

US DEFENCE SECY
TO VISIT INDIA
NEXT WEEK

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Possibility of very light rain/thundershowers. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 34 and 17 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: 1.0 MM

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 87% Min: 46%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 33.0°C (+4) Min: 18.2°C (+4)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

06:34 hrs 18:27 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

06:10 hrs 16:33 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh with Indian Navy officers during the commissioning ceremony of P-75 INS Karanj submarine into the Indian Navy, in Mumbai on Wednesday. ■ AGENCIES

Pakistan to get Indian Covid vaccines: Pakistan is set to receive 'Made in India' Covid-19 vaccines through the Covax facility, which is the global alliance for supplying vaccines across the globe. The neighbouring country will get nearly 16 million free doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covid vaccine.

CVC gets 27,590 corruption complaints: A total of 27,590 complaints were received by the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) during 2020, the government said on Wednesday. A total of 5,922 complaints have been received by the anti-corruption watchdog up to February 2021 this year, it said. Of the total 27,590 complaints received last year, 15,004 were sent for necessary action to the Chief Vigilance Officers concerned and 140 were sent for "investigation and report" to the CVO/CBI, minister of state for Personnel Jitendra Singh said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

Despite farmers' issue, BJP-JJP government in Haryana wins trust vote

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 10 MARCH



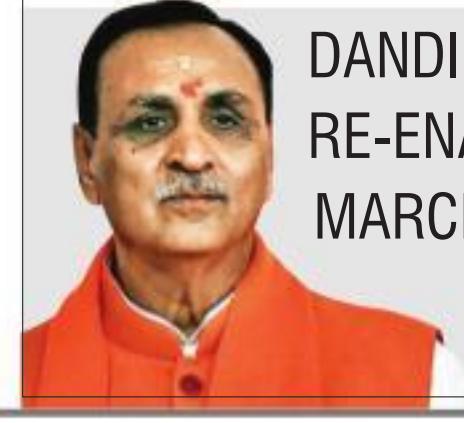
The Bharatiya Janata Party-Janayak Janata Party (BJP-JJP) government in Haryana survived the floor test on Wednesday, defeating the motion of no-confidence brought by the main opposition Congress in the Assembly.

At the end of a marathon six-hour discussion on the motion, Speaker Gian Chand Gupta announced the 55-32 break up in the House. The 55 members who voted against the motion included 39 from the BJP, 10 from ally Janayak Janta Party. Thirty members of Congress and two Independents, who had earlier withdrawn support, backed the motion.

Replying to the no-confidence motion, chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar said 'no confidence' is Congress' culture. "When the party (Congress) loses polls, there's no confidence on EVMs, for surgical strikes, it asks for evidence," he said. "We know that we will not win the confidence of the Opposition but we will take this opportunity to win the confidence of the masses", he added.

Referring to the ongoing farmers' agitation, Khattar gave assurance on the floor of the House that once the three farm laws are implemented in the state and the farmers feel that their interests are being hurt, the government will do everything to protect the farmers' cause.

"I give a guarantee that mandis (grain markets) will not be shut down and minimum support price will also continue. Market fee in man-



DANDI MARCH TO BE
RE-ENACTED FROM 12
MARCH: GUJ GOVT

P4



IRDAI CONSIDERING
CHANGE IN PRODUCT
APPROVAL SYSTEM

P4

INDIANS RUBBED UP
THE WRONG
WAY BY SAWHNEY

P12



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

Mamata injured, rushed to hospital

Chief minister alleges 'conspiracy', Opposition calls it 'drama'

SNS & AGENCIES

HALDIA (WB), 10 MARCH

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee alleged on Wednesday that she was attacked by "four-five men" who manhandled her during the election campaign in Nandigram, because of which she was injured in the left leg.

The incident happened around 6.15 p.m. when Banerjee was about to leave the Birulia area near Reypara after praying at a local temple. "I was standing outside my car with the door open. I was praying from there on seeing a temple. Few people came around my car and pushed the door. The door hit my leg," she said.

Banerjee alleged that she was pushed by four-five men while she was trying to get into the car.

The chief minister said that her leg got swollen because of the injury and she was feeling feverish, besides having chest pain.

Pointing to her leg, she told reporters, "See how it has swollen."

"Some people deliberately did it. Of course, it is a conspiracy. There were no local policemen around me, neither the district police superintendent was present at the spot," she alleged.

The chief minister also has severe pain in the waist, TMC MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray, who is at present in Nandigram, said.



day, she filed her nominations in Haldia.

Banerjee is pitted against her former aide Suvidra Adhikari, who switched over to the BJP a few months back.

The TMC leadership claimed that the attack was a well-planned conspiracy to "remove her" from the poll campaign.

"Many people don't want her to campaign for the elections. They want her to be removed from their path. That is why she has been attacked by goons. People will give a befitting reply," state minister and senior TMC leader Subrata Mukherjee said.

The BJP alleged that Banerjee was trying to turn a "simple accident" into a "pre-planned conspiracy" and demanded a CBI investigation.

"It can happen that she met with an accident but

she was taken to the state-run SSKM Hospital for treatment, sources said. She was in Nandigram over the last two days to campaign for the upcoming elections. Earlier in the

to claim that she was deliberately pushed is not acceptable. She has a lot of security personnel guarding her round the clock," BJP's national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya said.

"Such tactics to gain sympathy are unacceptable. I think the matter should be handed over to the CBI for investigation," he added.

State Congress president Adhir Chowdhury said such "tactics to gain sympathy" would not work this time.

"Mamata Banerjee is the police minister of the state and if she is not safe then she should immediately resign from the post," he said.

CPI(M) candidate from Nandigram Minalshi Mukherjee wished her speedy recovery, but asserted that "people would not be fooled this time".

The attack came a day after the Election Commission replaced the Director-General of Bengal Police, Mr Virender amid concerns of violence voiced by the BJP. An Indian Police Service officer of the 1987 batch, P Nirajnayan, has been named the new police chief.

The election commission has sought a report on the Bengal chief minister being pushed, injured in Nandigram.

Senior TMC leaders including the chief minister's nephew Abhishek Banerjee reached SSKM hospital where a special medical team was constituted to attend to her.

'No democracy left in Congress': PC Chacko resigns from party

SNS & PTI
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/
NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH



gressman," he said.

V Sudheeran was also forced out from the party due to factionalism, Chacko told media persons in New Delhi.

Alleging that merit or winnability is not being considered by the faction leaders while choosing candidates, he said that the national leadership is a "mute witness to this disastrous situation".

He said he has sent his resignation letter to party chief Sonia Gandhi and a copy of the letter to Rahul Gandhi.

He, however, did not announce his future plans but made it clear on his views on the BJP saying the saffron party "is not a political factor" in the southern state.

NEW FACE



Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya administers oath of office and secrecy to new chief minister Tirath Rawat in Dehradun on Wednesday. ■ SNS

As Covid numbers rise, Maha draws up 7-point action plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE, 10 MARCH

To check the spike in Covid-19 cases, the Maharashtra health department has come up with a seven-point action plan, including testing of close contacts, fast contact-tracing, mass testing in hot-spots and audit of deaths.

All district administrations have been directed to act upon these points immediately, as per a letter dated March 3 of the health department's principal secretary Dr Deepak Vyas.

The action plan also includes strict adherence to guidelines on social, political and religious gatherings, and to involve civil societies and religious leaders to motivate people to adopt Covid-19-appropriate behaviour.

The Covid-19 cases in Maharashtra have been on a rise since the second week of

February.

On Tuesday, the state reported 9,927 new Covid-19 cases which took the case-load to 22,38,398, while 56 fatalities pushed up the death count to 52,556, as per official data.

The action plan has been prepared following observations of a team from the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, which recently visited Nagpur, Amravati, Yavatmal, Thane, Pune and Mumbai, where there has been a spike in cases of the viral infection.

In the letter issued to all district collectors and civic chiefs, Dr Vyas said though the central team came out with observations based on its visits to the above-mentioned districts, a similar situation might be prevailing in other districts.

Hence, all the district administrations need to act

on these strategies, he said.

As per the letter, the districts have been asked to activate institutional quarantine or isolation facilities as there is no proper mechanism to monitor patients in home isolation on a day-to-day basis.

Authorities have been instructed that as the test report of a patient's close contact is likely to be false-negative if the person is in the incubation period, there is a need to do or repeat the test around 5th to 7th day of the exposure.

Till then, the person may be kept in institutional quarantine, the letter said.

The central team has also suggested that in Covid hot-spots, there could be universal testing of each and every person using a large number of rapid antigen tests, if sufficient RT-PCR test capacity is not available.

Over 17K fresh cases, 133 deaths in last 24 hrs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

India on Wednesday recorded 17,921 new coronavirus cases and 133 fatalities, taking the total Covid-19 case-load to 1,12,62,707. The total number of deaths in the country has reached 1,58,063.

As per the Ministry's data, there are 1,84,598 active cases at present while 20,652 patients were discharged in a day. A total of 1,09,20,046 persons have been discharged so far.

The recovery rate has come down to 96.96 percent from 97.98 percent recorded on Saturday, last week.

Maharashtra, Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Karnataka cumulatively account for 84.04 percent of the new cases. Delhi sees 370 cases, highest in 2 months: Delhi today recorded 370 fresh Covid cases - reportedly the highest single-day figure in nearly two months - and 3 coronavirus-linked

deaths, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

Will continue disengagement talks with China: Govt

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

India will continue discussions with China to achieve the objective of disengagement from all friction points and restoration of peace and tranquility in the India-China border areas at an early date, the government said today.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said the two countries have continued diplomatic and military engagements to resolve the situation in the border areas. Six meetings of the Working Mechanism for Coordination and Consultations (WMCC) in border areas and nine meetings of senior commanders have been held so far.

The minister noted that since April-May 2020, the Chinese side had made several attempts to unilaterally change the status quo along the LAC in the Western Sector. These attempts were responded to appropriately by the Indian armed forces. It has been made clear to the Chinese side that such attempts were unacceptable. These actions have seriously disturbed the peace and tranquility in the border areas in the Western sector.

Responding to another question, Muraleedharan said the Central Military Commission of China last month announced awarding posthumously honorary merit citations and titles to Chinese soldiers killed in the 15 June clash with Indian soldiers at the Galwan Valley.

He also stated that the disengagement in the Pangong Tso Lake area has been completed by the Indian and Chinese sides.

Exclusion of women from joining NDA: SC seeks Centre's reply

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH



The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea which has raised the issue of exclusion of eligible and willing women candidates from joining the prestigious National Defence Academy (NDA) solely on the ground of sex which allegedly is a violation of fundamental right of equality.

The plea has sought a direction to the concerned authorities to allow eligible female candidates to appear in the National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination.

The bench, also comprising justices A S Bopanna and

ings.

The plea said that authorities allow unmarried male candidates having adequate 10+2 qualification to take the National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination, but eligible and willing female candidates are not allowed to take the examination on the sole ground of their sex and without any reasonable or justifiable explanations within the four corners of the Constitution.

It alleged that this act of discrimination is a dishonour committed by the concerned authorities to the constitutional values of equality and non-discrimination.

The act of the respondents to categorically exclude eligible and willing female

candidates from appearing for the National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination over the years, solely on the ground of sex, is a violation of the fundamental right of equality before the law and equal protection of the law, it said.

It said that eligible female candidates having adequate 10+2 level of education are denied the opportunity to take the examination and after qualifying join the NDA to get trained to be commissioned as permanent commissioned officers in the Indian armed forces, the plea said.



I have been fighting against such undeclared rules in the party for a long time

SHANKAR GHOSH, FORMER WARD COUNCILLOR OF CPI-M

ON HOW HE QUIT THE PARTY THAT HE SAID LACKED FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF THOUGHTS AND IDEAS

Kejri announces free visit to Ram temple for elderly

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today announced free pilgrimage for Delhi's senior citizens to the Ram temple in Ayodhya once the construction work is completed there.

The CM also asserted that

his government follows 10 principles inspired by the concept of "Ram Rajya" to serve the people.

The 10 principles listed by him include providing food, education, medical care, electricity, water, employment, housing, security for women, and honouring the elderly.

Kejriwal's announcement about the pilgrimage came a day after his government present-

eda Rs 69,000 crore "Deshbhakti (patriotism) Budget".

The Kejriwal dispensation already has a "Mukhyamantri Teerth Yatra Yojana" that allows senior citizens from Delhi to undertake a free visit to various pilgrimage sites in the country.

All expenses related to travel, food and accommodation are borne by the Delhi government for these visits.

Addressing the Delhi Assem-

bly today, Kejriwal took potshots at the Yogi Adityanath government over the allegedly abysmal condition of government-run schools in Uttar Pradesh.

The Delhi CM said that he saw on social media a video of UP CM Adityanath inspecting a school in "Manish Sisodia style".

"I am happy that chief ministers and ministers are visiting schools now," Kejriwal said.

He said his deputy CM Sisodia went to Lucknow recently to inspect UP government-run schools after a minister there "challenged" him. "But the minister chickened out and the UP stopped Sisodia from inspecting the schools himself," he said.

"I am a devotee of Lord Ram and Hanuman. We have been following 10 principles inspired by the concept of 'Ram

Rajya' to serve the people of Delhi," Kejriwal said during a discussion on the Lieutenant Governor's address to the House.

"We have taken many steps to honour our elderly, the most important being sending them on free pilgrimages. I want to tell all senior citizens in Delhi that I will send you to Ram temple in Ayodhya once the construction work is completed," the CM said.

The construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya is expected to be completed in 36-40 months.

Referring to the 10 principles listed by him, Kejriwal said no one should sleep on an empty stomach in Delhi. "Every child, irrespective of the social status, should get quality education and every person should get the best possible medical treatment." The AAP government

has taken a number of steps to generate employment, provide housing facilities to the poor and ensure women safety, he claimed.

Kejriwal also appealed to residents of Delhi to participate in the Covid vaccination drive and said the members of the Delhi Assembly should go to hospitals, stand in queue and take vaccine just like common people.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF SH. SUNIL RANA ADDL. DISTRICT JUDGE-05 CENTRAL PWD NO. 77, TIS HAZARI COURTS, DELHI.

PC NO. 12/2020 N.D.O.H. 31-05-2021

Smt. Lajwanti & Ors.

Versus State & Ors.

CITATION UNDER SECTION 271 OF INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT 1925.

Whereas an petition under Section 276/278 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of Probate or Letters of Administration in respect of the Estate of deceased Late Sh. Prabhu Deval, s/o Late Rooram Parsoy, r/o 332/26, Badon Pur, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005. Who died on 21-06-1996 at Delhi has been made by 1. Smt. Lajwanti Dayal, w/o Sh. Maan Singh, r/o 72/5468, Regharpura, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005. 2. Smt. Parimal Dayal, s/o Late Sh. Prabhu Deval, w/o Sh. Ghanaysham Das, Mauya, r/o 59/433, Regharpura, PS, Road, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005.

Whereas the 31st of May, 2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the Probate/Letter of Administration of the Estate of the said deceased if he/she desires to be heard shall appear before the court on 31-05-2021 before the grant of Letter of Administration.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 8th day of March, 2021.

Addl. District Judge-05 Central Room No. 307, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.

Seal of the Court

COURT NOTICE (U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC) (UNDER GUARDIAN AND WARD ACT)

IN THE COURT OF HIRDEJIT SINGH Additional Civil Judge (Senior Division), Phyllaur

CNR No. PBLB/2008/55-2020

Notice dated 20/02/2021

Jaswinder Kaur W/o Sanjtokh Ram, s/o Charan Singh, r/o Village Billa, Tehsil Phyllaur District Jalandhar at Present d/o Kewal Singh, r/o Sanjokal, Tehsil Phyllaur, District Jalandhar.

Versus General Public.

Notice to:

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 01-04-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?r=distcct_notice&dis=district-jalandhar.

Dated, this day of 09-02-2020.

Additional Civil Judge (Senior Division), Phyllaur

Seal of the court

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It can happen that she met with an accident but to claim that she was deliberately pushed is not acceptable.

BJP NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY KAILASH VIJAYVARGIYA
AFTER MAMATA BANERJEE CLAIMED THAT SOME PEOPLE DELIBERATELY INJURED HER

Delhi HC stays ED summons to Mufti

Don't press for Mehbooba's appearance on 15 March till the court hears her petition, HC asks ED

PTI

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the Enforcement Directorate not to press for former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mehbooba Mufti's personal appearance in a money-laundering case till the court hears her petition on March 18, her daughter said.

The matter came up for hearing before a division bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anup Jaairam Bhambhani. The matter was posted for March 18 with a direction to the ED not to press for her personal appearance on March 15.

The PDP leader had challenged the validity of the summons issued by the ED for appearing before it on March 15 without specifying the case she was being investigated in. She asked the court to quash the summons, her daughter Iltija Mufti said.



The summons was issued under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act but the case under which she was asked to appear was missing from the notice.

In her petition before the high court, Mehbooba said she had not been informed if she is being summoned as an accused or as a witness.

"The petitioner is not the subject of investigation, nor

is she an accused, in any of the scheduled offences to the best of her knowledge," it said.

She alleged in her petition that since her release from preventive detention following the abrogation of Article 370, "there have been a series of hostile acts by the state, against her, acquaintances and old family friends, who have all been summoned by the ED.

"The petitioner also wrote a letter to the Enforcement Directorate, inter alia, pointing to the roving nature of the inquiry undertaken in the case thus far and that in the event that she is questioned, she will insist on the legitimacy of the process," the petition stated.

Mehbooba, 60, who was released last year after more than a year in detention following the scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, was served notice to appear at the ED headquarters in the national capital.

The former chief minister also challenged the validity of Section 50 of PMLA under which she had been summoned and said the section was in violation of Article 14 (equality before the law or equal protection of the laws within the territory of India) and Article 21 (No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established

by law). Under Section 50 of PMLA, "The Director, Additional Director, Joint Director, Deputy Director or Assistant Director shall have power to summon any person whose attendance he considers necessary whether to give evidence or to produce any records during the course of any investigation or proceeding under this Act."

The persons summoned shall be bound to attend in person or through authorised agents, as such officer may direct, and shall be bound to state the truth upon any subject respecting which they are examined or make statements, and produce such documents as may be required. The proceedings under this section are deemed to be a judicial proceeding. Mehbooba said it was in violation of Section 25 in the Indian Evidence Act under which any statement given in front of a police officer was not valid in the court of law until substantiated with evidence.

Punjab Assembly condemns ED raid at Khaira's house

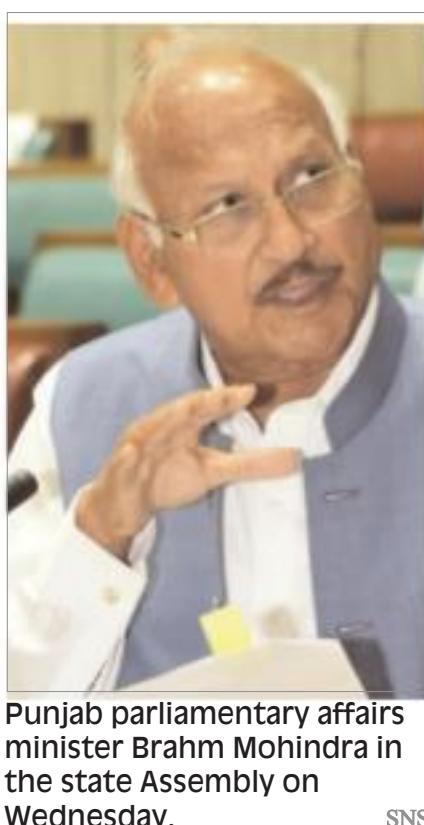
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 10 MARCH

The Punjab Assembly on Wednesday unanimously condemned the Enforcement Directorate (ED)'s raid at the house of the founder and president of the Punjab Ekta Party, Sukhpal Singh Khaira, a vocal critic of the controversial farm laws enacted by the Bharatiya Janata Party government at the Centre.

Terming the ED's raid as "unconstitutional and unwarranted", Punjab parliamentary affairs minister Brahm Mohindra said that the House expressed its concern in one voice against the use of Central agencies such as CBI, ED, NIA, etc. to harass innocent people including the farmers, politically elected representatives, and even some government officials, even though these agencies were meant to ensure transparency in public life.

The minister further said that during the ongoing Budget Session of the Punjab Assembly, a member of the House (Khaira), who represents the state's Bholhat constituency, has been compelled to remain absent from participating in the proceedings of the House.

He said this raid disabled him from discharging his constitutional obligations as an elected representative of his constituency due to the



Punjab parliamentary affairs minister Brahm Mohindra in the state Assembly on Wednesday.

"unwarranted and unconstitutional" interference by the ED, which has been noticed and condemned by the august House unanimously.

While condemning the "unwarranted and unconstitutional" use of the Central agencies, the House urged the Narendra Modi-led Central Government to refrain from infringing upon the rights of the elected representatives of the people by subverting the due process of law, and uphold the tenets of the democratic set-up in the country.

Khaira was formerly with the Aam Aadmi Party and has served as the leader of the opposition in the state Assembly.

SAD moves privilege motion against Punjab FM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 10 MARCH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) legislative wing on Wednesday moved a privilege motion against Punjab finance minister Manpreet Singh Badal for allegedly "fudging" figures in the state's Budget presented in the Assembly on Monday.

The Opposition SAD alleged that the finance minister cheated Punjabis by making provisions under various heads in successive budgets but not releasing the funds for the same.

The privilege motion, which was submitted to the Assembly Speaker early today morning, also accused the finance minister of "lying" on the floor of the House and demanded that action be taken against him.

The SAD legislators led by the legislative wing leader Sharanjit Singh Dhillon and Bikram Singh Majithia charged that Badal had fudged figures to the tune of Rs 69,676 Crore in the Budget by inflating the gross state domestic product (GSDP). They said the GSDP for 2019-20 was Rs 5.74 lakh Crore and it fell by 6.4 per cent in 2020-21 due to Covid pandemic by the state's own estimates on page nine of budget at a glance document.

"This should have made the GSDP 5.37 lakh Crore in 2020-21 but the FM had fudged figures to show a GSDP of Rs 6.07 lakh Crore for 2020-21," the privilege motion said. It said Badal had misled the House vis-a-vis Rs 8,359 Crore loan taken by the state by not taking it into account in the 2020-21 estimates.

The SAD legislators said if this was taken into account the state debt for 2020-21 would become Rs 2.61 lakh Crore and not Rs 2.52 lakh Crore as stated in the budget and the same would rise to Rs 2.73 lakh Crore in 2021-22.

"All this will also result in an increase in the debt to GSDP ratio to 48 per cent in 2021-22 and not 45 per cent as projected by the government," the SAD legislators said. They said the finance minister had also cheated every section of society. They said provisions had been kept for giving farm loan relief of Rs 3,000 Crore in 2019-20 and Rs 2000 Crore in 2020-21 but the same was not released.

"Similarly the finance minister kept a provision of Rs 600 Crore for award of Post Matric Scholarship to SC students in each of the last four budgets. However not one rupee from the Rs 2,400 Crore allocated for SC students was released," the SAD said.

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Virbhadra asks Cong rank & file to unite to win polls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 10 MARCH

Calling upon party leaders and workers to gear up for upcoming municipal corporation and 2022 state Assembly polls, senior Congress leader and former chief minister Virbhadra Singh on Wednesday called for forgetting differences and make united efforts to win the polls.

Singh said whatever Himachal Pradesh has

achieved today was due to the initiatives and efforts of the Congress party and its leaders.

"Congress MLAs, party leaders and workers should make disciplined and united efforts for upcoming elections in the state.

After coming to power again, Congress government in state will work for development of all, keeping aside the prevalent regionalism in the politics of the state," he added.

the Congress to retain power in the state.

"It seems that days of the BJP government at Shimla and Delhi are over now and the people of the state and country will vote them out in the coming elections," Shukla added.

State Congress Leader Kuldeep Singh Rathore, Leader of Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri, former Congress chief Sukhvinder Sukhu, state party organization secretary Rajnish Kima, MLAs and party office bearers were present on the occasion among others.

ermittent's "mismanagement" during the Covid pandemic has resulted in citizens running from pillar to post to seek relief.

There were several allegations of scams in procurement of PPE kits, sanitizer and sanitiser control to the people of the country but failed to deliver on these.

In fact, PM Modi during Lok Sabha polls had promised to provide petrol and diesel per litre at Rs 40 and Rs 38 respectively but now the prices of these commodities had crossed Rs 100 in the country, he said.

Shukla further said that the BJP-led Himachal government was protecting persons who were involved in scams while opposition leaders were being implicated in false cases and misinformation was being spread in public domain against

the people of the state.

Further, the state government was supporting persons who were involved in scams while opposition leaders were being implicated in false cases and misinformation was being spread in public domain against

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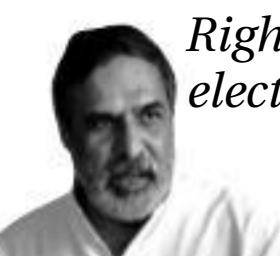
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Right now, the only objective before the party is to fight the elections together to defeat BJP and other opponents



SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER ANAND SHARMA
SAYING THERE ARE NO TWO GROUPS IN CONGRESS

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ndia

Red Fort violence: 2 more accused held

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Delhi Police has arrested two more persons in connection with the Red Fort violence on Republic Day, police said.

One of them, identified as Maninder Singh, a Dutch national settled in Birmingham, UK, was arrested at IGI Airport while allegedly trying to flee from India on forged travel documents, police said.

Another accused, identified as Khempreet Singh, had allegedly assaulted police personnel on duty inside the Red Fort with a spear, police said.

"Accused Maninder Singh was involved in Red Fort violence case and video footages have shown the presence of accused along-side the unlawfully assembled unruly riotous mob at Red Fort. The presence of the

accused at Red Fort is also established through electronic evidence. He was absconding and willfully evading his arrest," police said. Maninderjit was produced before a court and has been sent to four-day police remand. Police charged that Khempreet was also actively involved in the Red Fort violence.

On the basis of electronic surveillance, he was arrested on 9 March, police added. During the investigation, Khempreet disclosed that on 26 January, he along with his associates joined the unruly mob from Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar and finally reached the Red Fort after breaching the barricades at Baruri and Chhatta Rail, police said. Police charged that Maninderjit was a habitual offender and that several criminal cases were registered against him. Khempreet is a resident of Delhi's Swaroop

Nagar area. He was arrested from Khayala area in outer Delhi when he was hiding at a relative's house.

On Republic Day, many protesters deviated from the pre-agreed route of protesting farmers' tractor rally in Delhi and broke barricades to enter the national capital. They allegedly clashed with police and vandalised property in several parts of the national capital. They also entered the Red Fort and unfurled their flags from its ramparts.

Thousands of farmers, including women, children and elderly people, have been protesting against the Narendra Modi-led central government's three controversial farm laws at Delhi's borders since 26 November last year peacefully.

Delhi Police has arrested about 150 people in connection with the Republic Day violence so far.

US Defence Secy to visit India next week: MoD

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

US Secretary of Defence Gen Lloyd J Austin will visit India from 19-21 March in what will be the first top-level engagement between New Delhi and Washington after the inauguration of Joe Biden administration.

The Defence Ministry today announced that Austin would meet defence minister Rajnath Singh and other senior Indian ministers and officials during his visit.

"Both sides are expected to discuss ways to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation and exchange views on regional security challenges and common interests in maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region," an official release said.

Discussions would also focus on how both countries could consolidate military-to-military cooperation and defence trade and industry cooperation.

Dandi March to be re-enacted from 12 March, PM to flag off

It is part of Gujarat govt's programme to mark 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD, 10 MARCH

Ninety-one years after Mahatma Gandhi took out the Dandi March to break the salt law that shook the foundations of the British empire, 81 persons will embark on the same 386-km long foot-march from here on 12 March to celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, the Gujarat government said on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will flag off the yatra from Sabarmati Ashram on Friday. It will re-enact Gandhiji's historic march to Dandi in south Gujarat, the government said in a release. It is part of the state government's programme to mark 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', it said.

The Gujarat government's state level high-powered committee's meeting chaired by chief minister Vijay Rupani was held on Tuesday to finalise the preparations to celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence.



Mahatma Gandhi's historic Dandi March. ~ FILE PHOTO

and broke the law.

The Salt Satyagrah made the entire nation stand behind Mahatma Gandhi and lakhs of people joined his civil disobedience movement and non-violent freedom struggle.

This development shook the British Empire at that time.

The marchers will halt at 21 places on the way and attend a variety of events at each place highlighting the socio-economic changes taking place in the field of cleanliness, environment, security and water conservation, he said.

The events have been

designed to foretell the steps India needs to take to become "Vishwa Guru", for celebrating the centenary of India's Independence 25 years from now, he added.

During this march, ministers, MLAs, officials and leaders will join for a day at different parts of the event.

The celebration will also include subjects such as environmental protection, Swachhta Abhiyan, water harvesting, yoga study and others.

The yatra will culminate in a big function to be held at Dandi on 5 April, the release said. Apart from the Dandi March, a variety of programmes have been lined up and will be simultaneously held at 75 locations in Gujarat, at places associated with Mahatma Gandhi's life, Rupani said.

Big events have been planned at Porbandar, Rajkot, Vadodara, Bardoli and Mandvi, and at district headquarters, he said, adding that India's freedom saga from 1857 revolt to winning the Independence would be displayed before the new generations.

TENDER

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG

Description of work					
Sr. No.	Description of work	Description of work	Earhest Money	Time	Cost of form
1.	A/R & M/O of various WSS under Jal Shakti Sub-Division Subathu Section Kuthar Distt. Solan (HP) (SH:- Manufacturing & Supplying of wheel valve Chamber size 450x450x600mm).	147700/-	2950/-	One Month	250/-
2.	A/R & M/O of various WSS under IPH Sub-Division Subathu Section Subathu Distt. Solan (HP) (SH:- Manufacturing & Supplying of wheel valve Chamber size 450x450x600mm).	147700/-	2950/-	One Month	250/-
3.	A/R & M/O of various WSS under IPH Sub-Division Subathu Section Subathu Distt. Solan (HP) (SH:- Manufacturing & Supplying of wheel valve Chamber size 450x450x600mm).	422175/-	8450/-	One Month	250/-
4.	R/M of various LWS/GWS under Jal Shakti Section Kuthar in Tehsil Kasauli Distt. Solan H.P. (SH:- P/F of Sluice valves of various dia in distribution to improve the water supply).	156440/-	3130/-	One Month	250/-
5.	A/R & M/O of various WSS under Jal Shakti Section Kunihar Sub-Division Subathu under Jal Shakti Division Arki in Tehsil Arki Distt. Solan H.P. (SH:- P/F of Cast Iron Sluice valves and P/F of Cast Steel Non Return Valve).	153489/-	3070/-	One Month	250/-
6.	R/M of various Hand Pumps plate form under Jal Shakti Sub-Division Darlaghat in Tehsil Arki Distt. Solan (HP) (SH:- Construction of 45 Nos. plateform under Jal Shakti Section Piluphat, Darlaghat, Kandhar & Kashlog).	152489/-	3070/-	One Month	250/-

Last date of submission of tender: 16-03-2021 up to 11:00 AM

Last date of sale of tender from Divisional Office: 15-03-2021 up to 04:00 PM

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be downloaded from the website www.hppih.org from office of above Executive Engineer up to date specified above.

Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti Division, Arki

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

HP.PWD KANGRA

Sealed item rate tenders on form 6 & 8 are invited by the Executive Engineer, Kangra Division, HP: PWD, Kangra on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh from the approved and eligible contractors/firms enlisted in HPPWD in the appropriate class for the work mentioned below on 30.3.2021 up to 10:45 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11:00 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender forms can be obtained from his office on cash payment (non refundable) on any working day from 26.3.2021 to 27.3.2021. The applications for the issue of tender forms will be received latest by 24.3.2021 up to 12.00 Noon. The applications for issue of tender forms accompanied with enlistment letter/or renewal letter and the earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificates/Saving Account/Time deposit Account in any of the Post Office in Himachal Pradesh duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Kangra Division, HPPWD, Kangra.

The conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days.

Work No.1:- C/O Link road Upper Bhaniar Masha Basti to Naghuin in G.P. Manjhgarh (Deposit work) under Head MMGSY (SH: - P/L C.C. pavement interlocking tiles ^ C/O U-shape drain with E/Wall) Estimated cost: Rs. 498518/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.2:- Restoration of rain damage on Shahpur Darini road (SH: - R/Wall at RD.7/795 to 7/820 extension of 900mm dia hume pipe culvert at RD.7/835 along with wing wall) Estimated cost: Rs. 498752/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.3:- C/O Link road from Chhatri Pehad km.0/0 to 3/0 (SH: - C/O Edge wall at RD.0/065 to 0/130 (R/Side) and 0/130 to 0/145 (L/Side)) (Under SCSP) Estimated cost: Rs. 322389/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.4:- RD on Dadham Durgella Bhatech via Tundu Tharu road km.0/0 to 6/450 (SH: - C/O V-shape drain at RD.4/275 to 4/450 & R/Wall at RD.4/285 to 4/300) Estimated cost: Rs. 431035/- Earnest Money Rs. 9000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.5:- A/R & M/O Shahpur Kairi Chatter road km.0/0 to 8/400 (SH: - Repair of pot hole at RD.6/200 to 8/420) Estimated cost: Rs. 482379/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.6:- A/R & M/O Shahpur Kairi Chatter road km.0/0 to 8/400 (SH: - Repair of pot hole at RD.0/02 to 4/800) Estimated cost: Rs. 494791/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.7:- Extra widening of Shahpur Darini road R/S & L/S (Both side) km.0/0 to 2/200 (SH: - Providing C.C. pavement at RD.0/0 to 0/250, 1/982 to 2/200) Estimated cost: Rs. 425403/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.8:- Extra widening of Shahpur Darini road R/S & L/S (Both side) km.0/0 to 2/200 (SH: - Providing C.C. pavement at RD.1/500 to 1/800, 2/100 to 2/109 and tarring at RD.0/250 to 0/500) Estimated cost: Rs. 433262/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.9:- Improvement & widening of Shahpur Gandroop at km.0/0 to 2/400 (Missing culvert) (SH: - C/O 900mm dia Hume pipe culvert at km.1/150, C/O U-shape drain at RD.1/100 to 1/180, C/O R/Wall at RD.1/090 to 1/108) Estimated cost: Rs. 289746/- Earnest Money Rs. 6000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.10:- Improvement & widening of Shahpur Gandroop at km.0/0 to 2/400 (SH: - Providing and laying interlocking tiles, C/o R/Wall and U-shape drain) Estimated cost: Rs. 499769/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.11:- C/O Bandi Gharoh Naganpat road km.0/0 to 4/00(SH: - Earth filling) Estimated cost: Rs. 496742/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Two Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.12:- C/O road along with culvert for Nag Mandir Oder Wrd No.4 in G.P. Har Bah in Tehsil Shahpur (SH: - P/L Kharanja Stone and cement concrete) Estimated cost: Rs. 223957/- Earnest Money Rs. 6000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.13:- C/O Appropriate Training Centre (A.T.C.) at I.T.I. Shahpur Distt. Kangra (SH: - P/L 60mm thick interlocking paver blocks around building) Estimated cost: Rs. 443220/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.14:- C/O Appropriate Training Centre (A.T.C.) at I.T.I. Shahpur Distt. Kangra (SH: - Providing boundary wall in brick masonry with main gate) Estimated cost: Rs. 400152/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.15:- C/O Chari Gheri road km.0/0 to 8/555 (SH: - C/O Wire crate wall at RD.2/650 to 2/680) Estimated cost: Rs. 358722/- Earnest Money Rs. 8000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.16:- C/O Bhown Ladwara road km.0/0 to 4/500 (SH: - P/L G-I, earth filling, edge wall and inter locking paver between RD.1/200 to 1/270) Estimated cost: Rs. 409960/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.17:- C/O 1 No. room in Govt. Sr. Sec. School Branji Tehsil Shahpur Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: - C/O Building portion along with stair hall) (Part-I) Estimated cost: Rs. 497427/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.18:- C/O 1 No. room in Govt. Sr. Sec. School Branji Tehsil Shahpur Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: - C/O Building portion along with stair hall) (Part-II) Estimated cost: Rs. 499067/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit Three Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.19:- A/R & M/O new Rest House building at Shahpur Distt. Kangra (HP) (SH: - Painting and repairing of ceiling) Estimated cost: Rs. 191642/- Earnest Money Rs. 4000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.20:- C/O Chatti Pehad road (SH: - C/O R/Wall at RD.1/660 to 1/685 & 0/830 to 0/865) (Under SCSP) Estimated cost: Rs. 423265/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.21:- Himachal Improvement programme in Darini to Boh km.0/0 to 9/00 (SH: - Extension of Hume pipe at RD.15/180 & C/O R/Wall at RD.15/180 to 15/187.50) Estimated cost: Rs. 280525/- Earnest Money Rs. 7000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.22:- C/O Dohab Chowki to Rajinder Kumar House km.0/0 to 0/500 (Under SCSP) (SH: - C/O 600mm dia hume pipe at RD.0/230 to 0/335 and C/O E/Wall at RD.0/167 to 0/240 & P/L interlocking tiles 0/230 to 0/362) Estimated cost: Rs. 473257/- Earnest Money Rs. 10000/- Time Limit One Month Cost of tender 350/-

Work No.23:- A/R & M/O Shahpur Kairi Chatter road km.0/0 to 8/400 (SH: - Repair of pot hole at RD.6/200 to 8/420) Estimated cost: Rs. 482379/- Earnest Money



Every party faces ups and downs. After Independence, parties like Jansangh and BJP had been finished...

BAHU-JAN SAMAJ PARTY SUPREMO MAYAWATI
SAYING CONGRESS' WRONG POLICIES BEHIND BJPS RISE TO POWER

THUMBNAILS



CISF personnel perform during a programme on the occasion of its foundation day, at Indirapuram in Ghaziabad on Wednesday.

■ AGENCY

Illegal coal mining: The CBI on Wednesday told Supreme Court that it did not require prior consent from the West Bengal government to conduct investigation in a case of alleged illegal mining and transportation of coal in the state, as the purported offence had taken place within the 'railway areas'. In its counter affidavit, the probe agency has said that alleged offence in the case has admittedly taken place within railway areas which forms the exclusive domain of the CBI to investigate upon.

PTI

State-of-the-art airport: Airports Authority of India (AAI) has sanctioned Rs 242 crore for development of a state-of-the-art airport in Ayodhya, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday. The airport will "hugely benefit" visitors and pilgrims, he said. Around 270 acres of land has been made available by the Uttar Pradesh government for the first phase of airport development, he noted.

SNS

Rajya Sabha confrontation continues

Between government and Opposition on petroleum price hike and farm laws leading to adjournment of House proceedings for hours

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, MUZAFFARNAGAR
10 MARCH



The Rajya Sabha confrontation between the government and the Opposition on petroleum price hike and farm laws continued today, leading to the adjournment of the proceedings hours before schedule.

Amidst the din and protests by the Opposition, the House approved the Arbitration and Conciliation Amendment Bill by a voice vote. The Bill, already passed by the Lok Sabha, replaced an Ordinance.

Just as the House proceeded to take up the Zero Hour mentions, the Opposition insisted that the issues on which it had given notices be taken up first. Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu said let the Zero Hour mentions be over first. "Do you want disruption or discussion," he said.

Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said notices under Rule 267 were given for a discussion on the three controversial farm laws and on the petroleum price-hike. He said farmers in several States were agitated and a large number of them were camping outside Delhi.

Naidu said he had received notices from Deepender Hooda (Congress), Manoj Jha (RJD), Tiruchi Siva (DMK), Rajeev Satav (Congress) and Pratap Singh Bajwa (Congress) on the farmers issue and from Ashok Siddhartha (BSP) on the petroleum price hike.

He said he had already disposed of the petroleum price hike notice earlier. The farmers' issue was already discussed in the first part of the Budget Session.

The issue could be discussed again when the working of the Agriculture and Rural Development Ministries are discussed in the next few days, he said.

Rural Development Ministries are discussed in the next few days, he said.

The Chairman said if laws were to be repealed, there was a procedure for that, and the required numbers. If the members had the numbers to nullify the laws, they could prevail upon the Government to reverse the laws, he said. As the Opposition persisted with its demand, the House was adjourned about 11.20 am till noon.

At noon, Deputy Chairman Harivansh called members for the questions but there was slogan shouting and the House was adjourned till 2 pm. The House took up the Arbitration and Conciliation Bill at 2 pm, even as the Opposition stood firm on its

demands.

Kharge requested the Chair for the discussions. He said 250 farmers were already dead. Farmers were on a long dharna on Delhi's borders. Harivansh said there was a Constitutional obligation to ratify the Ordinance on the Arbitration law amendments. The Chairman had already ruled on the members' demands.

A few members spoke on the Amendment Bill. In his reply, Law and Justice Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the Amendments were meant to rectify the flaws in the law passed during the UPA regime.

Farmers to continue protest till Modi govt lasts: Tikait

Farmers are ready to stay put on Delhi borders to protest against three agrilaws for the remaining three and half years of the Modi government's second term and the stir cannot be "culled" any which way the Centre tries, legendary farmer leader Mahendra Singh Tikait's son Narendra Tikait says.

Delhi Police strengthens security along Delhi-UP border, no digging of road: Govt

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

The Delhi Police has strengthened security along the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border to prevent any possible repeat of the violence that broke out during the farmers' tractor parade on 26 January, Union minister of state for home G Kishan Reddy said on Wednesday.

A few members spoke on the Amendment Bill. In his reply, Law and Justice Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the Amendments were meant to rectify the flaws in the law passed during the UPA regime.

The minister's written reply in the Rajya Sabha came in response to a question from AAP member Narain Dass Gupta on whether nails were fixed on the road at the farmers' protest site near the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border.

Reddy said the Delhi Police has informed that on 26 January, the Samyukt Kisan Morcha broke the barricades, in

violation of permission granted for taking out Kisan tractor parade on a mutually accepted route and it proceeded towards central Delhi despite being stopped at other barricades inside the city and broke those barricades as well. "In view of this experience, and the manner in which the protesting farmers used tractors as weapons for breaking the barricades and injuring policemen, the barricades at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border were strengthened to prevent any possible repeat of the conduct displayed on January 26," he said.

When the farmers' unions called a tractor parade on January 26, large scale violence was reported in different parts of the national capital.

A group of protesters also went to Red Fort, indulged in vandalism at the monument and hoisted a Sikh religious flag there. Replying to another question, the minister said the Delhi Police has informed that no road has been dug up at Delhi borders in view of the farmers' agitation.

Reddy also said that the Delhi Police has registered 38 cases against people, including foreigners, following the January 26 violence.

The Delhi Police has informed that 38 cases have been registered against the persons, including foreigners, who violated various legal provisions, including cyber crime, recently in Delhi, while protesting in the name of farm laws," he said.

Scrutiny of first phase poll nominations begins

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
GUWAHATI, 10 MARCH

The scrutiny of nomination papers, submitted by over 200 candidates for the first phase of Assam legislative Assembly elections has begun.

The first phase polling will take place on 27 March in 47 (out of 126) Assembly constituencies, where as the second and last phase polling will be held on 1 and 6 April next.

Chief minister Sarbanan-

da Sonowal submitted his nomination paper at Majuli on the last day of filing nominations yesterday. The senior BJP leader is seeking re-election from the Brahmaputra river island constituency.

Union minister Jitendra Singh, State BJP president Ranjeet Kr Dass, BJP's ally Asom Gana Parishad president Atul Bora, minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, BTC chief Rupin Bora, Congress leaders Rabkul Hussain, Bharat Narah, Rupjyoti Kurmi, AGP leader Keshab Mahanta, Asom Jatiya

Parishad chief Lurinjyoti Gogoi, Rajoij Dal leader Akhil Gogoi, etc submitted their nomination papers.

Meanwhile, necessary precautionary measures have been adopted by the state electoral department to ensure free and fair polls. Safety against the pandemic has been prioritized across the poll bound state. Additional polling stations are planned to accommodate maximum 1000 voters in one polling booth.

Range of global issues and challenges to be discussed at first Quad Summit: US

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 10 MARCH

The top leaders of the US, India, Australia and Japan will hold their first summit under the framework of the Quadrilateral coalition on Friday to discuss a range of issues facing the international community, the White House has announced, amidst growing global concerns over China's increasing assertiveness in the strategic Indo-Pacific region.

Announcing the virtual summit to be held on March 12, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said that US President Joe Biden will discuss a variety of global issues ranging from Covid-19 challenges, economic crisis and climate change during the meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

Formed in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami and formalised in 2007, the Quad has met regularly at the working and foreign minister level. Friday's summit will be the first time that the Quad is meeting at the top leadership level, Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference on

Tuesday. "That President Biden has made this one of his earliest multilateral engagements speaks to the importance we place on close cooperation with our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific," she said.

"A range of issues, of course, we expect to be discussed, I should say, facing the global community from the threat of Covid to economic cooperation and, of course, to the climate crisis," she said.

Psaki described India, Australia and Japan as America's key partners.

At a separate news con-

ference, State Department spokesperson Ned Price said that the summit will showcase the Quad's ability to pool capabilities and build habits of cooperation to address some of those urgent challenges they face.

"Now, at the same time, I would just note that the Quad is not about any single challenge. It's not about any single competitor. This is an entity forged and formed because we share common interests... maritime security is, of course, an important one, but our shared interests go well beyond that."

India: Pak yet to ratify SAARC energy cooperation accord

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH

Noting that the SAARC framework agreement on energy cooperation in electricity signed in Kathmandu in 2014 was yet to come into force in the absence of its ratification by Pakistan, India today called for an integrated regional grid for enhanced energy cooperation in the region.

Addressing the South Asia Group on Energy at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries, foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla expressed India's readiness to undertake a project for electrification of one village in each of the SAARC countries using solar energy.

India, he said, was working assiduously to promote the sub-region comprising Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and India as an energy hub. "I should also add Sri Lanka to make it a full regional integration. Be it conventional sources,

hydro-power, solar, wind or even petroleum products, India is taking the lead to promote a regional approach to our energy needs."

Shringla said that being the largest producer and consumer of energy in the region, it was natural for India to be the epicenter for any energy initiative in the region. Energy must be made affordable, accessible and clean.

He said there has been a renewed emphasis on clean energy, both in terms of technological advances and in large-scale adoption and deployment. He also drew attention towards Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on solar energy.

The Indian diplomat said India has done exemplary work in the renewable energy sector and has played an instrumental role in the formation of the International Solar Alliance. Similarly, India's success in the wind energy sector has been noted globally.

Paid holidays declared on Assam poll days

GUWAHATI, 10 MARCH

Assam government declared the poll days for state legislative Assembly elections 2021 as paid holidays to enable the employees to cast their votes.

Accordingly 27 March, 1 and 6 April will be paid holidays in all factories, plantations, shops & commercial establishments, public entertainment or amusements establishment, firms and other workshops, banking institutions etc for respective employees.

Meanwhile, Assam witnessed massive seizures of around rupees 18 crore worth items ahead of state assembly polls. Various poll-monitoring agencies have also arrested at least 110 people in the last two weeks. Soon after the polls were notified on 26 February, all election districts were put under surveillances.

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL



General public is hereby informed that one boy namely **Vishal**, So Lt. **Bijendra**, R/o: H.No. K-317, Sunder Nagri, Delhi, Age: Approx 20 years, Height: 5'8", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Built: Medium, wearing Black & Red colour Jacket, Black Pant and Black Shoes in feet, has been missing from his house since 01.02.2021. In this regard a DD No. 72-A dated 02.02.2021 has been registered at P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the boy but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in

Fax: 011-24368639

Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641

P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi

DP/573/NE/2021

SHO

Ph. No.: 011-22585985, 22583307

By Order of the Tribunal

Assistant Registrar

DRT-III, New Delhi

01.02.2021

In this regard a DD No. 72-A dated 02.02.2021 has been registered at P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the girl, but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in

Fax: 011-23011334

Ph.: 011-23014046

S.H.O.,

P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi

Ph.: 011-22137761, 22135722

DP/605/NE/2021

By Order of the Tribunal

Assistant Registrar

DRT-III, New Delhi

01.02.2021

In this regard a DD No. 01-A dated: 12.02.2021 has been lodged at PS Nand Nagri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the girl, but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in

Fax: 011-23011334

Ph.: 011-23014046

S.H.O.,

P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi

Ph.: 011-22137761, 22135722

DP/605/NE/2021

By Order of the Tribunal

Assistant Registrar

DRT-III, New Delhi

01.02.2021

Whereas the above named applicant (s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 474,17,37,072/- (RUPEES FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY FOUR CRORE SEVENTEEN LAKH THIRTY SEVEN THOUSAND AND SEVENTY TWO ONLY) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 13.04.2021

Gift horse

Neutral commentators are calling it the Quad Effect, the simpatico have termed it a coming to fruition of India's tough stand vis-à-vis its powerful northern neighbour, and the dwindling breed of Left-leaning internationalists are hopeful that Chinese Foreign Minister and State Councillor Wang Yi's accommodative stand and conciliatory comments on relations with India on Sunday would herald a new, fraternal phase for Sino-Indian ties. A few clarifications, therefore, for those justifiably confused by these widely differing perceptions that have made their way into public discourse, are in order. Yes, Mr Wang was speaking just a few days before India's meeting with leaders of the Quad grouping set for 12 March, but that is neither here nor there. For, it was a pre-scheduled annual Press conference on relations with India which Mr Wang addressed. Of course, this doesn't mean the Quad hasn't been quite useful in keeping the pressure on China, but to jump to the conclusion that he was spooked by the impending Quad meet – which is in any case an infantile way of looking at Beijing's nuanced, long-term, strategic policy – is factually incorrect. Secondly, while New Delhi's comparatively robust stand on the border issue which has included imposing economic costs on China for its transgressions is a welcome departure from India's past pusillanimity; the over-enthusiasm of chest-thumping commentators has value only in terms of keeping public morale up and ought not to be mistaken for a serious assessment of Beijing's responses. As for the viscerally anti-American intelligentsia which thinks democratic India and communist China are a viable global pairing going ahead, well, best of luck to them.

So, what explains Mr Wang's outreach? Especially, as he made it a point to underline that the Ladakh boundary dispute is "not the whole story of the China-India relationship" as he urged both countries to stop undercutting each other, shed mutual suspicion, and create enabling conditions by expanding bilateral cooperation to resolve their differences including on the border issue. For starters, there is adherence to form which in the Chinese strategic and cultural scheme of things is quite important. Additionally, China's self-projection as a major world power which is amenable to reason, seeks mutual prosperity with neighbours, and is committed to promoting solidarity among developing countries helps it in its positioning vis-à-vis both the West and the developing world. It also provides Beijing's foreign policy formulation a formal framework; statements such as those made on Sunday are, in that sense, meant for the record. If, in the bargain, a détente with an interlocutor comes about, Beijing won't complain. To read anything more into Mr Wang's utterances, evocative as they were in referencing India and China as "two ancient civilisations... two major emerging economies each with over a billion people... that have similar national realities, broad common interests, and tremendous potential for cooperation", would be unwise. There was no mistaking the hint of steel which shone through in his reply to a question on the Ladakh stand-off: "The right and wrongs of what happened at the border area last year are clear, so are the stakes involved." New Delhi would do well to look this particular gift horse in the mouth.

Passage to Bangladesh

When Bangladesh Prime Minister, Begum Hasina, met India's external affairs minister, Mr S Jaishankar, in Dhaka last Thursday both sought to prepare the ground for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the eastern neighbour on March 25 and 26, indeed the days on which the liberation struggle began in parallel to the atrocities perpetrated by the Pakistan army in 1971. Liberation was formalised on 16 December that year. Aside from the optics of the romantic euphoria ~ Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's centenary and the 50th anniversary of the birth of Bangladesh ~ the bilateral ties are expected to be buttressed later this month with Mr Jaishankar affirming that relations will "transcend even our strategic partnership". If indeed the pledge attains fruition during Mr Modi's second visit as Prime Minister, it will underline the geostrategic position of Bangladesh not merely in South Asia but in the broader Indo-Pacific region. Bangladesh is, therefore, central to India's "neighbourhood policy" which can be contextualised with the Act East policy. Indeed, following a meeting with the Bangladesh foreign minister, AK Abdul Momen, Mr. Jaishankar said: "Our comfort levels are now so high that there is no issue that we cannot discuss and resolve through amicable dialogue." Chief among these ~ of which the likes of Mr. Modi and Mamata Banerjee are acutely aware of ~ are sharing of the Teesta waters, the relentless influx and its attendant irritant of fake currency by militants to destabilise India's economy. Fortunately, though, such thorny issues as the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens are unlikely to figure in the next round of talks between the two Prime Ministers, not the least because of the election season in India. With relations with Nepal on a roller-coaster, Bangladesh and Bhutan are arguably now India's true friends within SAARC. Which explains why ~ as a curtain-raiser ~ India is now engaged in a diplomatic overdrive, indeed to ensure that Mr. Modi's visit turns out to be a "very memorable" one. Indeed, it will be his first trip outside India since the pandemic and his second to Bangladesh as Prime Minister. Among the issues that ought to be given an impetus are cooperation in addressing Covid, connectivity, trade, water, security, the porous border and the line of credit. Cooperation during the peak of the pandemic was underlined by the Bangladesh foreign minister, most importantly in implementing the vaccination programme.

Nutritional insecurity

The link between nutrition and economics has been analyzed by economists since a long time. The notion that poverty causes malnutrition dates back at least to Adam Smith and income is still the main explanatory variable in most contemporary attempts to explain poor nutrition



Malnutrition has an irreversible effect on health and human development. The initial 1,000 days of one's life-span, from the day of conception till he/she turns two years of age, are considered as a critical 'window of opportunity' when poor nutrition can result in stunted growth, diminished immune response, impaired intellectual ability, poor school performance and lower economic productivity.

Globally, WHO's three key anthropometric measures – stunting (a lower-than-expected height-for-age), wasting (lower-than-expected weight-for-height) and underweight (lower-than-expected weight-for-age) – are used to measure child malnutrition. Such measurements are widely accepted for assessing the status of malnutrition. Generally, children who have been severely malnourished in early childhood suffer a later reduction in IQ by as many as 15 points, significantly affecting schooling achievement and increasing the risk of drop-out or repeat grades. Moreover, the impact of malnutrition on future life chances starts before birth. In 1995, the British Medical Journal coined the term 'Barker Hypothesis' to refer to Dr. David Barker's theory that conditions in utero have a long impact on a child's life chances. There is considerable support for the Barker Hypothesis.

Growth stunting is regarded as chronic malnutrition caused by an extremely low energy intake or nutrient losses due to infection. It is also a risk factor for increased mortality, poor cognitive and motor development, and other impairments in function. Moreover, stunting usually persists, leading to smaller size and poorer performance in adulthood. Wasting is characterized by a rapid deterioration in nutritional status over a short period of time in children under five. It is sometime referred to as 'acute malnutrition' because it is believed that episodes of wasting have a short duration. The correlation between Low birth weight (LBW) or early childhood stunting and later cardiovascular disease (CVD) and diabetes may arise from the fact that nutritional deprivation in utero or in early childhood programmes a newborn for a life of scarcity. The problems arise when the child's system is later confronted by a world of plenty. Malnutrition in children has risen across in India in recent years, sharply reversing hard-won gains, according to the latest government data. The first round of the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) was conducted in 22 states and Union Territories (UTs) before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. When com-

pared with the last survey ~ NFHS-4 of 2015-16 ~ more states now fare poorly on several parameters of malnutrition. This means children born between 2014 and 2019 are more malnourished than the previous generation.

Analysis of survey data shows a rise in stunting among children of 13 states. The list includes populous states like Maharashtra, West Bengal, Gujarat and Kerala. Meghalaya (46.6 per cent) had the highest prevalence of stunting followed by Bihar (42.9 per cent). At 22.3 per cent, Sikkim has the lowest prevalence of stunting. Ladakh and Andhra Pradesh have made least progress in addressing the problem. Surprisingly, affluent states like Goa (25.8 per cent) and Kerala (23.4 per cent) have reported a rise in stunting. These two states were in the list of best performing states in NFHS-4.

As many as 13 states/UTs have also reported rising incidence of wasting among children. For most, the increase has been in the range of 0.1 to 8.2 percentage points. The levels remain unchanged in Maharashtra and West Bengal since NFHS-4. Karnataka is the only state that has made progress by reducing the prevalence of wasting by 6.6 percentage points. In case of underweight, a rise is noticed among children under five in 16 states and UTs. States that have managed to tackle the problem show only a marginal decline ~ from the lowest 0.5 percentage by Manipur to the highest 2.9 by Bihar. Apart from the status of malnutrition, the survey report also has data related to neonatal (28 days from birth), infant (up to one year) and child (under-five) mortality. It shows infant and child mortality has declined across most states. Sikkim, J&K, Goa and Assam have witnessed a steep reduction in neonatal mortality rate (NMR) and under-five mortality rate (U5MR). Rural children have been found to be more vulnerable than their urban counterparts in a majority of states. The link between nutrition and economics has been analyzed by economists since a long time. The notion that poverty causes malnutrition dates back at least to Adam Smith and income is still the main explanatory variable in most contemporary attempts to explain poor nutrition. The International Food Policy Research Institute estimates that because of the Covid-19 pandemic an additional 140 million people will be thrown into living in extreme

poverty (income less than US\$1.90 per day) in 2020 globally. According to the World Food Programme, the number of people in Low and Medium income countries (LMCs) facing acute food insecurity will also double to 250 million by the end of 2020.

The disruption of health and social protection services during lockdowns, nutrition interventions, mainly mid-day meal or hot cooked meals at anganwadi centres, other supplementary nutrition programme under ICDS will further compromise maternal and child health and mortality. Taking all these eventualities under consideration together with the status as revealed in the NFHS-4 vis-à-vis NFHS-5 survey, the nutritional insecurity of children in India can be evaluated. The latest National Family Health Survey (NFHS) of 2015-16 reveals that every second child in India

is already malnourished. It means that roughly 77 million children – the combined population of Jharkhand, Telangana and Kerala – are undernourished. Using this data, researchers have ascertained the additional children population that will become malnourished in three distinct weight-loss scenarios:

(1) If children lose as little as 0.5 per cent of their body weight, prevalence of underweight, severe underweight, wasting and severe wasting status will increase by additional 0.4 million, 0.3 million, 0.4 million and 0.2 million children respectively; (2) In case, children lose 2.5 per cent of their body weight, prevalence of underweight, severe underweight, wasting and severe wasting status will increase by additional 2.2 million, 1.4 million, 2.4 million and 0.9 million children respectively; (3) In the scenario of 5 per cent weight loss, India will experience a staggering increase of underweight, severe underweight, wasting and severe wasting status increased by additional 4.4 million, 3.2 million, 5.1 million and 2.1 million children respectively. As many as 15 million additional children would be pushed into malnutrition if children in the poorest fifth of population lose 5 per cent of their body weight. Now, what will be the impact on our future generation (in utero) and born during pandemic period? Before attempting an answer to the query let us look back at fallouts of past pandemics or similar crises. Scientists and researchers have found that children born during the 1918 pandemic (or in utero) grew up less educated and

were poor as well. Similarly, expectant mothers during the 2008 economic recession gave birth to underweight infants, particularly those from poor households. In 1918, El Nino caused devastating floods in Ecuador. Children born during that period were underweight and stunting continued for five to seven years. The impact and estimates stated here are likely to be conservative, as the duration of the pandemic crisis is unknown, and its full impacts on food, health, education and social-protection systems are yet to be realized. The impact of the pandemic on the generation born during this period, including children who are under five years of age, is very important as these children will account for around 46 per cent of India's workforce by 2040.

Preliminary indicators suggest that the pandemic generation of this century would not be any different from those who survived past ones. However, the World Bank has prepared an Index known as Human Capital Index (HCl) which measures how much capital each country loses through lack of education and health. Alternatively, it measures 'the human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by her 18th birthday.' This includes the health and education entitlements of new born now and how it would impact his/her future productivity.

The latest Human Capital Index (HCl) released by the World Bank says that the pandemic generation would be one of the worst victims. The adult generation of 2040 would be a stunted one; they would be left behind in terms of human capital. Moreover, there would be higher child mortality and also stunting among them who manage to survive.

According to HCl estimates, child mortality will increase by 45 per cent in 118 LMICs. Analysis shows that a 10 per cent increase in GDP per capita reduces infant mortality by 4.5 per cent. But most countries are going to experience high GDP loss due to the current pandemic. The new index brings out the fact that even though the pandemic is a temporary shock, it will leave crippling impacts on tomorrow's children. Task before us is to assess the status of nutrition on a war footing and to take all steps to contain malnutrition of the pandemic generation. In the words of Ban Ki-moon, the former secretary-General of the United Nations: "Nutrition is both a maker and a marker of development. Improper nutrition is the platform for progress in health, education, employment, empowerment of women and the reduction of poverty and inequality and can lay the foundation for peaceful, secure and stable societies."

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Blaming Asians for the coronavirus

As the US economy falters and many Americans have lost their jobs due to Covid-19, hostility toward Asians has recently accelerated. According to CNN, there have been approximately 3,000 cases of violence against Asians and Asian Americans in the US in the past year. CBS News reported that, "Nearly 500 Asians in New York were targets of bias incidents or hate crimes in 2020, ranging from verbal to physical assaults, including acid attacks." NBC News said in a report last week that, "A man violently threw a Chinese woman to the ground outside a bakery in New York City." In response, a large protest rally was recently held in NYC, condemning violence against Asians. Some of the demonstrators held a banner that read, "We're American, too." An Asian girl at the rally held a picket saying, "I am not a virus."

CNN's reports were especially disheartening and appalling: "An 84-year-old man from Thailand died in late January after being attacked on his morning walk in San Francisco. Days later, a 91-year-old Asian man was violently shoved to the ground in Oakland's Chinatown. Last week, a 64-year-old woman was robbed outside a Vietnamese market in San Jose, California. And a 61-year-old Filipino man was slashed in the face last week on the New York City subway." Reading this news, one might wonder, "Why were the victims of racial crimes mostly elderly Asians?" Were the assailants afraid that young Asians might be well versed in kung-fu, karate, or taekwondo? If so, it would be consistent with their cowardice. No surprise, then, that they would attack women, too, for it is an unspoken rule among cowards that they must prey on the most vulnerable. Surely, such a thing is un-American. One might also wonder,

H The Korea Herald
why do they attack all Asians indiscriminately? It is already absurd for any Asian person to be held responsible for Covid-19, let alone for all Asians to face verbal or physical assaults because of a global pandemic. Still, however, a crowd recently jeered at Jeremy Lin, a Taiwanese American NBA player, by calling him "Coronavirus." Although it is not clear if the coronavirus is what directly triggered all of these assaults against Asians, violence against Asians and Asian Americans has exponentially increased since Covid-19. News of these racial crimes is especially devastating for Asian Americans who were born on US soil. They are Americans, and yet they are facing harassment and assault as if they were foreigners, simply because they look different. Many Asian Americans are concerned about their children. Kids can be cruel and thus may pick on Asian American students at school, following their social milieu. The problem is that racial harassment and assault will leave an indelible scar in the mind of children of Asian origin in America. CNN pointed out that Donald Trump was largely responsible for the racial violence because he instigated racism by repeatedly calling Covid-19 "the Wuhan Virus." Terrible as that stigma is for those of Chinese descent, it certainly has not led to restraint against blaming all Asians for the spread of the disease. Some Americans do not seem to realize that Asia, just like Europe, is a vast continent where many different countries exist. Indeed, how would Canadians or Europeans feel, if the people in an anti-American country in Asia harassed or violently assaulted all Caucasians simply because they looked alike? You cannot judge a person's nationality simply by his or her physical appearances.

According to HCl estimates, child mortality will increase by 45 per cent in 118 LMICs. Analysis shows that a 10 per cent increase in GDP per capita reduces infant mortality by 4.5 per cent. But most countries are going to experience high GDP loss due to the current pandemic. The new index brings out the fact that even though the pandemic is a temporary shock, it will leave crippling impacts on tomorrow's children. Task before us is to assess the status of nutrition on a war footing and to take all steps to contain malnutrition of the pandemic generation. In the words of Ban Ki-moon, the former secretary-General of the United Nations: "Nutrition is both a maker and a marker of development. Improper nutrition is the platform for progress in health, education, employment, empowerment of women and the reduction of poverty and inequality and can lay the foundation for peaceful, secure and stable societies."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Poll propaganda amidst virus

SIR, Can I ask the Prime Minister of India and the Chief Minister of West Bengal, legislators, political party chiefs, leaders and the students whether during an epidemic, the a political-propaganda for the impending elections is at all possible without a procession and a huge mass assemblage?

The report, "India records biggest jump in daily new Covid cases in 30 days" (1 March) is indicative for all concerned to be extremely alert while the report "Rally paints city of joy red" points to a scene that is detrimental to precaution.

Today's front page report, "6 states show Covid surge; India's total cases touch 1.11 crore", is a cruel reminder to us to be suitably conscious. It is impossible to

maintain a strict covid-protocol in a large public gathering or procession (which is one of the probable sources of the spread of coronavirus.) All this is known to the rulers at the Centre and the states and the leaders of other political parties. Unfortunately, instead

of saving people they do not hesitate to pushing the risk of danger towards the people. This is a blatant exposure of the attraction of 'retention of power' on the pretext of people's democracy.

The attitude of the supposedly responsible minis-

ters and legislators is that to win a seat in the elections is more important to them than to reflect on the increasing trend/surge of the deadly virus.

It is a strange contrast that, between the same group of politicians at the government, measures such as lockdown, curfew, clampdown, quarantine and other restrictions are in parallel to

competitive public meetings. Are the legislators true people's representatives? The election-wave has shattered the reasonable attitude of responsible politicians.

In a desperate run for winning a 'seat' they seem to overlook the pathetic scenes. People of India are almost ruined physically, financially and above all mentally.

CONQUERING ONE'S BEREAVEMENT

SIR, I thoroughly enjoyed reading Abhik Roy's article, 'Tagore and Death' (March 2). Rabindranath was a man of higher intellect and attained a philosophical level to conquer the fear and grief of death. Otherwise, it would have been next to impossible for him to bear the loss of near and dear ones throughout his life.

Tagore believed in rebirth and endorsed the Hindu philosophy which says that the soul is transcendental and indestructible.

This was the realisation which helped him immensely to minimise his sorrow. The writer has rightly referred to Tagore's thought about death in *Sadhana*, that it is the "extinction of the lamp in the morning light, not the abolition of the sun".

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, March 3.



With a shadow for company

ATANU BISWAS

For far too many people, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life," Theresa May, the then UK prime minister had said while announcing the new position of a Minister of Loneliness, the first of its kind in the world, at the beginning of 2018. Famous CBS talk show host Stephen Colbert, on his TV show, suggested: "This is so British. They've defined the most ineffable human problem and come up with the most cold, bureaucratic solution."

Well, a minister for loneliness? A somewhat similar idea, though not British at all, may be traced in the pursuit of happiness. Ministry of Supreme Social Happiness was created in Venezuela in 2013, and the UAE created the post of Minister of State for Happiness in 2016. To what extent these ministries succeeded in inducing happiness in their countries is, however, a different issue to introspect.

Back to the issue of loneliness. Three years have passed since the UK announced the headline-making position. In between, the deadliest pandemic for a century resulting in prolonged lockdown, severe economic distress and millions of job losses, and increasing dependence – often enforced – on internet, certainly wasn't very helpful to combat loneliness. Interestingly, Japan now has embraced the idea and appointed its first Minister for Loneliness after the country's suicide rate increased for the first time in 11 years during the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, a total of 20,919 people committed suicide in 2020 – an increase of 3.7 per cent. This is in contrast to 3,459 Covid-19-related deaths in this period. And, when announcing the new Ministry, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga commented on the gender paradox in suicides and expressed concern over "increasing women's suicide rate under the pandemic".

Often loneliness is not about a poetic journey, for sure. It may not always be inspired by a host of golden daffodils and cannot always be characterized by floating of a cloud on high over vales and hills. In fact, loneliness is a real and diagnosable scourge. Loneliness is typically defined as the feeling of lacking or losing companionship, and a public health concern. It's a growing health epidemic. A Har-

vard Business Review article cited a study that said social isolation is associated with a reduction in lifespan similar to that caused by smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

Back to Britain. Jo Cox, a Member of Parliament from the Labour Party for Batley and Spen, was the leading force to combat loneliness in Britain through a commission. Cox was murdered in 2016 by a white supremacist, and subsequently two other members of parliament continued the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness. More than 9 million people in Britain – around 14 per cent of the population – often or always feel lonely, costing UK employers up to \$3.5 billion annually. The report of the Jo Cox Commission recommended serious action including the nomination of a lead minister. "I am pleased that government can build on her [Cox's] legacy with a ministerial lead for loneliness who will work with the commission, businesses and charities to shine a light on the issue and pull together all strands of government to create the first-ever strategy," responded Theresa May.

What was the British approach to combat loneliness? In October 2018, the UK government launched its inaugural loneliness strategy. Nationwide adoption of a way to measure loneliness from Britain's Office for National Statistics began with a single, direct question: "How often do you feel lonely?" paired with the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) three-item loneliness scale. The government announced a £7.5m fund to countering loneliness during winter, and support sectors well known for bringing people and communities together, such as the arts, libraries, charities and radio. A volunteer phone call service for older and vulnerable social housing residents and a homemade Christmas food delivery service featured among the notable initiatives.

In Japan's case, however, a 22-year-old student of Keio University named Koki Ozora started a non-profit volunteer organization called Anata no Ibasho (A Place for You) in March 2020, which offered a 24-hour text-messaging service for those seeking a sympathetic listener. Anata no Ibasho promised to answer every request, as soon as possible and sometimes within seconds, and received more than 300,000 inquiries from about 26,000 people by the end of November. Ozora



along with lawmaker Takako Suzuki proposed a nationwide survey on the issue of loneliness to draw up a basic policy on countermeasures and appoint a minister. The government led by Liberal Democratic Party agreed and also linked the rise in suicides with the loneliness among people. Tetsushi Sakamoto, Japan's first Minister for Loneliness, wants to carry out activities with a view to preventing social loneliness and isolation, and protecting ties between people.

What about other countries? A 2018 survey on 20,000 US adults conducted by Cigna Corporation, a global health service company, in partnership with market research firm, Ipsos, found that nearly half of people suffers from feelings of loneliness. The evaluation of loneliness was measured by an often-used score of 43 or higher on the UCLA 'Loneliness Scale', a 20-item questionnaire developed to measure feelings of loneliness and social

isolation, which is a frequently referenced and acknowledged academic measure used to gauge loneliness.

The questionnaire ranges from "I feel in tune with the people around me" to "There are people I can turn to". Each question carries 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely), 3 (Sometimes) or 4 (Often) marks, and hence the minimum and maximum possible marks are 20 and 80, respectively. In case of American adults, it was found that average loneliness score was 43.5, compared to an average score of 46.4 for those who live alone. Single parents/guardians are more likely to be lonely, even though they live with children; they have an average loneliness score of 48.2. Around half of Americans (53 per cent) had meaningful in-person social interactions, such as having an extended conversation with a friend or spending quality time with family, on a daily basis. Interestingly, generation Z (adults ages 18-22) is the loneliest gen-

eration, and, contrary to the general perception, social media use alone was not a predictor of loneliness; very heavy users of social media had an average loneliness score of 43.5, which was not markedly different from the average score of 41.7 of those who never used social media.

Loneliness may be the perceived sense of isolation, and an epidemic as well. However, is loneliness associated with physical isolation only? Can loneliness also affect those surrounded by a lot of people? In a world where so many people are visibly lonely, and many of the remaining, if not all, feel lonely, loneliness is not an alien concept at all. Can a cold, bureaucratic solution be really helpful, even to some extent? A ministry of loneliness might sound a very British or maybe a very Japanese idea though, for the time being.

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

100 YEARS AGO OCCASIONAL NOTE

The latest of the Memoirs of the Department of Agriculture, just issued, is a substantial volume containing a monograph, or rather a series of monographs, by Mr. Bainbridge Fletcher, the Imperial Entomologist, dealing with the life histories of the small moths which come under the scientific term "mcirolepidoptera." It is only within the last fifteen years, says Mr. Fletcher, that any serious attempt has been made to acquire a knowledge of these insects in India. In 1889, when Cotes and Swinhoe's "Catalogue of the Moths of India" was published, only 225 species were enumerated. At the present time 242 species, contained in about 458 genera, have been recorded, and, in Mr. Fletcher's words, "we are still only beginning to learn what forms actually exist within the Indian Empire." This statement may give some idea of the almost illimitable field of study presented by this one kind of insect alone knowledge of the early stages of these little moths, according to Mr. Bainbridge Fletcher, is very incomplete, although, as he says, numerous species are of considerable importance as pests of crops or of household or stored products. It is emphasised, moreover, that they deal only with life histories of a certain number of the moths, and not with control measures for pests, or with classification - both of which aspects of the subject remain for future treatment.

NEWS ITEMS THE LYONS RANGE DACOITY

Mr. Bird, Deputy Commissioner, Calcutta C.I.D., assisted by Inspectors Hartley, A. Robertson and Pulin Chatterjee, made a successful raid yesterday in the house of a Peshawari taxi-cab owner living in the Taltolla jurisdictions, in connection with the recent taxi-cab dacoity in Lyons Range, in which a sum of Rs 95,000 belonging to the Chartered Bank was stolen, and recovered Rs 34,000 in G.C. notes. These include Rs 100 notes to the value of Rs 10,000, the number of which tally with those stolen. So far the police have made about a dozen arrests and have taken charge of a taxi and a private motor car. The armed sepoys who accompanied the coolie with the money, and who disappeared after the robbery, has not yet been traced. The recovered notes were found in three tins buried in the ground.

MAHSUD RAIDS ON FRONTIER

Delhi, Mar 10
The Mahsuds have continued their guerilla warfare tactics with unabated energy during the past week. A party of road protection troops from Khirgi was ambushed in the Hinnis Tangi, about two miles south-east of Jandola on March 4. One Indian officer and three Indian other ranks were killed and two Indian other ranks wounded, while the Mahsuds had four casualties. On March 5 ten camels were stolen from a contractor of the 27th Pack Battery, another ten camels from a contractor of the 27th Pack Battery, and another ten camels from a Powindah convoy between the Hinnis Tangi and Jandola. A few days ago about 30 raiders, probably Wazirs, collided with a party of cavalry near Mirzai post. Mirzai is about ten miles west of Bannu.

ACCUSED IN FARROW'S BANK CASE

The Farrow's Bank case was resumed today, when all three defendants were committed for trial. They pleaded "Not guilty" and reserved their defence. Darr and Crotch were allowed the same bail as previously, but the sureties asked in the case of Farrow were split up into smaller amounts, with the result that he is free pending the trial. Farrow's counsel declared that he was the victim of circumstances, and foreshadowed surprising evidence which would arouse the sympathy of the whole public. Sir Charles Wakefield, the Magistrate, expressed the opinion that it was desirable that there should be some kind of control by the community over the activities of bankers, perhaps in the form of an annual licence to trade as bankers.

TORNADO IN MIDNAPORE DISTRICT

A tornado originating near Doobapool village passed through a station on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway in the district of Midnapore today at 4 PM., doing serious damage. Machines in the signal box, telegraph posts and the station platform were damaged. Nearly 30 houses were blown away while many big trees were uprooted. A large number of villagers have been rendered homeless. A column resembling smoke was first noticed after a severe hailstorm by the villagers, who became panic stricken and began to run away, leaving their houses and other belongings. The loss of a number of cattle is reported, but so far there is no report of loss of human life.

When you are crippled inside



MAHIR ALI

I recall staying up late more than a quarter-century ago to watch Diana's BBC interview with Martin Bashir. I couldn't be bothered to repeat the experience with her son Harry and his wife Meghan Markle's tell-all' chat with Oprah Winfrey.

Bashir has been accused of deception in obtaining the interview. It was nonetheless fascinating, as the first instance of a senior member of Britain's most elite institution laying bare the royal family's dysfunction. "There were three of us in this marriage," Diana complained about her

husband's relentless infatuation with the woman his family didn't allow him to marry.

At least not until the princess of Wales succumbed to her injuries in a car crash two years later. Diana's status as an 'outsider' has been compared with that of Meghan. The parallels are limited. The ill-fated Diana-Charles match was in effect an arranged marriage between a nubile teenager and a considerably older heir apparent, a decorative decision rather than the culmination of a fairy-tale romance.

Diana may not have been blue-blooded, but she was the daughter of a trusted viscount and former royal

equerry. Meghan is a biracial actress from the other side of the Atlantic with a divorce behind her. Both of them, one might say, left one dysfunctional family to enter another, but beyond that, the commonalities mostly reside in media hype.

Hundreds of millions of women, young or otherwise, experience trials and tribulations with their in-laws. The unfortunate experiences of Diana and Meghan don't even come close to the frequently fatal ordeals of targeted brides in the subcontinent. And there's no good reason why any one family's experience or ordeal should be elevated above others.

On the other hand, not every family doubles as a political institution. The Windsors are by no means globally unique in this respect, except insofar as at least the senior-most members of the family interfere in political affairs. Just last month, a series of investigative reports in The Guardian pointed to a history of royal involvement in framing legislation, which shows the Windsors to be particularly wary of revealing the extent of their wealth.

The British royal family is symbolic of the feudalism that persists in a nation that purports to be a model democracy, boasting "the mother of parliaments". In several other countries there are debates about how the upper house of parliament is elected, and whether the process is democratic. In Britain the upper house is selected.

The proportion of hereditary peers has diminished in recent decades, but even life peers are appointed by the monarch, albeit usually on the advice of the government of the day. Mind you, the chamber – the only upper house in any bicameral parliament in the world to be larger than the lower house – includes the bishops and archbishops of the Church of England. As for the separation of church and state, suffice it to say that the head of state – the monarch – is also the supreme governor of the Church of England. That's hardly a barrier, though, to un-Christian ideas and practices among the royal family.

Perhaps the most publicised 'takeaway' from Meghan and Harry's conversation with Oprah relates to racism. There was hostile speculation

among one or more members of the royal family, apparently, about the skin colour of the couple's offspring. The duke and duchess (as they still are) refused to reveal the identity of the culprit/s, but made clear that it was neither the queen nor her husband – whose racist observations over the decades are infamous.

It may also be worth recalling that the present monarch is only a generation removed from an uncle who taught her to flash the Nazi salute. But neither the ideological inclinations nor the racial preferences of the royal family are the biggest issue. It's the feudal institution itself that's an absurd anomaly in the 21st century, as its subjects – not just in Britain, but in Canada, Australia and New Zealand – will sooner or later realise, collectively or one by one.

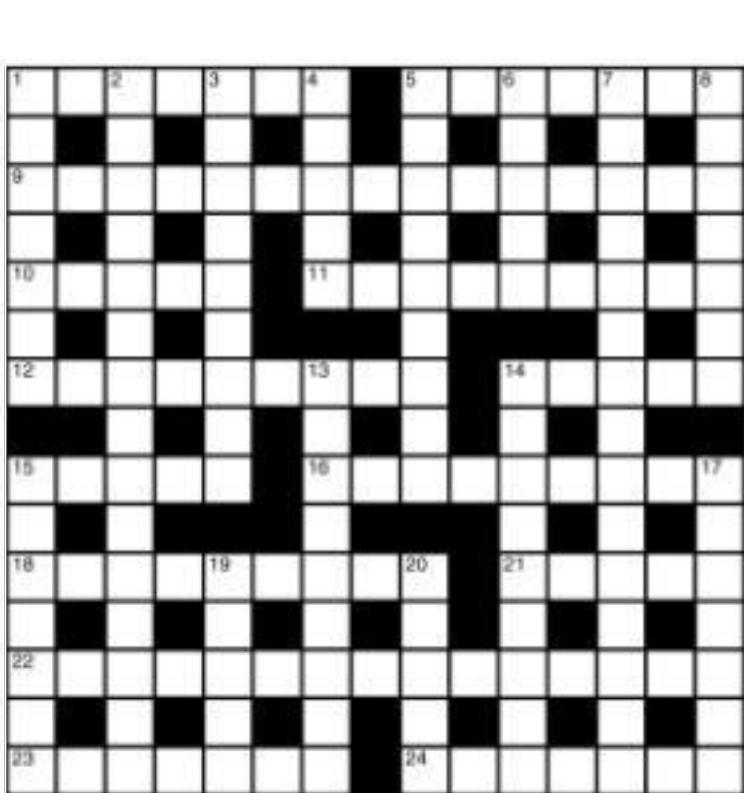
To some people, this was clear centuries ago. Percy Bysshe Shelley was bold but hardly innovative in penning the sonnet England in 1819, in which he decried princes as "the dregs of their dull race, who flow/ Through public scorn – mud from a muddy spring".

Perhaps the most apposite precursor to the Harry-Meghan saga is that of another celebrity couple hounded out of Britain by racists 50 years ago. The same year one of them put on record a bunch of timeless thoughts, including the verses: "You can go to church and sing a hymn/ You can judge me by the colour of my skin/ You can live a lie until you die/ One thing you can't hide/ Is when you're crippled inside."

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28850

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1 Dressing down? Theatregoers are beneath it (7)
- 5 Less well-bred horse picked up (7)
- 9 Frightening hanger from wood classed 'poor' (5,2,8)
- 10 Notes new centre for fashion (5)
- 11 Hard drink after work? It's child's play (9)
- 12 Tough guy dined out with grand trousers (9)
- 14 Youthful setter perhaps squeezing trendy model (3-2)
- 15 Swimmer or runner outside shop undressed (5)
- 16 Put in a slim site, he got out (9)
- 18 Drink brand keeping variety quiet

(4,5)

- 21 Sheepish bishop's abandoned bull, say (5)
- 22 Getting stuck into pub food's a help for negotiator (10,5)
- 23 Bald guy's welcomed in French by daughter (7)
- 24 Press continuously on face of smooth operator (7)

DOWN

- 1 Think about wine bottles getting picked up (7)
- 2 Issue being an issue? (7,8)
- 3 Soldiers execute steps to defend home rule (9)
- 4 Dominant wolf, if threatening packs (5)

5

- He gets gold and silver frame of necklace – it's sparkling stuff (9)
- 6 Lifelless spies touring Australia to the north (5)
- 7 Leave countless cakes I see to bravely diet, say (5,10)
- 8 Stirred hot ingredient of some teas (7)
- 13 As dirt may be stripped off, a Beath showered (9)
- 14 Lightly knock then violently corral vehicle with force (6,3)
- 15 Basic item for retirement affected teacher (4,3)
- 17 Writer who could make me snore (7)
- 19 Paradoxically, what one may do to gain a seat? (5)
- 20 Came to go topless in Clare's town (5)

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



*Thank you Meghan for your courage and leadership.
We are all strengthened and inspired by you*

SINGER BEYONCE

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR MEGHAN MARKLE

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	29	26 R
HONG KONG	33	29 H
TOKYO	31	24 R
LONDON	08	04 H
DUBAI	42	30 S
SAN FRANCISCO	19	14 H
NEW YORK	11	07 S
MOSCOW	-13	-08 S

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

THUMBNAILS



A statue stands surrounded by weeds at a park in the exclusion zone in Fukushima prefecture, Japan on Wednesday. AP

LGBT 'freedom zone': The European Parliament is scheduled to debate a resolution on Wednesday that would declare the entire 27-member European Union to be a freedom zone for LGBT people. The resolution comes largely in reaction to developments over the past two years in Poland. AP

Blinken to visit Japan: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Japan and South Korea next week to reaffirm America's commitment to strengthening its alliances and to highlight cooperation that promotes peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region, the State Department said. AP

Roger Mudd, longtime network TV newsman dies

WASHINGTON, 10 MARCH

Roger Mudd, the longtime political correspondent and anchor for NBC and CBS who once stumped Sen. Edward Kennedy by simply asking why he wanted to be president, has died. He was 93.

CBS News says, Mudd died Tuesday of complications of kidney failure at his home in McLean, Virginia.

During more than 30 years on network television, starting with CBS in 1961, Mudd covered Congress, elections and political conventions and was a frequent anchor and contributor to various specials. His career coincided with the flowering of television news, the pre-cable, pre-Internet days when the big three networks and their powerhouse ranks of reporters were the main source of news for millions of Americans.

Besides work at CBS and NBC, he did stints on PBS's "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour" and the History Channel.

When he joined Robert MacNeil and Jim Lehrer's show in 1987, Mudd told The Associated Press: "I think they regard news and information with a reverence and respect that really is admirable."

He wrote a memoir, "The Place To Be," which came out in early 2008, and described the challenges and clashing egos he encountered working in Washington, where among other things he covered Congress for CBS for 15 years.

In an April 2008 interview on the "NewsHour," he said he "absolutely loved" keeping tabs on the nation's 100 senators and 435 representatives, "all of them wanting to talk, great access, politics morning, noon and night, as opposed to the White House, where everything is zipped up and tightly held." Mudd received a George Foster Peabody Award for his November 1979 special "CBS Reports: Teddy," which aired just days before Kennedy officially announced his attempt to challenge then-President Carter for the 1980 Democratic presidential nomination.

AP

House set to vote on virus relief Bill

It's a remarkable, historic, transformative piece of legislation which goes a very long way to crushing the virus: Pelosi

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 10 MARCH

Congress is poised to approve a landmark \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill, placing President Joe Biden on the cusp of an early triumph that advances Democratic priorities and showcases the unity his party will need to forge future victories.

The House was expected to give final congressional approval Wednesday to the package, which aims to fulfill Democrats' campaign promises to beat the coronavirus pandemic and revive the enfeebled economy. House and Senate Republicans have unanimously opposed the package as bloated, crammed with liberal policies and heedless of signs the dual crises are easing.

"It's a remarkable, historic, transformative piece of legislation which goes a very long way to crushing the virus and solving our economic crisis," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said Tuesday.

For Biden and Democrats, the bill is essentially a canvas on which they've painted their

core beliefs—that government programs can be a benefit, not a bane, to millions of people and that spending huge sums on such efforts can be a cure, not a curse. The measure so closely tracks Democrats' priorities that several rank it with the top achievements of their careers, and despite their slender congressional majorities there was never real suspense over its fate.

They were also empowered by three dynamics: their unfettered control of the White House and Congress, polls showing robust support for Biden's approach and a moment when most voters care little that the national debt is soaring toward a stratospheric \$22 trillion. Neither party seems much troubled by surging red ink, either, except when the other is using it to finance its priorities, be they Democratic spending or GOP tax cuts.

A dominant feature of the bill is initiatives making it one of the biggest federal thrusts in years to assist lower- and middle-income families. Included are expanded tax credits over the next year for children, child care and fam-



Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., flanked by Majority Whip James Clyburn, D-S.C., left, and Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal, D-Mass., at a news conference ahead of the vote on the Democrat's \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill, at the Capitol in Washington. AP

ily leave plus spending for renters, feeding programs and people's utility bills.

The measure provides up to \$1,400 direct payments to most Americans, extended emergency unemployment benefits and hundreds of billions for vaccines and treatments, schools, state and local governments and ailing industries from airlines to concert halls. There is aid for farmers of color and pension systems, and subsidies for consumers buying health insurance and

states expanding Medicaid coverage for lower earners. Its very expansiveness is a chief GOP talking point.

"It's not focused on Covid relief. It's focused on pushing more of the far-left agenda," said No. 2 House GOP leader Steve Scalise of Louisiana.

The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll found last week that 70 per cent of Americans back Biden's response to the virus, including a hefty 44 per cent of Republicans. Yet the bill's

pathway has underscored Democrats' challenges as they seek to build a legislative record to persuade voters to keep them running Congress in next year's elections.

Democrats control the Senate, split 50-50, only because Vice President Kamala Harris gives them the winning vote in tied roll calls. They have just a 10-vote advantage in the House.

That's almost no wiggle room for a party that ranges from West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin on the conservative side to progressives like Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Progressives had to swallow big concessions in the bill to solidify moderate support. The most painful was dropping the House-approved federal minimum wage increase to \$15 hourly by 2025.

Moderates forced tightened eligibility for the \$1,400 stimulus checks, now phased out completely for individuals earning \$80,000 and couples making \$160,000. The House's initial extension of

the soon-to-end \$400 weekly emergency jobless payments, paid on top of state benefits, was trimmed by the Senate to \$300 and will now halt in early September.

Manchin was a leading holdout and in the middle of talks that resulted in curbing all of those initiatives. The Senate approved the bill on a party-line 50-49 vote on Saturday.

Dropping the minimum-wage boost was "inflating," said Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., chair of the roughly 100-member Congressional Progressive Caucus. But she called the overall bill "incredibly bold," adding, "It hits all of our progressive priorities—putting money in people's pockets, shots in arms, unemployment insurance, child care, schools."

The independent Tax Policy Center said that the Senate-passed bill would give almost 70 per cent of this year's tax breaks to households earning \$91,000 or less. In contrast, the Trump-era GOP tax bill gave nearly half its 2018 reductions to the top 5 per cent of households earning around \$308,000, said the research center.

EU-UK relations take a new dip over 'vaccine ban' comments

BRUSSELS, 10 MARCH

Relations between the European Union and recently departed Britain took another diplomatic dip on Wednesday when the EU envoy in London was summoned to explain comments that Britain had issued a vaccine export ban.

The United Kingdom was so irate about Tuesday's comments from EU Council President Charles Michel that Britain had imposed an outright ban on the export of vaccines, "that it called in the ambassador for a morning meeting.

A British government statement said that it has not blocked the export of a single Covid vaccine. Any references to a UK export ban or any restrictions on vaccines are completely false.

The spat comes against a background that the COVID-19 vaccination drive in Britain is seen as a huge success while that in the 27-nation bloc has been a major failure. The United Kingdom has given about 35 per cent of its adults a vaccine shot while the EU is further back with 9.5 per cent.

EU gets more vaccines to target hard-hit borders: The European Commission says it has secured an agreement with Pfizer-BioNTech for an extra four million doses of vaccines for its 27 nations to tackle the surge of cases in several coronavirus clusters.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said this will help member states in their efforts to keep the spread of new variants under control. Through their targeted use where they are most needed, in particular in border regions, these doses will also help ensure or restore the free movement of goods and people.

The EU mentioned Tyrol in Austria, Nice and Moselle in France, Bolzano in Italy and some parts of Bavaria and Saxony in Germany where Covid hospitalisations have been on the rise. The Commission said the new doses will be made available to all member states on a pro-rata basis this month. AP

Russia moves to slow Twitter's speed after protest row

AGENCIES
MOSCOW, 10 MARCH



Russia said on Wednesday it was slowing down the speed of Twitter in retaliation for its alleged failure to remove banned content, and threatened a total block if the U.S. platform did not comply with its deletion demands.

The move, which escalates a growing stand-off between Moscow and U.S. social media firms, comes weeks after Russian authorities accused Twitter and others of failing to delete posts it said illegally urged children to take part in anti-Kremlin protests. Twitter did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Russia has traditionally taken a more hands-off role in policing the internet than neighbouring China. But as domestic political tensions have risen this year over the arrest and jailing of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny—which triggered nationwide protests—it has signalled a tougher line.

Twitter was already under pressure in Russia after it was named as one of five social media platforms being sued for allegedly failing to delete posts urging children to take part in illegal protests, the Interfax news agency cited a Moscow court as saying on Tuesday.

The regulator did not mention content related to opposition protests in Wednesday's statement, but referred to what it said was illegal content on Twitter containing child pornography, information about drug abuse and calls for minors to com-

Lawmakers seek to grill Merkel over Wirecard scam

BERLIN, 10 MARCH

German lawmakers say they plan to question Chancellor Angela Merkel and her deputy, Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, about their involvement with the collapsed payment systems provider Wirecard next month. Members of the parliamentary committee set up to investigate the Wirecard scandal said Wednesday that the long-time chancellor will be summoned to testify on April 23, a day after Scholz, the center-left Social Democrats' candidate to succeed Merkel in this fall's national election.

Wirecard filed for protection from creditors through insolvency proceedings in June after admitting that \$2.3 billion supposedly held in trust accounts in the Philippines probably didn't exist.

Opposition lawmaker accused authorities from financial supervisors to prosecutors and auditors of looking the other way despite reports of irregularities at Wirecard dating back at least five years. We in Germany have a culture of non-responsibility, of looking mainly at who has jurisdiction and who doesn't have jurisdiction, and not thinking enough about the bigger picture, said Florian Toncar, a lawmaker for the pro-business Free Democratic Party.

Merkel will face questions about her lobbying for Wirecard's entry into the Chinese market during a 2019 trip to China.

Toncar said Scholz, who has pledged to reform Germany's financial supervisory agency, BaFin, should publicly apologise to Financial Times journalist Dan McCrum, who played a key role in exposing the company's questionable accounting but himself was investigated on suspicion of violating securities laws until prosecutors dropped the probe. AP

US narrows in on organized extremists in siege probe

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 10 MARCH

As members of the Oath Keepers paramilitary group shouldered their way through the mob and up the steps to the U.S. Capitol, their plans for 6 January were clear, authorities say. Arrest this assembly, we have probable cause for acts of treason, election fraud, someone commanded over an encrypted messaging app some extremists used to communicate during the siege.

Little while earlier, Proud Boys carrying two-way radios and wearing earpieces spread out and tried to blend in with the crowd as they invaded the Capitol led by a man assigned "war powers" to oversee the group's attack, prosecutors say.

These two extremist groups that traveled to Washington along with thousands of other Trump supporters weren't whipped into an impulsive

frenzy by President Donald Trump that day, officials say. They'd been laying attack plans. And their internal communications and other evidence emerging in court papers and in hearings show how authorities are trying to build a case that small cells hidden within the masses mounted an organized, military-style assault on the heart of American democracy.

This was not simply a

march. This was an incredible attack on our institutions of government," Assistant U.S. Attorney Jason McCullough said during a recent hearing. The Proud Boys and the Oath Keepers make up a fraction of the more than 300 supporters charged so far. But several of their leaders, members and associates have become the central targets of the Justice Department's sprawling investigation.

ANNUAL RITUAL



Shiite worshippers carry a symbolic coffin at the golden-domed shrine of Imam Moussa al-Kadhim, who died at the end of the 8th century, during the annual commemoration of his death, in Baghdad, on Wednesday. AP

Buckingham Palace tries to keep Harry, Meghan interview fallout private

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 10 MARCH

Buckingham Palace is trying to keep things private as the fallout of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's explosive interview with Oprah Winfrey continues to dominate headlines in the UK on Wednesday, including some female parliamentarians considering a debate in the House of Commons.

In a brief statement released in the wake of shocking revelations by the Duke and Duchess of Sussex around racist undertones within the royal ranks related to their son Archie's mixed-race heritage and lack of mental health support for a struggling new bride Meghan, the palace tried to draw a line under the matter by indicating that Queen Elizabeth II was sad-

dened to learn the full extent of how challenging the last few years had been for her grandson Harry and his wife.

While acknowledging the seriousness of the claims, there was a clear palace stand that the couple's revelations are only a version of the events.

"The issues raised, particularly that of race, are concerning. Whilst some recollections may vary, they are taken very seriously and will be addressed by the family privately. Harry, Meghan and Archie will always be much loved family members," read the palace statement on Tuesday.

Opposition Labour Party MP Holly Lynch, who had coordinated a cross-party letter from 72 female members of Parliament in support of the 39-year-old former actress and against the colonial under-

Royals' comments raise race issue in Commonwealth nations

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CAPE TOWN, 10 MARCH

In countries with historic ties to Britain, allegations by Prince Harry and Meghan that an unnamed member of the royal family had "concerns" over how dark their unborn baby's skin might be have raised a thorny question: Do those nations really want to be so closely connected to Britain and its royal family anymore?

It was expected the interview would expose more rifts in the royal family. Now it seems to be risking divisions within the "family" of the Commonwealth—an association of 54 countries, most of them former British colonies, held together by historic ties. For decades, Queen Elizabeth II has been the driving force behind the Commonwealth.

The value of the Commonwealth has been debated before, with critics questioning if countries and people once colonized—and even oppressed—should remain in such an association with a former colonizer.

Its stated aim is to improve international relations, but Britain's relationship with the members has been clouded by diplomatic missteps and the legacy of Empire. In a speech to mark Commonwealth Day on Monday, the queen spoke of "the spirit of unity."

But their interview this week "opens our eyes further" on the merits of the Commonwealth, wrote Nicholas Sengoba, a newspaper columnist in the former colony of Uganda. Reaction to the interview was especially fierce in Africa. It was encapsulated by one Twitter user in South Africa who wrote: "It's Britain and the royal family. What did you expect? They oppressed us for years." Mohammed Groenewald, who showed them around at a mosque in Cape Town, was still digesting the interview, which was only shown in South Africa on Monday. But he said that, more than anything, it sparked memories of "British colonial racism." "It comes out very clearly," he said.

and mental health strains raised in the couple's interview with the American chat show host in California.

A lot of media outlets have not heeded those calls for a change, which is why we might start needing to think about how we stop hounding women in

Perfect blend of fact with fiction

The Last Queen is a cautionary tale about loyalty and betrayal, and a powerful parable about the indestructible bond between mother and child... A review

SUMDATTI MANDAL

The *Last Queen* tells the story of Jindan Kaur, daughter of the royal kennel keeper in Lahore, who went on to become Maharaja Ranjit Singh's youngest and last queen; his favourite. She became regent when her son, Dalip, barely six years old, unexpectedly inherited the throne.

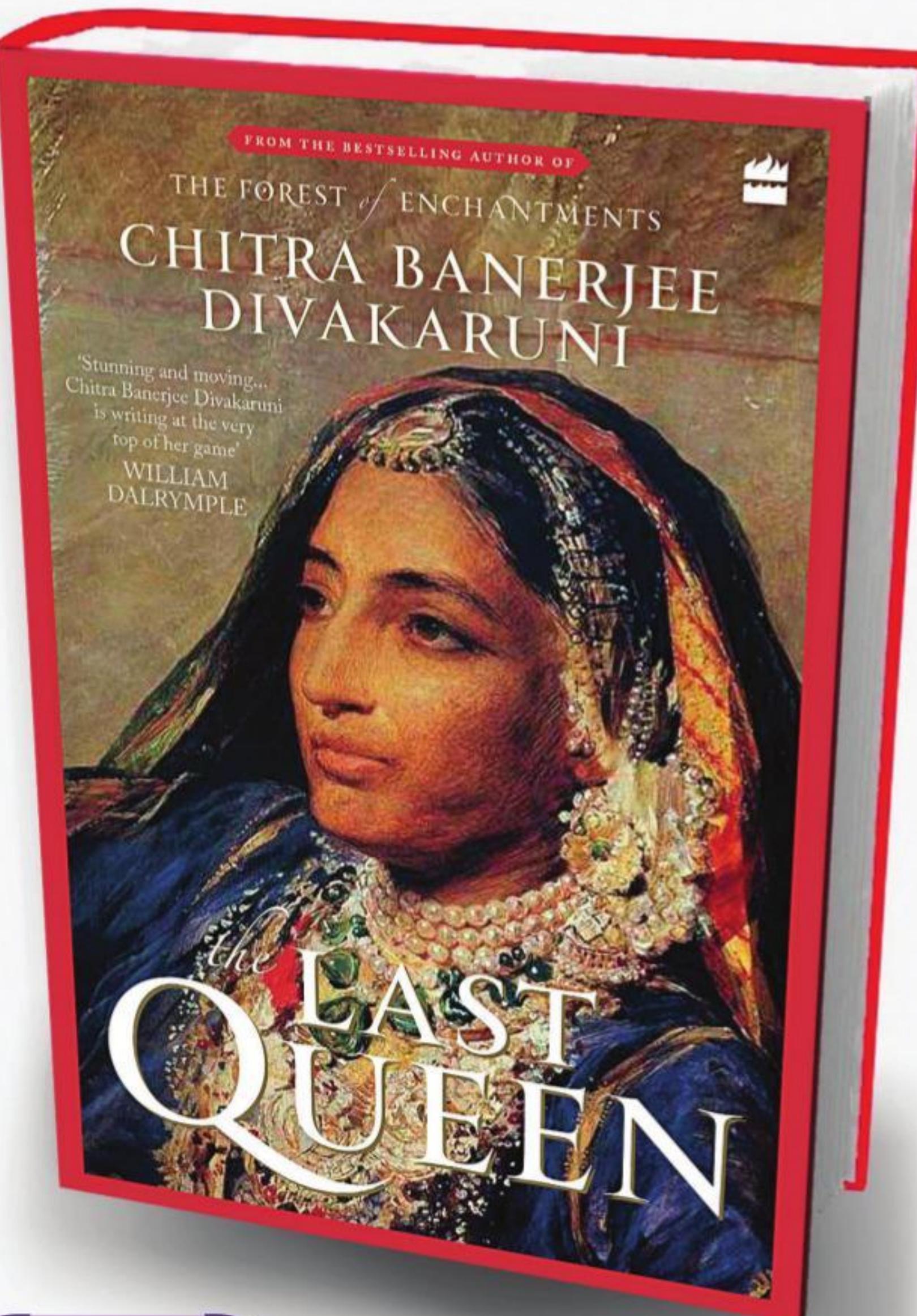
Sharp-eyed, stubborn, passionate and dedicated to protecting her son's heritage, Jindan distrusted the British and fought hard to keep them from annexing Punjab. Defying tradition, she stepped out of the zenana, cast aside the veil and conducted state business in public. Addressing her Khalsa troops herself, she inspired her men in two wars against the *firangs*. Her power and influence were so formidable that the British, fearing an uprising, robbed the rebel queen of everything she had, including her son. She was imprisoned and exiled. But that did not crush her indomitable will.

The Prologue begins in Lahore, 1839 when one is told how 21-year old Jindan hasn't slept for two nights, waiting by the sickbed of Maharaja Ranjit Singh along with his other wives. She is hoping for the recovery of the "Sarkar", as his people lovingly call him, but the Maharaja passes away.

The story then proceeds chronologically, beginning with the section titled "Girl: 1826-1834" where one reads how Jindan grew up as a poor, rustic village girl near Gujranwala. Her father Manna Singh was the royal kennel keeper in Lahore and being an opportunist at heart, took both her and her brother Jawa-har there.

One day, by chance, she sees a most beautiful horse and befriends it, without knowing that its owner Ranjit Singh would like to take her for a ride on it to the Shalimar Gardens. The fairy tale kind of beginning brings out the spirit in her when she tells her brother, "I want the 'Sarkar' to fall in love with me. Because he's powerful and charismatic and didn't take advantage of me though he could easily have done so. Because he tells the most fascinating stories. And because, foolishly, I am falling in love with him." She is then invited to the royal banquet, she meets the other queens, and finally when she meets Ranjit Singh alone in the *gurdwara*, he promises that he will marry her in two years, if he is still alive.

The second section called "Bride: 1835-1839" begins with Jindan getting married to the "Sarkar's" sword as he could not come in person and once she is in Lahore, she is admitted into the zenana where she witnesses the rivalry, bickering and jealousy among the other queens. Her marital life begins in Sheesh Mahal, the birth of her son Dalip makes her glad beyond her dreams, but unfortunately everything collapses with the sudden death of the Maharaja. Finding no other alternative, she secretly leaves Lahore to safeguard her son, with the hope that her eyes will be sharper and her will stronger.



Spot Light

THE LAST QUEEN
BY CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI
HARPER COLLINS PUBLISHERS INDIA
354 PAGES, RS 599

In the third section entitled "Queen: 1840-1849" one is given a lot of information about the political machinations of Dhian Singh, the murder of Chand, her visit to Amritsar where she wants to remain incognito,

the death of Sher Singh and the pact she has with Hira Singh that Dalip will be presented at the *durbur* where he will sit on a temporary throne.

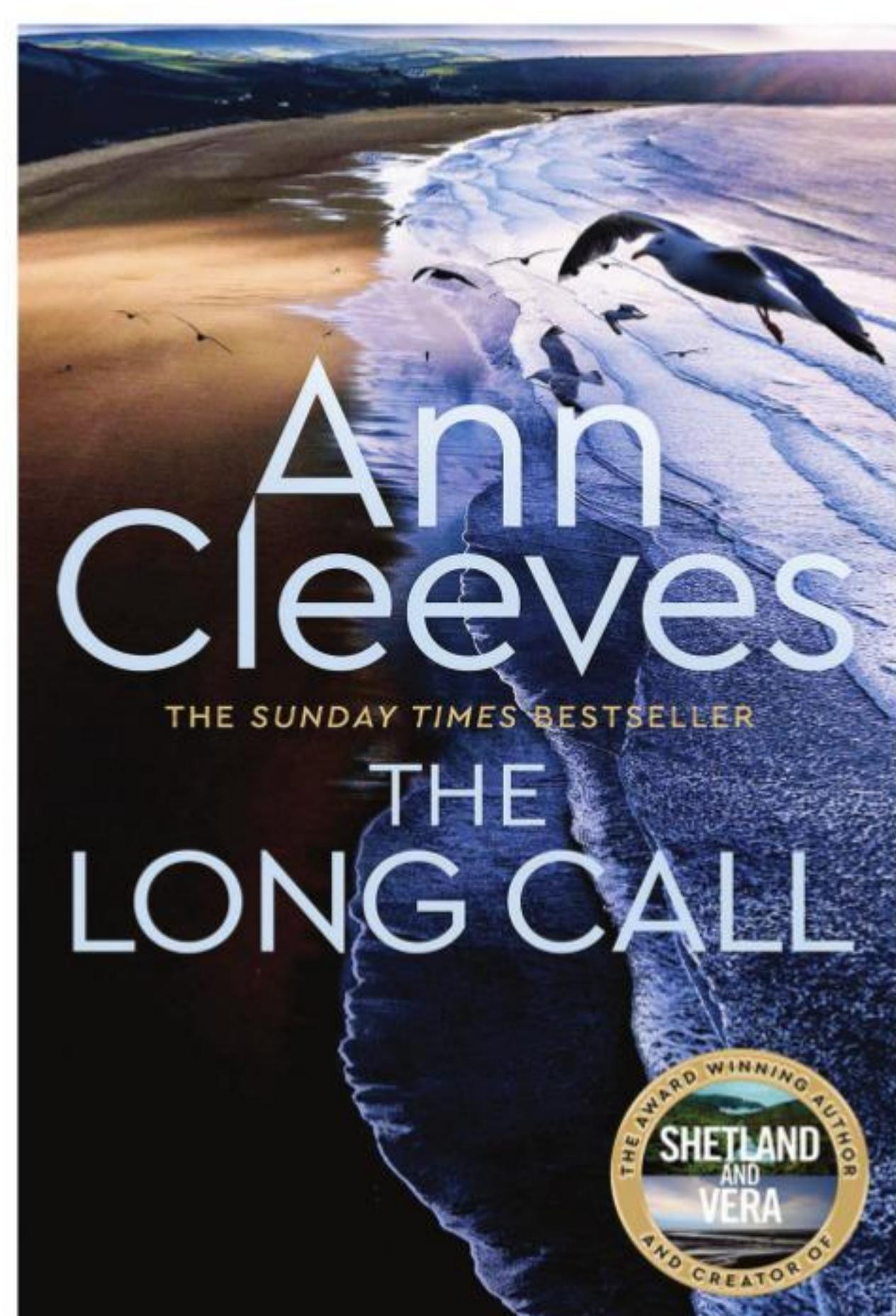
One is also told about the intimate relationship she develops with Lal Singh, till she is exiled from court. She tries to motivate the Khalsa army but is unable to control it. The British intervene and wrests her son's kingdom from him. Leaving the *qila* at night she first goes to Patna and from there walks incognito with other pilgrims towards Nepal. Jung Bahadur, the King of Nepal, initially takes her to

be a mendicant, but upon knowing her identity, welcomes her in Kathmandu.

The fourth section, suitably titled "Rebel: 1860-1863", describes how Jindan was constantly being spied upon by the British Resident, Colonel Ramsey. Her letters are intercepted yet she receives one letter from her son Dalip, who wants to meet her in Calcutta. She is excited because she had been separated from him for 14 years and at the same time, she is worried how his years with the Logins and the British Queen changed him.

Divakaruni manages to paint a complete picture of a woman from all perspectives. Beginning with the exquisite love story of a king and a commoner almost his daughter's age, *The Last Queen* is also a cautionary tale about loyalty and betrayal, and a powerful parable about the indestructible bond between mother and child. A perfect blend of fact with fiction, the novel is strongly recommended for all categories of readers, serious and casual alike.

The reviewer is a former professor of English, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan



The world of Matthew Venn

Although the narrative is as slow as the soft Devonshire accents, this detective yarn suits the sands and the drag of the tides... A review

ANJANA BASU

Englishwomen, they say, make the best crime writers. Following on the heels of Agatha Christie and PD James, comes Anne Cleeves, who has already been awarded the Silver Dagger for her work and deserves to be better known in India.

The Long Call, a title which refers to the cries of the black-backed gulls that wheel across the skies of River Taw and Exmoor, seems to echo titles like *The Big Sleep*. In *The Long Call*, Cleeves introduces her new detective – Inspector Matthew Venn. He has a husband, the beautiful platinum blonde named Jonathan, who has created a community for artists and a space for mentally challenged women in a repurposed factory warehouse.

Venn is quiet, straightforward and estranged from his mother who belongs to a fraternity of evangelical brethren led by the dynamic Dennis Salter. He returns as an outsider to his father's funeral and is plunged into a murder, which gradually draws in Venn's husband and the community that he created at the Woodyard.

Even though she is writing about the quiet little towns of North Devon, Cleeves makes her canvas seem as broad as the sweep of the two rivers and the shores of the North Sea. Exmoor is far-flung, and

the people are separated by more than space.

Cleeves delves into Venn's background to tie together a hierarchy of evangelical bigotry and corporate double dealing. The matter behind the murder is not just money but reputation, and it is revealed slowly and carefully.

Venn does not seem like an outsider – he is conservatively dressed in suits and humble – but his way of life has made him one. His search for identity and recovery from depression is achieved through love, understanding and a craving for regulation – the last factor led him to join the police force. He has no vices like alcohol or ego or even brilliant little grey cells. Venn's deductions are quietly reached, and he manages to work with his team without ruffling feathers.

What comes through is the fact that organised evangelicalism and corporations have a patriarchal assertiveness to them that denies the rights of minorities and homosexuals, the mentally challenged and unfortunately, women. So does sexual abuse. Small town women depend on their men for identity and they are so discreet and self-effacing that one might overlook them. Small towns too, it seems, are crowded places where it is possible for someone to disappear at high noon in the high street on a market day.

At the other end of the scale are

When Dalip requests the Governor General, Lord Canning to let both him and his mother live together in India, he disagrees as he is afraid that their united presence will stir trouble.

They are ordered to leave for England on the next ship and once there, she is hurt to see Dalip's dismissive attitude towards the failed War of Independence. She longs to give him a different perspective but instead of arguing, weakened by age, illness, and most of all, the fear of alienating her son, she remains silent. Jindan is afraid of what will happen to Dalip after her death for he has neither the strength of character nor the stubborn focus that his parents possessed.

The epilogue takes place in Nasik in 1864 when Dalip Singh brings his mother's body back to India for the Sikh rites she had requested. She had died in London and for an entire year she was interred in an un consecrated vault in Kensal Green Cemetery while the British government dithered to give him permission to undertake a simple journey.

Divakaruni has been writing fiction for more than two decades and though most of them are about women, one notices a tectonic shift in her selection of themes. Initially, she would write on the problems of immigration and culture clashes plaguing Indians in the New World. In *Palace of Illusions*, she went back to the Indian epic and narrated the story of The Mahabharata from Draupadi's point of view. In her last novel *The Forest of Enchantments*, she brought Sita to the centre of The Ramayana and accorded her parity with Ram, revealing her innate strength.

Now, Divakaruni has taken recourse to Indian history and rebuilt the story of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's empire in Punjab narrating it from the viewpoint of Rani Jindan Kaur, his last wife and one of the most fearless women of the 19th century. In a recent online discussion about the book, she stated that she happened to be present at a lecture delivered by William Dalrymple on his book *Kohinoor* where he presented the portrait of Rani Jindan, which mesmerised her. Thereafter, she started studying Sikh history and realised that nothing much has been written about her, except in bits and pieces. So, she decided to write this novel and apart from the available historical data, she filled in the story by imagining many things Jindan would have said and done.

Divakaruni manages to paint a complete picture of a woman from all perspectives. Beginning with the exquisite love story of a king and a commoner almost his daughter's age, *The Last Queen* is also a cautionary tale about loyalty and betrayal, and a powerful parable about the indestructible bond between mother and child. A perfect blend of fact with fiction, the novel is strongly recommended for all categories of readers, serious and casual alike.

The reviewer is a former professor of English, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan

Spot Light

THE LONG CALL
BY ANNE CLEEVES
PAN MACMILLAN
384 PAGES, RS 650

the creative people with attitude who stand apart from the rest like the murder victim Simon Walden, a brilliant chef and a man who doesn't fit in despite his talent and compassion. He has an albatross tattooed on his neck in memory of a guilt that haunts him, and he dies because he threatens to upset the status quo.

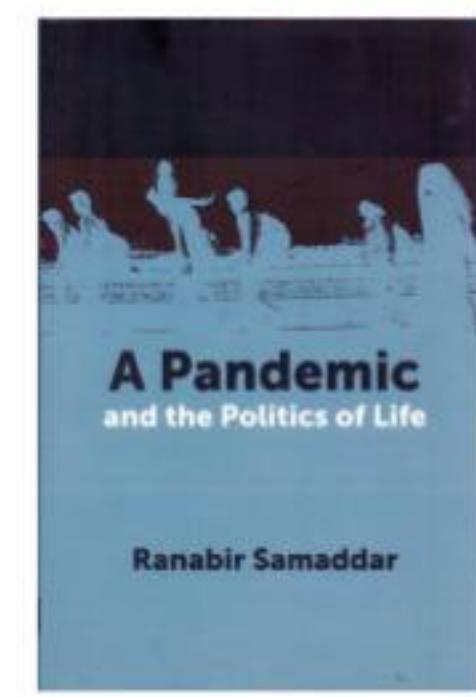
What comes through is that the establishment is the villain in the story because it represents the world of big houses and social success with no understanding at its heart. There aren't too many choices available for the murderer but Cleeves keeps one wondering till the end when she fills in all the dots.

The narrative is as slow as the soft Devonshire accents and occasionally one might wish for a faster pace, but *The Long Call* suits the sands and the drag of the tides.

The reviewer is a freelance contributor

BOOKS RECEIVED

Seeking answers



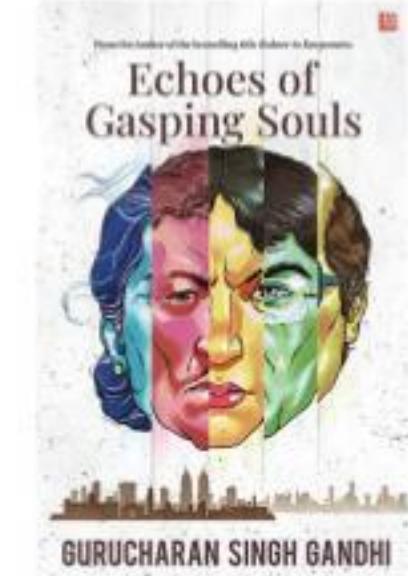
A PANDEMIC AND THE POLITICS OF LIFE
BY RANABIR SAMADDAR
WOMEN UNLIMITED
NON-FICTION, 208 PAGES, RS 450

This book unravels the specifics of the Indian experience of battling Covid-19, while adopting an international perspective, in order to analyse the why and how of this public health emergency; the neoliberal response by the state; the production of an unanticipated politics of life; and the dramatic desire for a new kind of public power.

Written during an intense time, this monograph closely follows the progress of the virus, focusing on three themes – the outbreak as an epidemiological crisis compounded by an economic crisis, a migrant crisis, and a political crisis; the presence of the marching migrant as the figure of this crisis; and the emergence of bio politics from below as a reaction of the lower classes.

Ranabir Samaddar is currently the distinguished chair in migration and forced migration studies, Calcutta Research Group. His writings on migration, forms of labour, urbanisation and political struggles have signalled a new turn in post-colonial thinking.

Stories unfurl



ECHOES OF GASPING SOULS
BY GURUCHARAN SINGH GANDHI
LEADSTART
FICTION, 251 PAGES, RS 299

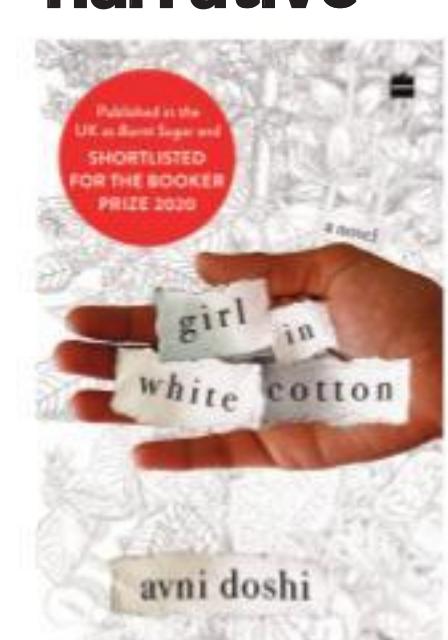
Four strangers are stuck in a hotel in Mumbai. Sitam, a Nepali-speaking man from Sikkim, is a frustrated bureaucrat. Kulwant Kaur from Amritsar is on her first solo trip at the age of 62, under the pretence of a pilgrimage. Razia is a Malayali Muslim married to a Hindu. Manoj is a typical engineer-MBA, highly driven, ambitious and suave.

Sunil Paswan, a Dalit from Bihar is the hotel manager. He survived caste riots in his native village 30 years ago, after which he moved to Mumbai and has never gone back home.

They hate each other, hate being forced to live together and hate that the torment will last almost a month. How do things play out and what happens at the end? The story changes when hearts and minds slowly begin to open up.

Born and raised in Jhinkpani, a dusty hamlet in Jharkhand, Gurucharan Singh Gandhi's writings have the sensibility of small-town India coupled with its inescapable complexities.

Unnerving narrative



GIRL IN WHITE COTTON
BY AVNI DOSHI
FOURTH ESTATE
FICTION, 277 PAGES, RS 599

Girl in White Cotton is a journey into shifting memories, altering identities and the subjective nature of truth. Tracing the fragile line between familial devotion and deception, Avni Doshi's first novel will surprise and unsettle readers.

Doshi was born in New Jersey. She completed her BA in art history from Barnard College and her MA in the history of art from University College London. She has been awarded the Tibor Jones South Asia Prize and a Charles Pick Fellowship. She lives in Dubai.



DISCOVERY OF AMERICA
Phil Neville (photo, left) says the excitement for his new gig at Inter Miami still feels fresh, even though he took the job in January. Neville led England to the Women's World Cup semi-finals in 2019. It was expected that he'd take the team to the Olympics in Tokyo this summer, but he left early to join David Beckham's Major League Soccer team.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

India favourites: England white-ball vice-captain Jos Buttler says India, who are strong in every format of the game, are favourites for this year's Twenty20 World Cup. India, who won the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007, will host the tournament in October and November. "There are many excellent teams, though," Buttler said.

Vonlanthen dead: Roger Vonlanthen, the last surviving member of the Switzerland team that in 1954 played in the highest-scoring World Cup match, has died. He was 89. At the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland, the host nation lost to Austria 7-5 in the quarter-finals in 40-degree Celsius heat in Lausanne. The Swiss led 3-0 by the 19th minute.

Federer's return: Roger Federer was to face Britain's Daniel Evans in the second round of the Qatar Open on Wednesday as the Swiss great would his comeback after a 13-month break. Federer, who has had two operations on his right knee since playing at the Australian Open last year, is a three-time champion at the Doha tournament.

Major upsets: Coco Gauff led a day of upsets in the second round of the Dubai Championships, when top-seeded Elina Svitolina lost and Petra Kvitova dropped out with a hip problem. Gauff defeated 12th-seeded Marketa Vondrousova 3-6, 6-0, 6-4. Svetlana Kuznetsova upset two-time champion Svitolina 2-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Klopp's decision: Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp said on Tuesday that he had no plans of replacing compatriot Joachim Loew when he would step down as Germany boss after the European Championship in June-July. Loew, who took the job in 2006 and led Germany to the 2014 World Cup title, is the current longest serving national team coach.

'Enough's enough': Edinson Cavani's father said on Tuesday the Manchester United striker was uncomfortable in England and wanted to return to South America, adding that his son's wishes had been influenced by a three-match ban he received for using a racial term. United confirmed last month they were planning to hold talks with Cavani.

Head injuries: A concussion expert told British lawmakers on Tuesday that football's management of head injuries was a "shambles" at the beginning of a parliamentary inquiry into the issue. Consultant neuropathologist Willie Stewart was speaking to Members of Parliament on the House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport committee.

World Cup: The International Gymnastics Federation said on Tuesday it had cancelled the Artistic All-Around World Cup in Tokyo, which was also to be a test event for the Olympics, owing to difficulties related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The event, which had been scheduled for 4 May, was meant to conclude this year's all-around series.

Torch relay: The starting ceremony for this month's Olympic torch relay may be held without spectators, a Japanese newspaper reported Tuesday, but fans would still be able to line the route. The newspaper reported that organisers feared crowding at the 25 March event in Fukushima, and would probably bar the 3,000 spectators initially planned.

'Chakravarthy unfit, Natarajan struggling'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD, 10 MARCH



Leg-spinner Varun Chakravarthy's failure to get through fitness tests has ruled him out while paceman T Natarajan is racing against time to be battle-ready, making him doubtful for at least the early part of India's five-match Twenty20 series against England starting here on Friday.

Chakravarthy has repeatedly failed to clear the fitness test at the National Cricket Academy in Bangalore while yorker specialist Natarajan has yet to join the Indian squad here owing to an apparent shoulder niggle. "Chakravarthy was selected because he had recovered from the shoulder injury that ruled him out of the Australia series. He did his rehab at the NCA and started throwing

normally. However, he has failed to secure the Yo Yo test mark," a senior Board of Control for Cricket in India source said on condition of anonymity.

The question now being asked is why the Chetan Sharma (in photo)-led committee selected such a player who, since October, hadn't played even one competitive game for Tamil Nadu. "We can understand he had gone into rehab during the Mushtaq Ali (Twenty20 championship).

It is said that Rahul Chahar will be inducted in the squad as he has been in the bio-bubble since the start of the Test series. The NCA's medical staff members were said to be trying to get Natarajan fit for at least the later part of the series. Rahul Tewatia is training with the Indian team in Ahmedabad as he awaits his second fitness test results. The T20s will be followed by a three-match One-Day International series in Pune.

DUBAI, 10 MARCH

But then again, he didn't play a single Vijay Hazare Trophy game. How do you assess his match-fitness based on games that he played five months ago? I guess Varun Chakravarthy is a lesson for the selectors," said the source, adding: "If a player is not up to the standard set by the Indian team, his bowling alone alone can't be a criterion for selection."

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Washington Sundar, who also played a crucial role in

Following his breathtaking century in the fourth Test against England, young Indian wicketkeeper batsman Rishabh Pant on Wednesday achieved a career-best seventh position in the ICC Test rankings.

Pant has jumped seven places after smashing a match-winning 101 in the Ahmedabad Test, which India won by an innings and 25 runs to clinch the series 3-1. The 23-year-old shares the seventh place in the batsmen rankings with compatriot Rohit Sharma, who moved up one spot, and Henry Nicholls of New Zealand.

Amul Milk

HAPPY MAHASHivratri



AMUL DOODH PEETA HAI INDIA

'Big 3 bete noire Sawhney finds the going tough'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 10 MARCH



International Cricket Council chief executive Manu Sawhney (in photo) has been sent on "leave" after his conduct reportedly came under scrutiny during an internal investigation by PricewaterhouseCoopers and may resign before his term ends.

Sawhney, who replaced Dave Richardson after the ICC World Cup in 2019 for a tenure till 2022, has not been on the best of terms with some influential cricket boards on various policy decisions. He has come under scrutiny for his allegedly "abrasive behaviour" towards his colleagues.

"There have been statements from many ICC staff members about his behaviour which hasn't been great for the morale of the very efficient group of employees," a senior official close to the ICC Board said on condition of anonymity. The 56-year-old hasn't been attending office for some time and was asked to go on leave yesterday. "The board of directors is trying to find a compromise formula so he can leave the job with dignity by offering his resignation," the source said.

He has been under pressure since the election process for the new chairman was set in motion last year. It ended with Greg Barclay taking the position.

in November. It is alleged that Sawhney's "authoritarian style of functioning" is far removed from the inclusive approach favoured by Richardson. It has not gone down well with ICC employees.

Also, a few cricket boards seem unhappy with him for backing interim chairman Imran Khawaja during the elections last year. "He hasn't exactly been a favourite of a lot of cricket boards during the past couple of years. First, a lot of people didn't like his passive involvement when Greg Barclay and Imran Khawaja of Singapore were in contention to replace Shahzad Manohar," a senior BCCI source privy to the developments in the ICC said.

The second reason why some of the bigger boards are upset is his support for the ICC's recent decision on asking national boards to bid and pay a fee for hosting events during the next tournament cycle.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India, England and Wales Cricket Board and Cricket Australia oppose the idea and have made their displeasure known.

Another reason is a proposal backed by him to have at least one ICC flagship event every year during the 2023-2031 tournament cycle, which the Big Three

In case Sawhney chooses not to resign, it could lead to the adoption of a long-drawn removal procedure by the ICC board of directors.

Manu also has support within the board which is now split into two factions of nine and eight members.

To remove Manu, one would need 12 of the 17 votes," it was said. Sawhney is the former CEO of Singapore Sports Hub and also served as managing director of ESPN Star Sports, a company he worked with for 17 years. He is also a non-executive director and member of the audit committee of Manchester United.