

"No vaccine would be authorised for supply in the UK unless the expected standards of safety, quality and efficacy are met," the MHRA said. ■ PTI

EU trade talks at tricky point, says UK as hopes of deal dim



ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 4 DECEMBER

Britain's business minister said Friday that UK-EU trade talks are at a "difficult" point, as British officials poured cold water on hopes of an imminent breakthrough, and France said it could veto any agreement it didn't like.

UK Business Secretary Alok Sharma said Britain was "committed to reaching an agreement."

"But, of course, time is short and we are in a difficult phase. There's no denying that," he told the BBC. "There are a number of tricky issues that still have to be resolved."

EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier (in photo), his British counterpart David Frost and

their teams remained locked in talks in a London conference center Friday after a week of late-night sessions fueled by deliveries of sandwiches and pizza.

UK officials sought to dampen hopes of an imminent deal, briefing media outlets that the EU had set back negotiations by making last-minute demands, an allegation the bloc denies.

The UK left the EU early this year, but remains part of the 27-nation bloc's economic embrace during an 11-month transition as the two sides try to negotiate a new free-trade deal to take effect Jan. 1. Any deal must be approved by lawmakers in Britain and the EU before year's end.

Talks have dragged on as

one deadline after another has slipped by. First, the goal was a deal by October, then by mid-November. On Sunday, Britain said the negotiations were in their final week. Now the two sides say they could stretch into the weekend or beyond.

European Council President Charles Michel noted that it

wasn't the first time that deadlines had slipped.

"We will see what will happen in the next days," he said in Brussels. "But the end of December is the end of the year and we know that after the 31st of December we have the 1st of January, and we know that we need to have clarity as soon as possible."

A trade deal will allow goods to move between Britain and the EU without tariffs or quotas after the end of this year; though there would still be new costs and red tape for businesses on both sides of the English Channel.

If there is no deal, New Year's Day will bring huge disruption, with the overnight imposition of tariffs and other barriers to UK-EU trade. That will hurt

both sides, but the burden will fall most heavily on Britain, which does almost half its trade with the EU.

Months of tense negotiations have produced agreement on a swath of fissures, but serious differences remain over the "level playing field" – standards the UK must meet to export into the bloc – and how future disputes are resolved. That's key for the EU, which fears Britain will slash social and environmental standards and pump state money into UK industries, becoming a low-regulation economic rival on the bloc's doorstep.

But the UK government, which sees Brexit as all about "taking back control" from Brussels, is resisting curbs on its freedom to set future economic policies.

Another sticking point is fish, a small part of the economy with an outsized symbolic importance for Europe's maritime nations. EU countries want their boats to be able to keep fishing in British waters, while the UK insists it must control access and quotas.

Fishing is especially important to France, which is seen by many on the UK side as the EU nation most resistant to compromise and likeliest to scuttle a deal.

If there is no weekend breakthrough, next week will bring more complications. On Monday Britain's House of Commons will vote on a bill that gives Britain the power to breach parts of the legally

binding withdrawal agreement it struck with the EU last year.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government acknowledges that the Internal Market Bill breaches international law, and the legislation has been condemned by the EU, US President-elect Joe Biden and British lawmakers, including many from Johnson's own Conservative Party.

The House of Lords, Parliament's upper chamber, removed the law-breaking clauses from the legislation last month, but Johnson's government says it will ask lawmakers to reinsert them.

That would further sour the talks, demolishing any good will that remains between the two sides.

US sues Facebook for 'biased hiring system'

Lawsuit alleges that Facebook denied fair opportunity to qualified US workers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 4 DECEMBER



workers offered an average salary of approximately \$156,000.

According to the lawsuit, which followed a nearly two-year investigation by the Justice Department, Facebook intentionally created a hiring system in which it denied qualified US workers a fair opportunity to learn about and apply for jobs that the company instead sought to channel to temporary visa holders.

"The Department of Justice's lawsuit alleges that Facebook engaged in intentional and widespread violations of the law, by setting aside positions for temporary visa holders instead of considering interested and qualified US workers," said Assistant Attorney General Eric S Dreiband of the Civil Rights Division.

The PERM process requires an employer to first demonstrate that there are no qualified and available US workers for the position that the employer plans to offer to the temporary visa holder.

The positions that were the subject of Facebook's alleged discrimination against US

recruitment methods designed to encourage applications by advertising positions on its careers website, accepting electronic applications, and not pre-selecting candidates to be hired based on a candidate's immigration status, according to the lawsuit.

The complaint seeks civil penalties, back pay on behalf of US workers denied employment at Facebook due to the alleged discrimination in favour of temporary visa holders, and other relief to ensure the company stops the alleged violations in the future.

Meanwhile, Facebook in a statement said it "has been cooperating with the DOJ in its review of this issue and while we dispute the allegations in the complaint, we cannot comment further on pending litigation".

President Donald Trump has been raising concern for years about foreigners competing with American citizens for jobs. In June, the Trump administration extended a ban on green cards issued outside the US until the end of the year and added many temporary work visas to the PERM process.

On Tuesday, a US court blocked two H-1B regulations proposed by the Trump administration to restrict the ability of American companies to hire foreign employees.

WARRIOR AT HEART



Major Wooten, an Alabama man who spent World War II repairing bomb-damaged trains in France, recovered from a fight with Covid-19 and marked his 104th birthday in Madison Hospital in the United States on Thursday. ■ AGENCIES

Britain leads the way with PM's ambitious new emissions cut target by 2030

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 4 DECEMBER

ally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Climate Agreement is now among the highest in the world and commits the country to cutting emissions at the fastest rate of any major economy so far.

We have proven we can reduce our emissions and create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the process – uniting businesses, academics, NGOs and local communities – in a common goal to go further and faster to tackle climate change, said Johnson.

This is the first target set by the UK following its exit from the European Union (EU) and Johnson said it demonstrated Britain's leadership in tackling climate change.

Today, we are taking the lead

with an ambitious new target to reduce our emissions by 2030, faster than any major economy, with our Ten Point Plan helping us on our path

to reach it. But this is a global effort, which is why the UK is urging world leaders as part of next week's Climate Ambi-

CLIMATE CALLS

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► The UK government says its path to meeting this latest target is backed by Johnson's "Ten Point Plan" set out earlier for a so-called green revolution, which is aimed at creating and supporting up to



tion Summit to bring forward their own ambitions plans to cut emissions and set net zero targets, he said.

As the co-host of the virtual summit on December 12, Johnson had invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a phone call last week to participate in the event, which will coincide with the fifth anniversary of the historic Paris Agreement.

The summit calls on countries around the world to submit ambitious NDCs or other climate plans on the road to the UN COP26 climate talks, which the UK government is hosting in Glasgow next year", he said.

Tackling climate change is the one of the most urgent shared endeavours of our lifetimes, demanding bold action from every nation to prevent catastrophic global warming, said Alok Sharma, UK Business

Secretary and President of COP26. "The UK's new emissions target is among the highest in the world and reflects the urgency and scale of the challenge our planet faces. I hope other countries join us and raise the bar at next week's UN Climate Ambition Summit, and ahead of the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow next year", he said.

Each party to the Paris Agreement, including countries and international blocs such as the EU, determines what domestic action it will take and communicates it in the form of NDCs.

They are at the heart of the Paris Agreement goal, set at COP21 UN summit in 2015, to hold the global temperature rise well below 2 degrees and pursue best efforts to limit the increase to 1.5C.

Many countries have now made net zero commitments and this round of NDCs, which set a 2030 emission reduction target, will need to be consistent with those longer term commitments.

Downing Street said the latest announcement achieves that and reflects the independent Climate Change Committee's advice on net zero.

The UK government says its path to meeting this latest target is backed by the PM's "Ten Point Plan" set out earlier for a so-called green revolution, which is aimed at creating and supporting up to 250,000 British jobs by 2030.



I promise you that when it's been made for people who are less at risk, I will be taking it. I may end up taking it on TV or having it filmed.

FORMER US PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

TO ENCOURAGE ALL AMERICANS TO GET INOCULATED WITH THE COVID VACCINE

The Statesman

11

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 05 DECEMBER 2020

THUMBNAILS

One killed, seven injured in blast in Pakistan's Rawalpindi
A blast ripped through Pakistan's garrison city of Rawalpindi on Friday, killing at least one person and injuring seven others. Police said the explosion occurred in a rickshaw parked in Pir Wadhai area near the bus station. Rawalpindi police spokesperson Sajjad ul Hassan told the media that the victims were shifted to a hospital. PTI

Pak court sentences three more JUD leaders: A Pakistani anti-terrorism court has sentenced three more leaders of Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) to 15 years imprisonment each in two more terror financing cases. Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore Judge Ijaz Ahmad Buttaw handed down the sentence to Abdul Salam bin Muhammad, Zafar Iqbal and Muhammad Ashraf on Thursday. PTI

2 US Marshals, suspect shot in New York: At least two US Marshals and a suspect have been shot in the Bronx early Friday, police said. The New York Police Department said the shooting happened about 5:30 a.m. Friday and they didn't immediately have information about the conditions of those shot. Two or three Marshals were injured, the department said. AP

Novelist Alison Lurie dies at 94: Alison Lurie, the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist whose satirical and cerebral tales of love and academia included the marital saga *The War Between the Tates* and *The Comedy of Americans abroad Foreign Affairs*, died Thursday at age 94. Lurie was a professor at Cornell University. AP

China's spacecraft takes off from moon with lunar samples

BEIJING, 4 DECEMBER

A Chinese spacecraft carrying lunar samples has started its return journey from the moon, according to the country's space authority.

China's Chang'e-5 probe, comprising an orbiter, a lander, an ascender, and a returner, was launched on November 24, and its lander-ascender combination touched down north of the Mons Rümker in Oceanus Procellarum, also known as the Ocean of Storms, on the near side of the moon on December 1.

After the samples were collected and sealed, the ascender of Chang'e-5 took off from the lunar surface on Thursday at 11:10 pm (Beijing Time), state-run Xinhua news agency reported, quoting an announcement from the China National Space Administration.

It represented the first-ever Chinese spacecraft to take off from an extra-terrestrial body. An engine, after working for about six minutes, pushed the ascender to present lunar orbit. Xing Zhuoyi, a designer of the Chang'e-5 probe from China Academy of Space Technology (CAST) under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation said.

Different from the ground take-off, the ascender could not rely on a launch tower system. The lander acted as a temporary "launching pad," which had touched down on the lunar surface quite stably, Xing said.

The Chinese spacecraft adopted two methods of moon sampling, including using drills to collect subsurface samples and grabbing samples on the surface with a robotic arm. It gathered diverse samples at different sites. The ascender is expected to complete the unmanned rendezvous and docking with the orbiter-returner in lunar orbit and the samples will be transferred to the returner, the report said. PTI

Avoid Gulf, says Israel citing Iranian threat

Iran has been threatening to attack Israeli targets since its chief nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was assassinated

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, 4 DECEMBER

The Israeli government on Thursday urged its citizens to avoid travel to the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, citing threats of Iranian attacks.

Iran has been threatening to attack Israeli targets since its chief nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was assassinated last Friday near Tehran. It accuses Israel, which has been suspected in previous killings of Iranian nuclear scientists, of being behind the shooting.

Israel has not commented on the killing. But Fakhrizadeh has long been on Israel's radar screen, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu saying at a 2018 news conference about Iran's nuclear program: Remember that name. Israel accuses Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons a charge Iran denies.

In recent months, Israel has signed agreements establishing diplomatic relations with Gulf Arab states of the UAE and Bahrain its first normalisation deal with Arab countries in a quarter century.

The agreements, brokered by the Trump administration, have generated widespread excitement in Israel, and thousands of Israeli tourists are scheduled to travel to the UAE for the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah this month. That may change following Thursday's warning.

In light of the threats heard recently by Iranian officials and in light of the involvement in the past of Iranian officials in terror attacks in various countries, there is a concern that Iran will try to act in this way against Israeli targets, said a statement issued by the prime minister's National Security Council.

It also advised against travel to Georgia, Azerbaijan,

Turkey, the Kurdish area of Iraq and Africa.

Israel's military is well prepared to deal with the threats of Iranian troops and their proxies in neighbouring Syria, Lebanon and the Gaza Strip. Israelmmedia say the government also has beefed up security at embassies around the world. But protecting Israeli travellers, conspicuous and spread out at countless hotels, restaurants and tourist sites, represents a different type of challenge.

This is going to be a nightmare, and I really hope that both governments, UAE and Israel, are coordinating and doing the best they can to safeguard those Israelis, said Yoel Guzansky, a former Israeli counterterrorism official who is now a senior fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv.

I'm really worried that something might happen, and especially now because of the context of Fakhrizadeh,

because Iran is really looking for revenge, he added. He spoke before the travel advisory was issued.

The Israel Airports Authority estimates that about 25,000 Israelis will fly to the UAE this month on the five airlines now plying the route between Tel Aviv and the Gulf state's airports in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Celebrities, entrepreneurs and tourists already have been flocking to Dubai.

With the coronavirus appearing to be under control in the UAE, it is one of the few quarantine-free travel options for Israelis during the coming Hanukkah holiday vacation, adding to its appeal. At a time when few people are traveling, Israeli visitors speaking Hebrew could be extra conspicuous. Israel this week also signed a tourism agreement with Bahrain.

Amsalem Tours, an Israeli travel agency, said that there was very serious demand for

travel packages to Dubai but did not provide specific figures.

Iran and its proxies have targeted Israeli tourists and Jewish communities in the past. Agents of the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group bombed a bus carrying Israeli tourists in Burgas, Bulgaria, in 2012, killing six and wounding dozens.

That year, Israel also accused Iran of being behind attacks targeting Israeli diplomats in Thailand and India.

Iran and Hezbollah also bombed the Israeli Embassy and Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in 1992 and 1994, claiming the lives of scores of civilians.

Concerns for the safety of Israelis in Dubai also is not without precedent. In 2000, an Israeli ex-colonel was kidnapped by Iranian proxy Hezbollah and held captive in Lebanon until he was released in 2004.

Today, Dubai, famous for

its glittering shopping malls, ultra-modern skyscrapers and nightlife, is a crossroads for travellers from around the world, including many nations that do not have relations with Israel.

Iran maintains a major presence in Dubai, due to historical and current trade ties, and Dubai is believed to be a major station for Iranian intelligence services.

The family of a California-based member of an Iranian militant opposition group in exile says he was abducted by Iran while staying in Dubai just a few months ago.

In a possible sign of Emirati security concerns, travel agencies in countries across the Middle East and Africa say the UAE has temporarily halted issuing new visas to their citizens. With tens of thousands of Iranians working or doing business in the UAE, Iran is also among the countries facing the visa restrictions.

Cash-strapped Pak seeks debt suspension till pandemic is over

ISLAMABAD, 4 DECEMBER

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has requested the international community for debt suspension till the end of the coronavirus pandemic for low-income and most affected countries as well as cancellation of debt of least developed nations, according to a media report on Friday.

Cash-strapped Pakistan's economic woes have further worsened due to the coronavirus pandemic and Khan's government is arranging finances from world bodies, including the International Monetary Fund, to tide over the crisis. Presenting a 10-point agenda for urgent action before the UN General Assembly special session on Covid-19 on Thursday, Khan underlined the measures the international community needs to take to defeat the Covid-19 pandemic, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The first item on his list is a request for debt suspension till the end of the pandemic for low-income and most affected countries. The second one is "cancellation of debt of least developed countries" that are no longer in a position to repay their loans, it said.

Other items on the agenda include restructuring of the public sector debt of other developing countries under an agreed inclusive multilateral framework; a general allocation of special drawing rights of USD 500 billion; expanded concessional financing to lower income countries through multilateral development banks; and creation of a new 'liquidity and sustainability facility', which should provide short-term loans at lower costs.

Pakistan's agenda also includes a reminder to rich nations to fulfill 0.7 per cent of their official development assistance commitments. PTI

First Rohingya refugees arrive at isolated B'desh island

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DHAKA, BANGLADESH



Authorities in Bangladesh on Friday sent the first group of more than 1,500 Rohingya refugees to an isolated island despite calls by human rights groups for a halt to the process.

The 1,642 refugees boarded seven Bangladeshi naval vessels in the port of Chittagong for the trip to Bhushan Char, according to an official who could not be named in accordance with local practice.

After about a three-hour trip they arrived at the island, which was once regularly submerged by monsoon rains but now has flood protection embankments, houses, hospitals and mosques built at a cost of more than \$112 million by the Bangladesh navy.

Located 21 miles (34 kilometers) from the mainland, the island surfaced only 20 years ago and was never

inhabited.

Saleh Noman, a Bangladeshi journalist who traveled with the refugees, said that the refugees were given rice, eggs and chickens for lunch after their body temperatures were measured by health workers as a coronavirus precaution. Before they boarded the ships they were also given face masks to protect against Covid-19.

The island's facilities are built to accommodate 100,000 people, just a fraction of the million Rohingya Muslims who have fled waves of violence in

persecution in their native Myanmar and are currently living in crowded, squalid refugee camps in Cox's Bazar district.

The United Nations has voiced concern that refugees be allowed to make a "free and informed decision" about whether to relocate to the island in the Bay of Bengal.

The director of infrastructure development on Bhushan Char, Commodore Abdullah Al Mamun Chowdhury, told reporters on the island that the international community has nothing to worry about regarding the safety of the refugees.

On Thursday, 11 passenger buses carrying the refugees left Cox's Bazar on the way to the island. They camped overnight in school buildings in the southeastern city of Chittagong.

About 700,000 Rohingya fled to the camps in Cox's Bazar after August 2017, when

the military in Buddhist-majority Myanmar began a harsh crackdown on the Muslim group following an attack by insurgents. The crackdown included rapes, killings and the torching of thousands of homes, and was termed ethnic cleansing by global rights groups and the U.N.

Foreign media have not been permitted to visit the island. International aid agencies and the U.N. have vehemently opposed the relocation since it was first proposed in 2015, expressing fear that a big storm could overwhelm the island and endanger thousands of lives.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch on Thursday urged the government to cancel the relocation plan. The current refugee camps near the town of Cox's Bazar are overcrowded and unhygienic.

(File picture)

Thousands killed in Ethiopia's conflict, Tigray side asserts

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NAIROBI, 4 DECEMBER

Several thousand combatants have been killed in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region, an official with the fugitive regional government has asserted, although claims remain difficult to verify a month after the fighting erupted between Ethiopian and regional forces.

Getachew Reda, a senior adviser to the Tigray leader, in an interview with Tigray TV aired Thursday urged young people and others in the region to rise and deploy to battle in tens of thousands of days after Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed over the weekend declared victory.

With the leaders of the Tigray People's Liberation Front on the run in rugged territory, fears of a drawn-out con-

flict continue. But with communications and transport links still largely severed to the region of 6 million people, it's difficult to know the situation on the ground, including the extent of popular support for the TPLF and the number of people killed.

Our capacity to resist ultimately depends on the support we get from our people, Getachew said. It is possible to have the scenario where we stop everything and turn all the people into soldiers. He didn't say how many people are actively fighting but said our army is doing amazing things with limited numbers, and he claimed there had been tens of thousands of deaths among Ethiopian forces and those from neighbouring Eritrea, which TPLF insists is also involved. Ethiopia's government denies that.

arrests of many journalists and human rights advocates, and by disciplinary action against teachers and students.

The United States and European Union have introduced sanctions against Belarusian officials accused of involvement in vote-rigging and the post-election crackdown.

Michelle Bachelet, the high commissioner for human rights, told the U.N. Human Rights Council there has been no improvement since a September debate about Belarus and recent weeks have seen continued deterioration, particularly with respect to the right of peaceful assembly.

Bachelet added four companies including Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp and China National Offshore Oil Corp to a list of entities deemed to be part of efforts to modernise the ruling Communist Party's military wing, the People's Liberation Army. That raises the total number of companies on the blacklist to 35.

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Police have cracked down hard on the largely peaceful demonstrations, using stun grenades, tear gas and truncheons to disperse protesters. Thousands of people have been detained and many of them badly beaten since the protests began, human rights advocates say.

There are multiple and credible reports of people beaten by members of the security forces during and after their transport to police stations or detention centers, Bachelet said. If confirmed, such incidents would constitute ill-treatment and, in some cases, may amount to torture. She said she was alarmed by the numerous allegations of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in custody, by the harassment and

those who protest in the streets today are individuals who reject the opportunities that have been created for direct dialogue with the government, he said.

Opposition leaders in Belarus have sought discussions with the government about a transfer of power or a new election, which Lukashenko has rejected.

China top threat to America, says US intelligence director

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 4 DECEMBER

China poses the greatest threat to America and the rest of the free world since World War II, outgoing National Intelligence Director John Ratcliffe has said as the Trump administration ramps up anti-Chinese rhetoric to pressure President-elect Joe Biden to be tough on Beijing.

The intelligence is clear: Beijing intends to dominate the US and the rest of the planet economically, militarily and technologically, Ratcliffe wrote in an op-ed published in The Wall Street Journal.

Many of China's major public initiatives and prominent companies offer only a layer of camouflage to the activities of the Chinese Communist Party. It calls its approach of economic espionage 'rob, replicate and replace,' Ratcliffe said.

China robs US companies of their intellectual property, replicates the technology and then replaces the US firms in the global marketplace.

In Beijing, foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying dismissed the editorial as a further move to spread false information, political viruses and lies' in hopes of damaging China's reputation and China-US relations.

It offered nothing new but repeated the lies and rumours aimed at smearing China and playing up the China threat by any means," Hua said at a daily briefing on Friday. It's another hedgehog of lies being produced by the relevant departments of the US government for some time."

Trump administration officials have been stepping up their anti-China rhetoric for months, especially during the presidential campaign as Donald Trump sought to deflect blame for the spread of the Covid.

On the campaign trail, Trump warned that Biden would go easy on China, although the President-elect agrees that China is not abiding by international trade rules, especially during the presidential campaign with the US, which must be addressed, he said.

This is our once-in-a-generation challenge. Americans have always risen to the moment, from defeating the scourge of fascism to bringing down the Iron Curtain, Ratcliffe wrote. That raises the total number of companies on the blacklist to 35.

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Biden has announced that he wants the Senate to confirm Avril Haines, a former deputy director of the CIA, to succeed Ratcliffe as the next national intelligence director.

The Trump administration, which once boasted of warm relations with Chinese President Xi Jinping, also has been ramping up sanctions against China over Taiwan, Tibet, Hong Kong and the South China Sea. It has moved against the Chinese telecoms giant Huawei and sought restrictions on Chinese social media applications.

Ratcliffe, a Trump loyalist who has been accused of politicising the position, has been the nation's top intelligence official since May. In his op-ed, he did not directly address the transition to a Biden administration. Ratcliffe said he has shifted money within the \$85 billion annual intelligence budget to address the threat from China. Beijing is preparing for an open-ended confrontation with the US, which must be addressed, he said.

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FAMOUS BEFORE DEBUT

Sebastian Vettel says he will be on hand to offer advice to Mick Schumacher (photo, left), son of his boyhood idol and seven-time world champion Michael, when he makes his Formula One debut next year. The 21-year-old will drive for US-owned Haas alongside Russian Nikita Mazepin in 2021.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

World cup: The international hockey federation - FIH - on Thursday allocated quotas for the 2022 women's World Cup and the 2023 men's World Cup. Asia was allocated four, including hosts India, for the men's World Cup which would be held in 2023.

Formula One: Britain's George Russell will stand in for Lewis Hamilton at Mercedes for Sunday's Sakhir Grand Prix after being released by Williams, both teams announced on Wednesday. Hamilton was ruled out only a few days ago after testing positive for Covid-19.

Oz Open: Australian Open organisers are confident details will soon be finalised for the 2021 tournament. It was to have started on 18 January but quarantine rules in the country left Tennis Australia locked in negotiations with the Victorian government.

Bailout package: The Premier League and the English Football League have agreed on terms over a £250million bailout for League One and League Two clubs amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The news was confirmed by the Premier League and the EFL.

Green light: Luis Suarez will be able to rejoin his Atletico Madrid team-mates for training after he returned a negative Covid-19 test following his battle with the coronavirus. The 33-year-old last played on November 13 during the international break for Uruguay.

Barca 'error': Barcelona's interim chief Carlos Tusquets feels the club should have cashed in on Lionel Messi during the summer transfer window. Messi was heavily linked with a move to Manchester City and sent a recorded delivery letter stating his intention to leave.

Bairstow out: England's Jonny Bairstow has withdrawn from the Melbourne Stars' Big Bash League campaign after he was recalled for international duty, the Australian Twenty20 franchise said on Thursday. The 10th edition of the event begins on 10 December.

No exemption: Pakistan's cricket team have been denied exemption to leave their hotel and train in groups while completing their time in managed isolation after several members of the touring side tested positive for Covid-19, the New Zealand health ministry said.

Mitra passes away: Noted civilian mountaineer Chanchal Kumar Mitra passed away following protracted illness Friday morning in Kolkata. His biggest achievement was to successfully lead the an expedition to Tirsuli in Kumaun Himalaya during 1966 which made the first ever ascent of the peak.

Shivansh fancied

GAUTAM BANERJEE

KOLKATA, 4 DECEMBER

The 1,400m Mayfowl Cup, a terms race for four years old and older horses, appears to be a straight contest between Shivansh and Psychic Force. The former trained by Vijay Singh and to be ridden by Hindu Singh is fancied to prevail.

1.00 p.m.: ABENAKI 1, The Hound 2, Elusive Wave 3.

1.30 p.m.: CHIARA 1, Glendower 2, Dothraki 3.

2.00 p.m.: DORNISH 1, Despacito 2, Viareggio 3.

2.30 p.m.: SULLIVAN 1, Namak Halaal 2, Surf Romance 3.

3.00 p.m.: ADORNICA 1, Robinson 2, Cliffhanger 3.

3.30 p.m.: SHIVANSH 1, Psychic Force 2, New Moon 3.

4.00 p.m.: SUMMERAIR 1, Excelsior 2, Louboutin 3. Day's best: Shivansh.

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For more updates

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AGENCIES

CANBERRA, 4 DECEMBER

Yuvendra Chahal turned out to be the perfect concussion substitute after an injured Ravindra Jadeja (in photo) did his part with the bat as the duo played their roles to perfection in India's impressive 11-run victory over Australia in the first T20 International here on Friday.

While Jadeja smashed an unbeaten 44 off 23 balls to propel India to 161 for 7, his head injury turned out to be a blessing in disguise with India unleashing Chahal (3/25 in 4 overs) on an Australian side caught completely off-guard. The hosts could manage only 150 for 7 in 20 overs.

Credit was also due to the lion-hearted effort from debutant Thangarasu Natarajan (3/30) and off-spinner Washington Sundar (0/16 in 4 overs), who bowled well in Powerplay.

ICC match referee David Boon allowed the visitors a "like for like" replacement, as mandated by the rules, for Jadeja in Chahal even though home team coach Justin Langer looked visibly angry.

And to make matters worse, Chahal dismissed two form men -- Aaron Finch (35) and Steve Smith (12) -- in his first two overs to turn the game on its head. At the end of it all, he also scooped the man of

the match honours for his superb effort.

The Australians were not prepared for Chahal, who bowled way better in his most preferred format, varying the pace of his deliveries and using the flight to good effect.

Natarajan, whose nerves had eased after a decent ODI debut, was right on the money and got one to straighten catching Glenn Maxwell plumb in-front.

If that wasn't enough, Natarajan snuffed out a frustrated D'Arcy Short (34 off 38 balls) to make it 113 for 4 and India didn't have to look back from then on.

Earlier, vice-captain KL Rahul continued his impressive run in the shortest format with yet another fifty but it took Jadeja's brilliant back-end flourish to take India to a fighting total.

The Indian vice-captain hit 51 off 40 balls but leg-spinner Adam Zampa (1/20 in 4 overs) and all-round Moises Henriques (3/22 in 4 overs) were brilliant between overs 11th and 15th, which shifted the momentum in favour of the home team till Jadeja came into play with a 44 not out off 23 balls.

During 11th and 15th over, India scored 22 runs and lost three wickets in Sanju Samson (23 off 15 balls), Manish Pandey (2 off 8 balls) and Rahul.

However, Jadeja (five fours



and a six), who suffered from hamstring trouble, launched into Josh Hazlewood and Mitchell Starc in the final two overs that yielded 34 runs taking Indian to a par-score at the Manuka Oval.

The Indians found Zampa difficult to get away as he conceded only one boundary

while Heniques conceded just a six, cleverly varying the pace of his deliveries with a good mix of cutters and seam-up stuff.

Rahul, who hit five fours and a six, along with Samson and the dangerous Hardik Pandya (16 off 15 balls) were deceived by the pace of pitch

while driving on the up wasn't an easy job.

Mitchell Starc (2/34) was also quick and incisive at the start but got hit during the death overs.

Four days of rest had done Starc a world of good as he found both his length and swing back at the start. At a scorching 145 clicks, he bowled one that shaped away from Shikhar Dhawan starting on middle-stump and knocking the off-stump back.

Rahul's first boundary was a mis-hit off Hazlewood over third man, followed by a cover drive off Zampa.

Another streaky boundary off Sean Abbott was topped up by a regal pull-shot into the mid-wicket stands.

Inexperienced leg spinner Mitchell Swepson (1/21 in 2 overs) repeatedly bowled short but did snap a prizewinning catch in rival skipper Virat Kohli (9) when a ball stopped on him and the result was a return catch off a leading edge.

But Rahul punished him and so did Samson, who rocked back to hit him for a six. Rahul's half-century came off 37 deliveries.

However, as has been Samson's trait, he perished when Heniques bowled an off-cutter and the uppish cover drive.

He was pouched by Swepson and India's innings went down south from that moment before Jadeja did redeem it.

The Statesman Sport

Postal Reg. No. DL (ND)-II/6088/2018-19-20

India win first Oz T20 by 11 runs

AGENCIES

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Inexperienced leg spinner Mitchell Swepson (1/21 in 2 overs) repeatedly bowled short but did snap a prizewinning catch in rival skipper Virat Kohli (9) when a ball stopped on him and the result was a return catch off a leading edge.

But Rahul punished him and so did Samson, who rocked back to hit him for a six. Rahul's half-century came off 37 deliveries.

However, as has been Samson's trait, he perished when Heniques bowled an off-cutter and the uppish cover drive.

He was pouched by Swepson and India's innings went down south from that moment before Jadeja did redeem it.

Unhappy Aus say replacement should have been like-for-like

CANBERRA, 4 DECEMBER

gled with a hamstring injury in the 19th over and it seemed likely that he wouldn't even be able to field, let alone bowl.

Australia all-rounder Moses Henriques said that replacing Jadeja with Chahal was not fine although they did not have any issue with concussion substitute.

"The like-for-like for me was an all-rounder, gun fielder and the other one is out and out bowler who bats at 11. That is the only thing from my point of view. It had nothing to do with his hammy (hamstring). I'd like to look at it as like-for-like decision," said Henriques in the post-match press conference. IANS

SCOREBOARD

INDIA INNINGS	AUSTRALIA INNINGS
K Rahul c Abbott b Heniques 51	D Short c Pandya b Natarajan 34
S Dhawan b Starc 1	AJ Finch c Pandya b Chahal 35
V Kohli c & b Swepson 9	S Smith c Samson b Chahal 12
S Samson c Swepson b Heniques 23	GJ Maxwell lbw b Natarajan 2
M Pandey c Hazlewood b Zampa 2	MC Henriques lbw b Chahal 30
H Pandya c Smith b Heniques 16	MS Wade c Kohli b Chahal 7
RA Jadeja not out 44	SA Abbott not out 12
W Sundar c Abbott b Starc 7	MA Starc b Natarajan 1
DL Chahar not out 0	MJ Swepson not out 12
Extras: (lb 2, nb 1, w 5) 8	Extr: (lb 4, w 1) 5
TOTAL: (20 Ov, RR: 8.05)	TOTAL: (20 Ov, RR: 7.5) 150
BOWLING: MA Starc 4/0, 34.2	BOWLING: Dt-Chahar 4/0, 29.1
JR Hazlewood 4/0, 39.0, A Zampa 4,0, 20.1, SA Abbott 2,0, 23.0	W Sundar 4/0, 16.0 Md Shami 4,0, 20.1, T Natarajan 4,0, 30.3
MJ Swepson 2,0, 21.1 M Heniques 4,0, 22.3	YS Chahal 4,0, 25.3

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