



Pages 12 | ₹5 | LC

KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR

THE CHALLENGES THAT HARRIS FACES



P7

'HALWA' CEREMONY KICKSTARTS BUDGET COMPILATION



P8

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

'NEW UK-VARIANT MAY BE MORE DEADLY'



P11

WHY SAINI BOWLED WITH INJURY



P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 18 and 09 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 58%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 20.4°C (-1) Min: 08.0°C (0)

SUN RISES

07:13 hrs

MOON RISES

14:00 hrs

SUN SETS

17:54 hrs

MOON SETS

04:11 hrs

THUMBNAILS



A man walks along a snow-covered road in North Kashmir's Kupwara district. Many roads are cut off after fresh heavy snowfall in the upper reaches in Kashmir.

MD AMIN WAR

Broadcasting giant Larry King dies at 87: Larry King, the suspenders-sporting everyman whose broadcast interviews with world leaders, movie stars and ordinary Joes helped define American conversation for a half-century, died on Saturday. He was 87. King died at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in L.A., Ora Media, the studio and network he co-founded, tweeted. No cause of death was given, but CNN reported on 2 January that King had been hospitalised with Covid-19.

P10

BSF detects second underground tunnel: Days ahead of Republic Day, the Border Security Force achieved a major success when it detected a 150-metre-long underground tunnel constructed by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district to facilitate the infiltration of terrorists for subversive activities, a top official said. This was the second such structure found beneath the International Border in Hirangan sector in 10 days, fourth in Jammu region within six months and 10th in the past decade.

P5

Bengal – will be administering the vaccine from next week, Agnani said. No case of serious or severe adverse event following immunisation or death attributable to vaccination has been reported till date, the official said, adding that just 11 cases of hospitalisation post vaccination have been reported.

"Total six deaths have been reported so far (post-vaccination). In the last 24 hours, a person aged 56 years, a resident of Gurgaon, has died. The postmortem confirms that cardio-pulmonary disease was the reason for her death and it was not related to vaccination. None of these deaths have been linked with Covid vaccination," he said.

Active caseload shrinks further: With 14,256 new coronavirus infections reported in the last 24 hours in India, the overall Covid-19 tally went up to 1,06,39,684 even as the active caseload further shrank



Seven more states will be administering the indigenously-developed Covaxin from next week, the Health Ministry said on Saturday.

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) had earlier this month approved Oxford Covid-19 vaccine Covishield, and indigenously developed Covaxin of Bharat Biotech for restricted emergency use in the country.

Additional secretary in the Union Health Ministry Manohar Agnani told mediapersons that as on 23 January, a total of 15,37,190 beneficiaries have been vaccinated for Covid-19 in 27,776 sessions. The inoculation drive was launched on 16 January. In addition to the 12 states currently using Covaxin, seven new states - Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and West

Pradesh, will be administering the vaccine from next week, Agnani said.

No case of serious or severe adverse event following immunisation or death attributable to vaccination has been reported till date, the official said, adding that just 11 cases of hospitalisation post vaccination have been reported.

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Senate to begin Trump impeachment trial on 8 Feb

THE INDEPENDENT
SAN FRANCISCO, 23 JANUARY

The US Senate will begin hearing opening arguments in the second impeachment trial of former President Donald Trump in the week starting 8 February, after majority leader Chuck Schumer reached an agreement late on Friday with top Republicans.

Trump, who is charged with "incitement of insurrection" for his role in helping inspire the 6 January attack on the Capitol ~ which left five dead and scores injured ~ is not only the first President to be impeached twice, but also the first to be subject to an impeachment trial after leaving office.

► Trump, who is charged with "incitement of insurrection" for his role in helping inspire the 6 January attack on the Capitol ~ which left five dead and scores injured ~ is not only the first President to be impeached twice, but also the first to be subject to an impeachment trial after leaving office

► The US House of Representatives will send its article of impeachment to the Senate on Monday, and initial proceedings could begin on Tuesday

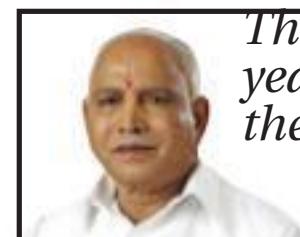
It will be a full trial and it will be a fair trial. We all want to put this awful chapter in our nation's history behind us.

CHUCK SCHUMER SENATE MAJORITY LEADER

Some Republicans have argued this process is point-

less and potentially violates the Constitution.

TURN TO PAGE 4



This magnitude of economic difficulties was never faced in the previous years by our state. Therefore, downsizing of the budget is inevitable and the outlay is bound to be less than what it was last year.

B S YEDIYURAPPA
KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER

6,967 of targeted 8,100 get jabs in Delhi on day 5

Capital's coronavirus positivity rate dips to 0.26 pc, recovery rate climbs to 97.99 pc

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

Eighty-six percent of the targeted 8,100 health workers in Delhi received the Covid-19 vaccine today - the fifth scheduled day of the inoculation exercise in the national capital - with some centres achieving their 100 per cent turnout, officials said.

For today, 8,100 health workers' vaccination were targeted at 81 centres across Delhi's 11 districts. Of this targeted figure, 6,967 people or 86 per cent received the shots, according to official data. Several hospitals including the Delhi government's LNJP, Rajiv Gandhi, State Cancer Institute and GTB hospitals, reported 100 per cent of the targeted vaccinations, officials said. "The rising numbers show that people are slowly overcoming their fear and doubts and coming forward to take the vaccine. The decision to allow administration of vaccines to registered walk-ins has also boosted the numbers," said a senior health department official.



Representational image

According to official figures, 6,673 people out of 7,500 were administered Covishield vaccine today. Twenty-three "minor" and 1 "severe" adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) cases were reported among those administered the Covishield jabs. A total of 294 people out of 600 were administered Covaxin. Only one case of minor AEFI given Covaxin was reported, according to figures.

Under the Covid vaccination drive in Delhi, 100 people are administered the jabs at each

of the 81 designated centres across the city on four days - Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday - in a week.

The vaccination drive is likely to pick up momentum in the coming days with the Delhi government proposing to increase the number of centres to over 175, officials said. Meanwhile, Delhi today recorded 197 fresh Covid cases and 10 deaths, even as its positivity rate dropped to 0.26 per cent. The city's coronavirus infection tally climbed to 6,33,739 while its toll

rose to 10,799, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. Delhi's active Covid cases tally dipped to 1,880, the health bulletin said. The 197 new coronavirus cases were detected out of 76,868 tests including 47,467 RT-PCR tests and 29,401 rapid antigen tests. In the last 24 hours 367 Covid patients recovered in the national capital, which took its cumulative coronavirus recoveries to 62,1,060, the bulletin stated. Its Covid recovery rate climbed to 97.99 per cent. Delhi had yesterday reported 266 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 7 coronavirus-linked deaths. These cases came to light following 71,850 tests. The positivity rate was 0.37 per cent. The city had on 21 January recorded 227 Covid cases and 8 deaths, even as its positivity rate had plunged to 0.28 per cent. Its tally of active coronavirus cases was then 2,120. On 20 January, Delhi had recorded 228 coronavirus infections and 10 deaths, even as the total number of Covid tests conducted in the city had till then crossed the one-crore mark.

'Varsities role'll be crucial in fight against unemployment'



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

Somnath Bharti sentenced to 2-yr jail in AIIMS staff assault case

PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

Aam Aadmi Party MLA and former Delhi minister Somnath Bharti was on Saturday sentenced to two years in jail by a court here in a 2016 case related to assaulting AIIMS security staff and causing damage to hospital property.

The mindset to cause damage to public property and infrastructure was an attack on the common man, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Ravindra Kumar Pandey said, as he rejected Bharti's plea to release him on probation but granted him bail to enable filing of an appeal in a higher court.

The judge, who also imposed a fine of Rs one lakh on Bharti, said he was well-educated and an MLA and, therefore, aware of the consequences of committing the offence.

The ruling AAP in Delhi backed its MLA from Malviya Nagar, claiming that "injustice" has been meted out to Bharti and expressed the hope that he will get justice at the appellate level.

Sisodia said that the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government's goal is to inculcate entrepreneurship mindset in students and that it has taken several steps in this regard.

The deputy CM, who was speaking at a function on the occasion of 125th birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, inaugurated Dr APJ Abdul Kalam lecture hall complex at the Netaji Subhas University of Technology (NSUT) here. A 50-metre high national flag was also set up at the university campus.

Sisodia said that the biggest tribute to Netaji would be to keep aside differences and work towards creating a strong future of the nation through better education. Netaji's dreams would be fulfilled when the children of the country would be skilled enough to contribute to its growth and development. This would embody true patriotism.

He said the NSUT is India's only technological university which has been named after Netaji.



The FIR was registered on the basis of a complaint filed by R S Rawat, Chief Security Officer, AIIMS.

The court is of the considered view that prosecution has duly proved its case beyond all reasonable doubt against accused Somnath Bharti, the judge said.

The court convicted Bharti for various offences punishable under IPC, including section 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 353 (assault or use of criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 147 (rioting).

It also held Bharti under section 3 (mischievous damage to public property) of the Prevention of Damage to the Public Property Act.

Bharti had told the court that police officials and witnesses deposed falsely against him to implicate him in the case.

During the arguments, Bharti sought leniency from the court and prayed that he be released on probation.

The prosecution, however, sought maximum punishment of a five-year jail term for Bharti.

The court is of the view that the mindset to cause damage to the public property and infrastructure is an attack on the common man. The infrastructure and public property of the country are not of any leader, party or government but these are national assets.

The infrastructure is built with the contribution of every poor, every taxpayer, middle class and every section of society. While exercising democratic rights, people must not forget about the national duty to preserve the national assets and resources meant for each and every citizen, the judge said.

While denying the AAP leader the benefit of probation, the judge said, Bharti is a well-educated person having qualification of M.Sc (IIT Delhi) and he is also Law Graduate and he is also Member of Legislative Assembly.

He was well aware about the consequences of committing the offence and he actively participated in the commission of offence in order to damage the Public Property belonging to the AIIMS, New Delhi. Hence, the court is not inclined to grant him the benefit of The Probation of Offender Act, the court said.

The court, however, acquitted Bharti's associates and co-accused Jagat Saini, Dilip Jha, Sandeep Sonu and Rakesh Pandey - citing lack of evidence.

The AAP leader is not new to controversies. In 2014, as the law minister in the then Kejriwal government, he led a late-night vigilante raid against some African women, accusing them of being drug runners.

In 2015, he was arrested in connection with a domestic violence case lodged by his wife. He was later cleared of the charge.

JOBS & CLASSIFIEDS QUEST

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE
P.L.A. No. 380 of 2019
IN THE HIGH COURT
AT CALCUTTA
Testamentary and
Intestate Jurisdiction
President of the
Union of India
Petition for Probate
In the goods of :
Trilok Chandra Amitrial
Sayani, son of Late Amitrial
Kalidas Sayani, lately
residing at 11/1, Heysham
Road, Kolkata-700020,
Deceased.

All persons claiming to have
any interest in the estate of
the above-named deceased are
hereby cited to come within 2 (Two)
weeks from the date of the publication
and affixation of the citation
and see the proceedings, if
they think fit, before the grant of
Probate in the above goods.

You are hereby informed that free legal services from the High Court Legal Services Committee are available to you and in case you are eligible and desire to avail of the free legal services, you may contact the above Legal Services Committee.

Witness Mr. Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan, Chief Justice at Calcutta aforesaid, the 7th day of February in the year Two Thousand and Twenty.

Sd/-
03.03.2020
For Registrar
P.D. Himalayika & Co.
Solicitors & Advocates
6, Old Post Office Street,
Kolkata - 700001

P.L.A. No. 356 of 1919
IN THE HIGH COURT
AT CALCUTTA
Testamentary and Intestate
Jurisdiction
President of the Union of India
Petition for Probate

In the goods of:
Sri Arun Kumar Sharma, son of Late Charu Chandra Dasa Sharma alias Charu Chandra Sharma, lately residing at Flat No. 2/F, Meghnagar premises no. 183, Garhatal Road, P.O. Ballygunge, P.S. Garhatal, Kolkata - 700019, a Hindu inhabitant deceased.

All persons claiming to have any interest in the estate of the abovenamed deceased are hereby cited to come within 2 (Two) weeks from the date of the affixation of the citation and see the proceedings, if they think fit, before the grant of Probate in the above goods.

You are hereby informed that free legal services from the High Court Legal Services Committee are available to you and in case you are eligible and desire to avail of the free legal services, you may contact the above Legal Services Committee.

Witness Mr. Thottathil B. Radhakrishnan, Chief Justice at Calcutta aforesaid, the 24th day of December in the year Two Thousand and Twenty.

Sd/-
For Registrar
14/01/2021
Mis. Chatterjee, Sil & Co.
Solicitors & Advocates
7, Old Post Office Street
Calcutta - 700001

IN THE COURT OF
MS. KOPAL
Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurugram

Next Date, Purpose of case,
Orders and Judgments as
well as other case information
is available on
<http://ecourts.gov.in>

Sanjay Chatterjee
Versus
General Public
CNR No. HRGR02-000433-
2021

Next Date, 19-03-2021
Publication Issued to:
General Public, Gurugram.
Whereas it has been proved
to the satisfaction of the Court
that the defendant(s)/respondent(s) abovenamed cannot
be served in the ordinary way

Seal of the Court

AIR-SURCHARGE: Kathmandu - Rs. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1
All other stations in India - Re. 1

Seal of the Court

I don't understand the meaning of Parakram Diwas. We celebrate the day as Deshnayak Diwas



MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

The Sunday Statesman
NEW DELHI, 24 JANUARY 2021

03

Stage set for HP's golden jubilee event on 25 Jan

The HP govt'll kick off celebrations of 50 years of its statehood with an event in Shimla, which'll be attended by Shah & Nadda

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 23 JANUARY

The stage is set for celebrations of the golden jubilee of Himachal Pradesh's statehood on 25 January. Subsequently, the HP government will undertake a 'Swarnim Rath Yatra' at the state, district and block levels to showcase the development journey of the hill state over the last 50 years of its statehood.

The government will kick off the golden jubilee celebrations of HP's statehood with a major public function at the Ridge in Shimla on 25 January, which will be attended by Union home minister Amit Shah.

Addressing media persons here today, HP chief minister Jai Ram Thakur said the Bharatiya Janata Party's national president Jagat Prakash Nadda and Union minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur will also attend the Ridge function.

Former HP CMs, Shanta Kumar, Virbhadr Singh and



Prem Kumar Dhumal, will however not be able to attend this golden jubilee event for various reasons.

Jai Ram said a postal ticket will be released on the occasion to commemorate 50 years of HP's statehood. A coffee-table book tracing the

journey of Himachal Pradesh's development during the last five decades will also be released.

The CM said Himachal Pradesh became the 18th state of India on 25 January 1971. He said since then the state has progressed in all

spheres including road connectivity, education, health among others. The

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has had a major role in ensuring road connectivity even in the state's interior areas, he said.

Jai Ram said the people and

leaders of Himachal share the credit for the state's development.

He said all former CMs – including YS Parmar, Shanta Kumar, Ram Lal Thakur, Virbhadr Singh and Prem Kumar Dhumal – played key roles in HP's development.

The CM said the state government had sought to celebrate the golden jubilee of HP's statehood from 25 January 2020 to 25 January 2021. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic this could not be accomplished. "So we have decided to hold golden jubilee celebrations now from 25 January 2021. During this period, different departments will showcase their achievements in 50 years. We will hold a function to honour the people who have brought honour to the state in any sphere at national and international levels," Jai Ram said.

The CM said that his government will also come out with a vision document for next 50 years and will invite suggestions from people for it.

BJP leaders had opposed statehood to HP: Congress

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 23 JANUARY



Himachal Pradesh Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore on Saturday raised questions on the golden jubilee celebrations of HP's statehood on 25 January, saying that the BJP is eulogizing those party leaders by placing huge banners who had earlier opposed granting of statehood status to HP.

Addressing media, Rathore said BJP leaders used to chant 'Statehood Ko Maro Thud' (Kick out statehood) at a time when former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was mulling to grant the status of 18th state to Himachal Pradesh.

"BJP leaders have no contribution in the formation of Himachal and at that time, the party leaders were in favour of merging the state with Punjab," he added.

He said the state was indebted to former Congress PMs Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi and the then Congress led regimes at the Centre who had contributed for the development of the state.

Former chief Minister late Dr YS Parmar was known as founder of the state and later, Thakur Ramlal and Virbhadra Singh were known for creation of modern Himachal, he said.

Rathore raised questions on lavish arrangements for Statehood day on the Ridge Ground and said one side repair work for water tank was going on at the place, on the other hand, the state government was making huge structure on it.

This could lead to safety issue as the entire structure was declared as restricted area and the government shouldn't ignore public safety.

He also accused the state government of tampering with the history of the state and said the government had knowingly covered the statues of Indira Gandhi and Dr YS Parmar who had worked for the statehood of Himachal

on the Ridge Ground.

"The state government is repeating the tactics that were adopted at the inauguration of Atal Tunnel Rohtang wherein the foundation stone laid by Congress chief Sonia Gandhi was removed on the inaugural day."

BJP should understand that governments come and go and if such kinds of trends are adopted then it wouldn't augur well for the country as well as for our vibrant democracy," he added.

Rathore said the state government should avoid such lavish functions in Covid period and in financial crunch period for the state, and instead the funds should have been utilized for the development of the state.

He added Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur should seek financial package from Union Home Minister Amit Shah as it will help the state in coming out funds crunch and if Thakur put forward such demand, then Congress will extend support to him.

"Congress party will pay floral tributes to Indira Gandhi and Dr YS Parmar on 25 January and will spread awareness of party's contribution on formation of Himachal Pradesh," he added.

Khattar releases poetry collections penned by senior IAS officer

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 23 JANUARY

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Saturday released two new poetry collections – titled 'Megh Mekhla' and 'Reshma Rassian' – authored by senior IAS officer Dheera Khandelwal at a function organised by Haryana Sahitya Akademi.

Throwing light on the new poetic collections, Khandelwal, the CM said all her poems written in touching language style are interesting and inspiring. He said Khandelwal is not only a competent and skilled officer but also a sensitive writer.

Prior to this, her four col-



lections of poems titled 'Mukhar Maun', 'Sanjh Sakare', 'Khalon Ke Khalan' 'Antar Aakash' and

two Haiku collections titled 'Taaron Ki Taraf' and 'Manmukh' have also been published.

While presenting vote of thanks, additional chief secretary, information, public relations and languages department Khandelwal said the CM always encouraged the academics in the state to prepare new schemes for the promotion of literature and welfare of literateurs. Apart from this, the Budget of Akademis has also been increased significantly.

Khandelwal said that she is fortunate that she has got the atmosphere of writing literature since childhood. She said that while her new collection 'Megh Mekhla' symbolises strength, 'Reshma Rassian' symbolizes pleasant bonding.

INTERSECTIONS



A view of hills, wrapped in a dense sheet of fog, from Theog near Shimla on Saturday.

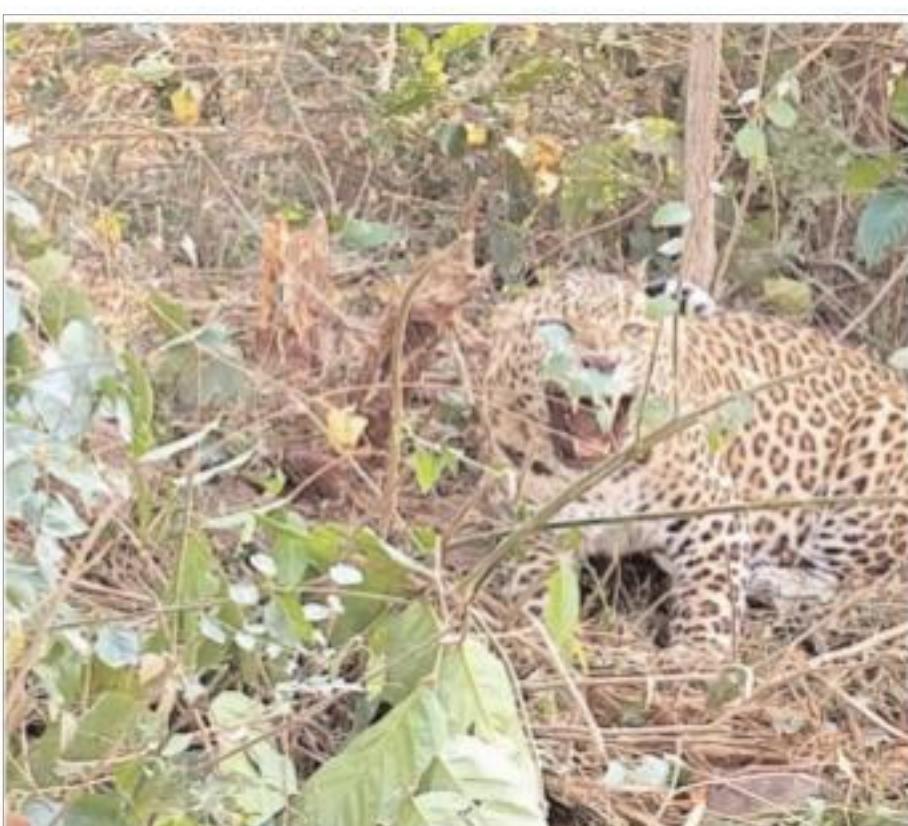
ED files chargesheet against H'yana firm, directors who duped 31 lakh investors

PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

The Enforcement Directorate Saturday said a money laundering chargesheet has been filed against a Haryana-based company and its directors accused of cheating about 31 lakh investors by way of a Ponzi or fraud multi-level marketing scheme.

It said a prosecution complaint or chargesheet has been filed against Hisar-based Future Maker Lifecare Pvt Ltd and its two directors Radhe Shyam and Banshi Lal under various sections of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Leopard stuck in poachers' trap in Dehradun rescued



Trapped leopard at Sorna (Guleria) in Dehradun on Saturday.

SNS

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 23 JANUARY

A team of the Uttarakhand forest department rescued a leopard, which got stuck in a trap set up by poachers, in Dehradun on Saturday.

The four-hour-long operation saw the team using a tranquilizer gun and shifting the feline in a cage to ferry it to the forest department campus at Timli.

Poachers are active in the western part of Dehradun and wild animals get trapped in snare, made by using clutch wire of two-wheelers, on a regular basis. Earlier this month on 2 January a leopard was killed at Jhajra, after getting stuck in a trap fixed by poachers. A forest department team rescued a Sambar deer recently which entered Timli village after a poaching attempt by miscreants. A wild boar stuck in a clutch wire trap was rescued from Jhajra

As the news about the trapped leopard spread in the area, a big crowd gathered on the site.

The presence of a big crowd made the rescue operation complicated. Rescue team member Ravi Joshi said, "The leopard is about eight year old."

The court on January 14 had granted bail to Vineet Kumar, saying he was a Delhi Police official and there was no chance of his absconding.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Dinesh Kumar granted bail to 21-year-old Kashish Kumar, son of Head Constable Vineet Kumar, on furnishing a bail bond of Rs 20,000 with one surety of like amount in the case.

The court on January 14 had granted bail to Vineet Kumar, saying he was a Delhi Police official and there was no chance of his absconding.

While granting bail to Kashish, the court said the investigating officer has submitted that custodial interrogation of the accused was not required now and he was a young man with no previous

criminal record.

"He (Kashish) is a young boy. There are no chances of his absconding. His presence can be secured by seeking a sound surety from him. Investigation qua him is already stated to be complete as his custody is not required by the IO (investigating officer)," the court said in its order. It further said all the offences alleged to have been committed by the accused provides a maximum punishment of up to seven years and he has already spent 20 days in custody.

Considering the facts and circumstances of the case,

AAP holds motorcycle rallies in Punjab to mobilise support for farmers' tractor parade on Republic Day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 23 JANUARY

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday took out motorcycle rallies in several parts of Punjab to mobilise people for farmers' tractor parade in Delhi against the Centre's agriculture laws on 26 January.

AAP's state president and Member of Parliament, Bhagwant Mann said the party workers have taken out motorcycle rallies across the state to mobilise people for the tractor parade in the national capital on Republic Day.

All the party legislators organised motorcycle rallies with supporters and volunteers in their respective constituencies.

"This rally has not been taken out for any political purpose, nor should it be seen as political. We all come from farmer families and



farming is in our blood. Our ancestors were farmers and still more than 80 per cent of the people of Punjab are involved in farming. Being the son of a farmer, we have organised this motorcycle

rally to give our support in farmers tractor parade," said Mann.

He said more and more people could join the tractor parade and shatter the pride of Prime Minister



Narendra Modi-led government, which had done a deal of the farmers under a settlement with the corporate houses.

The AAP leader said that for the first time after the

"Today, our country is going through a very critical period and all the rights enshrined in the Constitution are being trampled on by the ruling dictator Modi government," said Mann.

independence of the country, there would be such a procession where on one hand the 'jawans' (defense personnel) would parade and on the other hand the farmers of the country would parade with their tractors on the Delhi roads.

"Today, our country is going through a very critical period and all the rights enshrined in the Constitution are being trampled on by the ruling dictator Modi government," said Mann.

The AAP leader said the

Constitution gives the right to protest peacefully and to speak, but the Modi-led Central government was somehow trying to take away that right.

Mann said for the last several months the country's farmers have been protesting against the Centre's anti-farmers agriculture black laws. But instead of yielding to their demands, the Union government is trying to stigmatize the farmers' movement by branding them as terrorists, traitors, agents of Pakistan and China, said Mann.

He said the Modi government was defaming the country by spreading propaganda against the peacefully agitating farmers.

Mann said the Modi government should listen to the legitimate demands of the farmers and immediately repeal the black laws.

Cop's son given bail in case of candidates' impersonation in constables exam

PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

A court here granted bail to the son of a Delhi Police official on Saturday in a case of alleged impersonation of candidates in an examination conducted for recruitment of constables.

The court on January 14 had granted bail to Vineet Kumar, saying he was a Delhi Police official and there was no chance of his absconding.

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While granting bail to Kashish, the court said the investigating officer has submitted that custodial interrogation of the accused was not required now and he was a young man with no previous

criminal record.

"He (Kashish) is a young boy. There are no chances of his absconding. His presence can be secured by seeking a sound

surety from him. Investigation qua him is already stated to be complete as his custody is not required by the IO (investigating officer)," the court said in its order. It further said all the offences alleged to have been committed by the accused provides a maximum punishment of up to seven years and he has already spent 20 days in custody.

Considering the facts and circumstances of the case,

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures.
SWEATER & JACKETS SALE WINTER OFFER
ARROW Raymond ColorPlus LOUIS PHILIPPE PARK AVENUE

Hi-Fashion winter Collection 2020
Best Brands Sweaters, Jackets, sweat shirts, Lower, Cardigan & winter wears
up to 60% off
By Economy Sales: 9212758425
PUNCHKUAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
JANAKPUR B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing



I am grassroots-level leader but Stalin rose to the present post because of his father who was a Chief Minister and party president

TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER K PALANISWAMI

DARING DMK PRESIDENT M K STALIN TO DEBATE WITH HIM ON CORRUPTION

THUMBNAILS



Commuters move slowly on a street due to low visibility amid dense fog during a cold winter morning, in Bihar on Saturday.

IANS

Andhra Panchayat polls to be held in four phases

State govt has moved the SC against the schedule announced by the SEC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 23 JANUARY

Andhra Pradesh State Election Commission today issued a notification for holding Gram Panchayat election across the state in four phases even though the state government had urged it to revise the schedule citing the ongoing vaccination drive and government employees have threatened to boycott the elections due to the pan-

demic.

Chief secretary Adityanath Das wrote a letter to the State Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar pointing out that it will be difficult to vaccinate the polling personnel as well as their deployment for poll duty. He said the state government was ready to conduct elections after 600 days of completion of the first round of vaccination of frontline staff involved in the poll process. The vaccine will be effective only after the first and

second doses and another four weeks according to health ministry guidelines. The state government has also moved SC against the schedule announced by the SEC.

The SEC, however, announced polls in four phases which will be held on 5, 9, 13 and 14 February. Polling will be held between 6:30 am and 3:30 pm and counting will commence from 4 pm on the same day. Submission of nominations papers will begin from tomorrow.

Ramesh also criticised the higher officials of Panchayat Raj department blaming them as the Commission was forced to conduct elections according to 2019 electoral rolls and said action would be initiated against those responsible at the appropriate time. Incidentally, Gopal Krishna Dwivedi the departmental secretary was the chief electoral officer of AP during 2019 General and Assembly elections and had been quite strict with the previous TDP regime.

It is not only the state government but even employees have threatened to boycott the elections due to the pandemic situation and challenged the SEC to terminate as many of them as he can. As leaders of employee unions made belligerent statements in a letter to the DGP the State

Election Commissioner complained that the chairman of the Federation of State Government Employees, Venkataarami Reddy has issued a death threat against him and asked the police to keep a close watch on the activities of Mr Reddy. Quoting Reddy who in a much publicised statement had said: "The Constitution has given a right to every individual to defend their life. In continuance of this right the Constitution has given the right to kill," the SEC in a letter to DGP Gautam Sawang wrote: "The Commission views this as most provocative and an unfortunate comment and a potential death threat issued against the Commissioner in his personal capacity. The Commission therefore desires the Director General of Police, AP to take due cognizance of the above and keep a close watch on the activities are likely to lead to events and situations resulting in physical hurt to the Commissioner."

The ruling YSRCP leaders have alleged Ramesh Kumar has been keen to hold polls in February this year since he will be retiring in March.

The state government and the SEC have been in locked in a legal battle for almost a year over conducting local bodies poll.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SIVASAGAR, 23 JANUARY

Reaching out to the indigenous people of election-bound Assam amid frequent anti-CAA protests, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday distributed land ownership certificates to over one lakh such families, insisting the move will guarantee them "pride, freedom and protection". On his first physical visit outside the national capital this year, Modi reaffirmed the state and the central government's commitment to protecting the land rights and the unique cultural traditions of the indigenous people. He also castigated the previous governments for depriving them of their land rights for years since Independence.

"When the Sarbananda Sonowal government took over the reins in Assam, more than six lakh indigenous families had no legal rights over their land. In the last few years more than two lakh such families have been allotted ownership certificates.

"With more than one lakh families added today, the government has shown its commitment to protecting the rights of the indigenous people," Modi said. "The land ownership certificates (pattas) will guarantee their 'Swabhiman' (pride), 'Swadheenta (freedom) and 'Suraksha' (protection)," the prime minister asserted.

As Modi spoke at the function in Sivasagar, the historical



capital of the Asom kings, anti-CAA and anti-NRC protests were staged at several places in Assam.

Seeking to impart nationalistic fervour to the event, Modi said Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, "inspires hope and national pride".

He asserted that the BJP-led government is committed to protecting the land, language and culture of the indigenous people of Assam. Modi said the state's BJP-led government had introduced a new land policy in 2019 to give land ownership rights to them. "They can now improve their living standards by availing of the benefits of a host of central government schemes like PM Kisan Samman Nihi, crop insurance scheme, and also easily secure farm loans from banks," he said.

About 70 tribal communities in Assam were provided social security under BJP-led governments at the Centre and in the state, he said. Modi said, in the last four years and half, his government took steps to honour and promote Assamese literary, cultural and spiritual heritage. "It should have been

the responsibility of all governments to preserve, protect and spread Assam's cultural heritage. But what happened to the sattras, including Batdara, the birth place of saint Sri Manta Sankardeva, is not hidden from the people of Assam," he said. He said the 1.75 crore Jan Dhan accounts opened by his government proved a boon during the pandemic as relief funds could be directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries without any leakage. Over 50 lakh cooking gas cylinders were distributed to 35 lakh households under the Ujjwala scheme during the pandemic, he said.

Reaffirming his commitment to restoring peace in the North East, Modi said the historic Bodo accord signed last year, and the subsequent Bodoland Territorial Council election gave a fresh impetus to the state's development. Noting that Assam and other states of the North East formed the cornerstone of this government's 'Act East Policy', Modi said improved surface, water and air connectivity has opened new vistas of development in the region.

TENDER

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT 'NOTICE INVITING TENDERS'

Sealed item rates tenders on form 6&8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Palampur Division, HPPWD, Palampur on behalf of the Governor of H.P. for the following works from the approved and eligible contractors enlisted in HPPWD, (B&R) whose registration stood renewed as per revised rules and also registered under H.P. General Sales Tax Act 1968 so as to reach in his office on or before 10.2.2021 upto 11:00 AM and the same shall be opened on the same day at 11:30 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender documents can be had from his office against cash payment (Non-refundable) on 9.2.2021 upto 4:00 P.M. and the application for issue of tender form shall be received on 8.2.2021 upto 12:00 noon.

The earnest money in the shape of FDR/saving account of the Post office/Bank in H.P. duly pledged in favour of the XEN must accompany with each tender. Conditional/incomplete tenders & tender without earnest money will summarily rejected. The XEN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders or drop the proposal of tenders without assigning any reason.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost (In Rs.)	Earliest Money (In Rs.)	Cost of form (In Rs.)	Time limit
1.	C/O approach road to Joint Office building at Palampur (SW:- C/O R/wall with pucca length: 4.50 mtr. Ht. = 9.60 mtr)	2,15,58/-	4350/-	350/-	Three Months
2.	C/O link road from main road d Banuri Basti - Odder via Crescent School and Panchayat Ghar upto NH-154 (SW:- C/O 2.00 mtr. Span RCC slab culvert at RD 1/00)	2,60,739/-	6650/-	350/-	Three Months
3.	C/O link road Cinema Hall bye pass road to join Ghuggar Ram Chowk (SW:- P/L Cement concrete pavement at RD 0/00 to 0/150)	3,41,545/-	6850/-	350/-	Three Months
4.	C/O link road Banuri to Odder 0/00 to 2/500 (SW:- C/O R/wall , U-shape drain etc. RD 1/700 to 1/800, R/wall 1/675 to 1/700 under MNP)	3,42,551/-	6851/-	350/-	Three Months
5.	C/O link road main road toward Lohar Basti Raichhila-Speru 0/00 to 2/500 (SW:- C/O U-shape drain at RD 0/150 to 0/400 and CC pavement at Km. 0/350 to 0/430 (MMGSY)	3,15,069/-	6300/-	350/-	Three Months
6.	C/O link road GPS Bandia to Samshain Ghat Bandia 0/000 to 0/150 (SW:- C/O CC pavement road form RD 0/00 to 0/018 & 0/110 to 0/120 & 0/143 (MMGSY)	1,14,982/-	2300/-	350/-	Three Months
7.	C/O link road from main road to Toran Village Km:- 0/000 to 4/600 (SW:- P/L Cement concrete road at RD 3/350 to 3/400 and 3/600 to 3/650 (MMGSY)	1,60,823/-	3250/-	350/-	Three Months
8.	Dharmashala Yol Dadhi Palampur road (SW:- P/L Interlocking pavement both side of beams at RD 31/922 to 32/052 L/side 31/925 to 32/075 R/side 32/180 to 32/260 L/side)	4,87,739/-	9750/-	350/-	Three Months
9.	Special repair of 5th Circle office building at Palampur (SW:- Providing and laying tile flooring in varanda Ground floor & first floor)	4,63,287/-	9300/-	350/-	Three Months

Terms and conditions:-

Following documents should accompany the application for tenders.

1. G.S.T. No.
2. Valid copy of registration.
3. Machinery will be of the contractor where required.
4. Certificate regarding possession of machinery.
5. Telegraphic /Fax tenders are not acceptable
6. The tender documents can be received by registered/insured post which should be received in this office on or before the date of opening of tender by 11:00 A.M. positively.
7. Contractor should have successfully executed two works of similar nature of 1/3 amount of estimated cost of similar single work of amount equal to estimated cost during the last preceding three years.
8. The contractor will have to submit affidavit alongwith application for issue of tender that he has not more than two works in hand. Next tender will be issued only after completion of previous works in hand.

5282/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

R-DAY BECKONS



A contingent of Bangladesh takes part in a full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day parade at Rajpath in New Delhi on Saturday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

'If LDF wins in Kerala then PM's intentions will come true'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
T'PURAM, 23 JANUARY

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday said that if LDF wins in Kerala, then Modi's dream of Congress-free India will come true.

Gehlot who reached Thiruvananthapuram as AICC's observer to coordinate the poll activities of Congress in Kerala, while addressing the party men in Indira Bhavan here, said "In every five years, Kerala witnesses a regime change.

"UDF and LDF form government intermittently. Our fight is against BJP. In Bengal, Congress is cooperating with CPI-M."

A Congress-free India is what Modi is dreaming of and if the LDF wins in Kerala, then that would make Modi's dreams come true."

Stating that BJP is the Congress' main opponent across the country, Gehlot urged that the BJP's plank of 'Congress-mukt Bharat' has to be opposed at any cost.

He further said that the RSS and BJP elements are working together to destroy Indian democracy through unconstitutional activities.

"The Modi government is using these Central agencies to disrupt governments, democratic processes, as they are dancing to the tune of their political masters," he said.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT "NOTICE INVITING TENDERS"

Sealed item rate tender are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Ghumarwin Division, HP-PWD, Ghumarwin for the following works from the registered contractors of appropriate class enlisted in HP-PWD, whose registrations stood renewed as per revised instructions and also registered dealers under the Himachal Pradesh, General Sales Tax Act, 1968. The important date of tender are as under:-

Date of application 5/2/2021

Date of sale of tender 6/2/2021

The tender shall be received up to 11:00A.M. on 8/2/2021 and will be opened on the same day at 11:30 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representative who may like to be present. The tender form can be had from this office against cash payment as shown below (Non-refundable) during the working hours on 6/2/2021.

The Earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Deposit at call/ Time Deposit /Account/ in any of the Post-Office /Nationalized Bank in H.P. duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Ghumarwin Division, HP-PWD, Ghumarwin must accompany with each application. Conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money will simultaneously be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days. The XEN reserves the right to accept or reject the tenders without assigning any reason.

S.No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earliest Money	Cost of form	Time limit
1.	Construction of road from Goacher to Kalla via Jhamradian Km 0/0 to 5/00 (SH:- Wearing in Km 0/800 to 1/500)	170,780.00	3400	350	Three Month
2.	R/R damages on Nakheria to Luhar via Pasoi Km 0/0 to 6/255 (SH:- Providing wire crate at RD 4/100 to 4/115, Cause way at RD 4/100 to 4/120 and 4/120 along with drain).	355,260.00	7100	350	Three Month
3.	Construction of Additional Accommodation to HPPWD Rest house at Talar (SH:- C/o balance work of Building work, WS & SI and Rain Harvesting Tank & Soak Pit).	4,16,107.00	8300	350	Three Month
4.	A/R & M/o to various roads Under Berthin Sub Division (Section Talar) (SH:- Repair of Pot holes)	4,99,951.00	10,000	350	Three Month
5.	R/R damages on Bheela to Trebu Km 0/0 to 2/500 (SH:- C/o R/wall at RD 1/315 to 1/354) Under SCCP.	37,358.00	7500	350	Three Month
6.	Restoration of rain damages on Baroha Kohina road in Km 0/0 to 2/50 (SH:- C/o R/wall at RD 6/210 to 6/240).	2,88,038.00	5800	350	Three Month
7.	Construction of link Silwan to sooh Km 0/0 to 3/0 (SH:- Construction of wire crate as Retaining wall at Km 1/450 to 1/470).	4,85,314.00	9700	350	Three Month
8.	A/R & M/o to Rest house Talar (Non-residential building) (SH:- C/o R/wall in front of Rest House Tala).	38,835.00	7800	350	Three Month
9.	Construction of link road from Devi Ka Mode to Kosherian to Boat Ghat Km 0/0 to 2/560 (SH:- Construction of cement concrete pavement at RD 1/252 to 1/595).	2,00,548.00	4100	350	One Month
10.	C/o toilet Block at Govt. Sr. Sec. School at Jhanda in Tehsil Jhanda Distt Bilaspur HP (SH:- P/L PCC 1:3:6 floor wall tile work).	49,654.10	10,000	350	One Month
11.	R/R & M/o to NR building under HPPWD Division Jhanda (SH:- P/F Computer networking Hardware).	2,02,088.00	4400	350	Three Month
12.	C/o link road from Behna Brahma to Lower Pala Km 0/0 to 2/00 (SH:- 900 mm dia HPPC with wing walls at RD 0/075, 0/120 & 0/150 & RODF at RD 0/075 to 0/19).	4,93,768.00	9700	3	



Farmers head for Delhi for R-Day tractor parade

Tractors carried tricolour flags, posters with slogans of Kisan Ekta Zindabad, No Farmer, No Food

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH, 23 JANUARY

Several batches of farmers from Punjab and Haryana set out on Saturday in their tractor-trolleys and other vehicles to take part in the proposed tractor parade on January 26 in Delhi.

Carrying some ration, mattresses and other essentials, cavalcades of tractors left for Delhi to press the Centre to accept their demands.

Tractors carried the flags of the unions, some sported the tricolour, and also posters with slogans of 'Kisan Ekta Zindabad', 'No Farmer, No Food' and 'Kaale Kanoo Radd Karo'.

Farmer unions protesting the Centre's three farm laws had said they would go ahead with their tractor parade in Delhi on Republic Day.

They had announced to take out the tractor parade on the Outer Ring Road in Delhi.

Farmer leaders said that the tractor parade would be peaceful.

"Over 30,000 tractors and trolleys today moved from Khanauri (in Sangrur, Punjab) and Dabwali (in Sirsa district, Haryana) to join the tractor parade in Delhi," said Bharti Kisan Union (Ekta-Ugrahan) general secretary Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan on Saturday.

They are expected to reach the Tikri border on Saturday night. Some farmers even mounted tractors on trailers and a few even towed their tractors in order to save

diesel, said the farmer leaders.

"Some loaded their tractors in trailers and some even towed their vehicles in order to save fuel," said Kokrikalan. Similarly, a cavalcade of around 1,000 tractors left from Phagwara area and 150 tractors from Hoshiarpur in Punjab to become part of the parade, said the farmer leaders. A farmer leader in Barnala said they were getting a very good response to the call for joining the tractor parade.

Youth and elders are going in their tractors towards Delhi in a peaceful manner," he said. A batch of tractors and other vehicles from Fatehabad in Haryana also left for Delhi to join the parade, they said. Many farmers from Karnal and other districts would leave for the national capital on Sunday. Independent MLA from Dadri in Haryana, Sombir Sangwan, who recently withdrew his support to the Khatar government over farmers' issue, told reporters on Saturday that the Centre will have to agree to farmers' demands.

Sangwan, who had gone to meet protesting farmers at the Haryana-Rajasthan border near Rewari, also told reporters that farmers should be freely allowed to take part in tractor parade on January 26. Kirpal Singh Moosapuri, Vice-President, Bharati Kisan Union (Doaba) in Phagwara, Punjab, said, "More farmers with tractors will leave tomorrow as well. We expect over 5,000 tractors from Doaba region (in Punjab) alone to reach Delhi for the parade."

Release political prisoners, restore rights & dignity of people of J&K: NC MPs

JAMMU, 23 JANUARY

National Conference (NC) MPs have sought an end to the "political witch-hunt" in Jammu and Kashmir and called for immediate release of all political detainees, saying the unjustified and prolonged detentions reek of fear and repression.

In a statement, the NC members of Parliament, Muhammad Akbar lone and Hassnain Masoodi, said,

"The unwarranted intimidation and prolonged incarceration of political leaders and workers in Jammu and Kashmir reflects the atmosphere of fear and repression giving a ditch to the claims of government on bringing normalcy to Kashmir."

"Such a policy violates people's basic rights to free speech, association and expression guaranteed under the constitution of the country. The incessant witch-hunt over the unfounded and motivated allegations has also had a chilling effect on democracy in Kashmir. The Orwellian nightmare we are reeling through seems to be inescapable on account of ruling BJP's aversion to empowering native of Jammu and Kashmir politically, and economically. The unjust measures of the ruling BJP are unfortunately ignoring the human cost of such prolonged detentions due to the prevailing pandemic situation, ongoing winter chill. On emotional trepidation of the kith and kin of such detainees are going through is heart-wrenching," they said.

In its capacity of being a member of UNHRC and bursting with global aspirations, Government of India, with BJP in its steering position, should welcome calls for accountability and justice in Jammu and Kashmir.

"It is high time for New Delhi to allow democratic and legitimate political space in Jammu and Kashmir. Pushing its cronies and stooges down the throats of people will not help getting the democratic process in Kashmir on track," they said. The NC MPs said the recent verdict of the people in DDC elections was the best antidote to policy paralysis of New Delhi on J&K.

India, China to hold talks on LAC stand-off today



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

India and China will tomorrow hold the ninth round of senior commander level talks at Moldo, on the Chinese side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC), in yet another attempt to resolve the ongoing military stand-off at eastern Ladakh.

The talks, expected to begin in the morning, will focus on disengagement and de-escalation of troops, leading to peace and tranquility in border areas, sources said.

Lt General PGK Menon, commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps that oversees the Ladakh sector, will lead the Indian delegation at the talks.

There have been no talks between the two sides on the border row for more than a month now. The last meeting between the two countries was held on 18 December when their senior diplomats met under the framework of the Working mechanism for Coordination and Consultation (WMCC) in border areas.

The meeting had failed to make much headway on resolving the border stalemate. The last meeting of commanders' level meeting was held on 6 November.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava had yesterday stated that the two sides were in close communication and the senior commanders' meeting would be held soon.

Tensions between the two countries began in

April-May last year when New Delhi detected incursions by Chinese troops in Ladakh along with a massive deployment of Chinese military personnel. India too quickly moved in its troops to counter further incursions.

Previous rounds of military talks have failed to yield any consensus on the pull back of troops, with both sides having some 50,000 personnel each along the LAC.

Relations between the two countries plummeted to a new low following a violent clash between their troops at the Galwan valley on 15 June, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of casualties on the Chinese side. Meanwhile, in a clear message to China, Chief of Army Staff Gen M M Naravane last week said India is committed to resolve the eastern Ladakh stand-off through talks but no one should make any mistake of testing its patience.

The Indian Army is ready to stand its ground in eastern Ladakh for as long as it takes to resolve the stand-off, Naravane said, acknowledging that China is "manifesting itself" on the ground but added that the Indian forces are prepared to handle any eventuality.

After an initial round of disengagement in early July, the Chinese stepped back from the base of Finger 4 to Finger 5, and Indian troops moved to Finger 3. But the Chinese refused to vacate the ridge of Finger 4, and have been there ever since.

BSF detects underground tunnel along IB in Kathua ahead of R-Day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 23 JANUARY

Days ahead of Republic Day, the Border Security Force (BSF) achieved a major success when it detected a 150-meter-long underground tunnel constructed by Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district to facilitate the infiltration of terrorists for subversive activities, a top official said. This was the second such structure found beneath the International Border (IB) in Hirangan sector in 10 days, fourth in Jammu region within six months and 10th in the past decade.

Inspector General of BSF, Jammu frontier, NS Jamwal said the secret tunnel was detected during an anti-tunnelling operation in the border outpost (BOP) Pansar area of Hirangan, opposite Abhyali-Dogra and Kingre-de-Kothi in Shakargarh (Pakistan).

"There were inputs from intelligence agencies about existence of a tunnel in Pansar area and possibility of infiltration attempt ahead of Republic Day. Accordingly, our anti-tunnelling campaign was intensified, which led to the detection of the tunnel," Jamwal, who rushed to the spot, told reporters there.

He said Pakistan has constructed this tunnel from the zero line and it is about 150-meter-long with 25 to 30 feet depth and two to three feet diameter so that one can crawl easily to pass through this tunnel.

"It is a big achievement and full credit goes to the troops on the ground and the intelligence agencies who are providing regular inputs to us," he said, highlighting the role of Pakistan in the construction of tunnels to facilitate infiltration of terrorists into India.

"The whole Pakistani establishment is involved as nobody

can come close to zero line without the knowledge of Pakistani Army, Rangers and ISI. The tunnel was constructed with an engineering effort and its construction demonstrates that a thought process was involved wherein the experts were involved to study and check the soil so that the tunnel can sustain and do not collapse," Jamwal said. The Jammu BSF chief said such type of a construction is not possible without the support of the administration.

"This is a difficult and sensitive area. This is the same area where we shot down a hexacopter in June last year. Two years earlier, there was a sniping incident from Pakistan and four to five years back, a fire assault also took place on BSF troops. It seems they have started the construction of the tunnel during that time," the IG BSF said, adding that in November 2019, the force fired after noticing movement of terrorists and neutralised their bid and forced them to flee back.

Jamwal said there was no specific input with regard to 26 December but the BSF is always alert and fully prepared to safeguard the borders of the country, especially during the National Days.



Baghdadi brutality

Embattled Baghdad has been roiled again with the death of no fewer than 32 people and injuries suffered by as many as 100 in Thursday's twin suicide bombings in a busy commercial area of the Iraqi capital. The region is home to a second-hand clothes market, and a segment of the economy has been blighted. Though no group has as yet claimed responsibility, the general suspicion is on the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. The last deadly suicide attack in the city occurred in January 2018, when 35 people were killed in Tayaran Square. Three years later, the bombers blew themselves up among a crowd of shoppers. Baghdad remains ever so volatile, indeed a capital where tension rages beneath the tenor of normal life, with violence and killings a further inch beneath. Indeed, the frighteningly volatile ambience of the place hasn't really changed since the days that followed the repressive era of Saddam Hussein. Towards the end of 2017, the Iraqi government had declared victory in its war against ISIS, the forbidding entity that has extended its tentacles to different parts of the world. However, sleeper cells continue to wage a low-level insurgency in the country, operating mainly in rural areas and targeting security forces. There appears to be some confusion within the government itself. Iraqi military spokesman Yehia Rasool said Thursday morning's attack was "carried out by two suicide bombers who detonated themselves when pursued by security forces" through the Bab Sharqi area. But other accounts suggested that the assailants moved freely through Tayaran Square, which was busy following the easing of coronavirus-related restrictions. The inherent irony is cruel. The lifting of pandemic-related curbs would suggest a forward movement towards the normal, such as it is. Alas, it has turned out to be an occasion for strife and killings. An interior ministry statement said the first bomber rushed into the market, claiming to feel sick. When people gathered around him he detonated an explosive belt he was wearing. There was, therefore, a fair measure of planning and calibration before the spirited footsoldiers of ISIS stormed the market, as generally believed in the beleaguered country.

The attacks have occurred days after Iraq's government said an early general election would be postponed from June until October in order to give electoral authorities more time to register voters and new parties. The Iraqi President, Barham Saleh, said the targeting of innocent people in Baghdad "at this specific time confirms the attempt by the groups of darkness to target all national entitlements and our people's aspirations for a safe future". Last year, Donald Trump had ordered the withdrawal of half the American troops deployed in Iraq, saying he had confidence in the ability of local forces to prevent a resurgence of ISIS. The US presence was cut from 5,200 to 3,000 in September, and was due to fall to 2,500 this month. Just as the "local forces" have failed in Afghanistan, so too have they been ineffectual in Iraq.

How's that?

Sen Venkataraghavan, the Indian cricket team's manager on their 1985 tour of Australia, found himself alongside Donald Bradman one day, both watching the players grind through their routine but elaborate calisthenics. How the great Australian had kept himself fit in his time out there in the middle was what the erstwhile spinner extraordinaire wanted to know. Asked the very simple question, Bradman offered an equally uncluttered answer: all that he had had to do was to keep playing cricket. No more, no less. Venkataraghavan would have been very happy, given that this had been his own way in his day too, and had led to his being described as supremely fit even when he played Test cricket at the age of 38. More or less contemporaneously, Brian Johnston wrote that merely looking on as the West Indies, led by Clive Lloyd, tuned physically up for a Test match in London, he had felt utterly knackered himself, the specialist-supervised motions being gone through a world away from how he had viewed the game previously. The game, Venkataraghavan once said in an interview, called essentially for cricketing fitness and not the Olympian kind. Behind the Caribbeans' 1983 World Cup final defeat were niggles and injuries suppressed or half-hidden, or so said some people at the time and later on. Inquiries might not have been attempted since fitness had already become one of sport's ancillary industries.

And how India were similarly hamstrung during their latest tour of Australia could have been a story by itself if uncomfortable questions could still be asked. That India yet completed an unbelievably second fairytale series triumph is hardly the central point here. What is that for all the purportedly scientific efforts that go into the vital business of building a squad that will be at the peak of fitness at the right moment, all of India's first-choice bowlers, left injured, were out of the decisive Test in Brisbane.

Mohammad Siraj and Shardul Thakur sent Australia hurtling towards doom where they had anticipated victory all right but the situation ought to have struck the Board of Control for Cricket in India as something that merited an inquiry, especially when it is led by a former national captain. Nothing suggestive of one is in the public domain. Australia coach Justin Langer, who also has had to cope with injuries, has referred, shifting attention from possible flawed training, to the Indian Premier League's timing, which he thought was wrong. If it is the BCCI which organises the extremely controversial tournament and then sends its team to Australia where injury strikes with the force of a celestially delivered curse, something is being got wrong somewhere along the way by those widely expected to do a better job. A rich institution poor in thinking is the unavoidable conclusion.

From defeat to hero ~ I

As the President of the Haripura Congress (1938), Subhas' speech was a long one. He was sure that India's independence was imminent and therefore delved into issues of economic reconstruction. He proposed a planning commission and made it clear that post-Independence reconstruction would be primarily by industrialisation



Subhas Chandra Bose was in prison when Jawaharlal Nehru became the Congress President in 1936. He was prohibited from having any correspondence with Gandhi even on issues like Khadi and Harijan upliftment. At the time of his release on 17 March 1937, the elections under the Government of India Act of 1935 were underway and the Congress performed exceedingly well. It was also the time to decide about the next presidency of the Congress party.

Gandhi noted: "I have observed that Subhas is not at all dependable. But there is nobody but he who can be the President". Despite considering him undependable, Gandhi chose him as Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad and C Rajagopalachari were busy with government formation.

Gandhi also persuaded Subhas to go to Europe to take some rest and be completely fit. Subhas however was eager to present a more moderate image. He wrote his autobiography *The Indian Pilgrim* (1937) to demonstrate the interconnections between religion, politics and economics. It was hastily written and remained incomplete.

As the President of the Haripura Congress (1938), Subhas' speech was a long one. He was sure that India's independence was imminent and therefore delved into issues of economic reconstruction. He proposed a planning commission and made it clear that post-Independence reconstruction would be primarily by industrialisation. He accepted the seamier sides of industrialisation but clearly stated there were no other mechanisms for modernization and poverty alleviation and as such it would have to be accepted with all its limitations.

It was a mild criticism of Gandhi, but the overall tone was conciliatory. Rudrangshu Mukherjee comments "at the beginning of 1938 Subhas' path to political freedom was very much determined by the methods of Gandhi". Subhas had totally forgotten his earlier critique of Gandhi which he had articulated in the early 1930s and publicly proclaimed his acceptance of Congress and Gandhi's creed including Khadi. His attempt seemed to be to assure the old guard that his earlier radicalism and unilateralism were over and that he was a firm believer in moderation and consensus.

His socialistic rhetoric was ambivalent, and his critique of capitalism was opaque

unlike Jawaharlal's frontal attack at the Lucknow Congress in 1936 which sent shock waves among the capitalists, Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Rajaji. Subhas attempted a new consensus between the left and the right wingers within the Congress. A working committee was formed without a socialist representative by Gandhi and Patel.

Nehru was critical of Subhas' act which he said was more like that of a speaker than a president. NB Khare even went to the extent of calling Subhas "a puppet in the hands of Mahatma Gandhi". Subhas on his part tried his best to achieve what he had promised in his presidential address. In order to secure



The writers are, respectively, Professor (retired) of Political Science, University of Delhi and Associate Professor in Political Science, Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi

Gandhi's support, he pledged his assistance to developing cottage industries stressing that this was not at variance with large scale ones. The most remarkable achievement of the Subhas presidency was the setting up of the National Planning Committee on 17 December 1938 with Jawaharlal as its President. Both Subhas and Jawaharlal were careful to emphasize that cottage industries and Khadi would not be neglected.

However, there was a serious setback to the apparent reconciliation between Gandhi and Subhas as the former rejected the proposal for a coalition government in Bengal. Sarat, elder brother of Subhas who was active in Bengal politics and Subhas wanted a coalition between the Congress, Fazlul Haq's Krishak Praja Party and some other minor groups to form the government. But Gandhi rejected it without consulting the Bose brothers. Subhas regarded Gandhi's unilateral decision to be completely fallacious and stat-

ed that he could not be a party to such a decision. He wanted the installation of a Congress government as that would considerably enhance its prestige and help to bargain better with the British government.

The reasons behind Gandhi's action were unclear. Subhas could not accept Gandhi's decision which was taken without a detailed discussion with the Congress President. It was the beginning of the parting of ways between the two leading to Gandhi's direction to Subhas not to contest for the second term which the latter refused.

Subhas wanted a second term and felt he too would be given one considering Jawaharlal had one at the end of 1936 as the latter pleaded that one year was insufficient to revitalize and galvanize the party. Patel was unhappy with Subhas' conduct as the Congress President and felt that the latter did "not know his own job". There were personal differences between the two as well. He was unhappy with Subhas' attitude in the working committee where he spoke rarely.

After Gandhi announced the name of Pattabhi Sitaramayya for the presidency of the Congress, Subhas announced his intention to run for the second term and in this he received full and enthusiastic support from Tagore, a rationalist and a pluralist.

Gandhi's Congress was an umbrella party with many shades of opinion. However, the core power structure like the working committee was rigidly controlled by Gandhi and his close associates. Despite the undue emphasis placed on consensus it was Gandhi's preferences that mattered the most. For instance, Jawaharlal could become the Congress president four times, first time because Motilal Nehru wished it, second after the death of Kamala Nehru and third when Jawaharlal wanted a second term. The fourth was just before independence to consolidate and elevate his position as the future prime minister.

Subhas' claim was not acceptable to Patel and six other members of the Working Committee. Subhas was willing to withdraw if a 'genuine anti-federalist' like Acharya Narendra Dev was accepted as the president as that was absolutely imperative since he suspected that right-wingers within the party could compromise with Britain on the issue of the federal structure. Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Sitaramayya denied any such plan.

(To be Concluded)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Trinamul's candidate from Nandigram

SIR, This refers to your excellent editorial 'Miss Banerjee's voice' (21 January). It is not denying that singur and Nandigram movements played important role in bringing Mamata Banerjee to state power but she hardly visited the places afterwards for any development there. Besides her excessive appeasement of minority community in Nandigram has sharply divided the village into communal and religious line. The voters appear to be

highly polarized now. This type of communal divide was not even evident during the days of fierce clashes between the government and the Bhumi uccched Pratirakha committee(BPUC) in 2007. The majority Hindus are united and seems to have turned their faces from Trinamool. So to contest from Nandigram may not be wise for Mamata specially when the opponent is Subhendu. You have rightly remarked, "True to character Miss Banerjee has coun-

tered the Adhikary bouncer with a fierce hook, we will soon know if the ball sails over the rope or leaves her caught out".

Yours, etc., Dilip Kumar Sengupta, Kolkata, 21 January.

UNINSURED

SIR, Notwithstanding the menace of air pollution is engulfing the entire world and number of COPD related cases on the rise to the utter detriment of common people, it seems the matter has

failed to stir the conscience of our Central Government as yet.

It requires no underlining the fact that in such a grim situation, battery operated vehicles can reduce harmful air pollution from exhaust emissions. Yet, save and except offering some subsidy, the Government is not doing anything to encourage ordinary people to use and/or migrate from traditional oil driven vehicles to electric ones.

As a responsible citizen

of this country, very recently, I purchased a battery operated two-wheeler and subsequently approached different insurance companies for insuring it. According to

the Central Govt. Rules, such vehicles do not require any registration.

Yet, to my utter surprise, no insurance company came forward to issue a policy in respect of the two-wheeler for want of a registration number. As a result, not only shall I have to bear huge repair costs in the event of damage, I will be in a soup if the vehicle is stolen. Finally, if the two-wheel-

er is in an accident causing injury/death to someone, the victim would be deprived of due monetary compensation. Although I highlighted all these issues to the IRDAI and the Central Government, my missive to them went unanswered, as is often the case. Now, I am literally cursing myself for buying this two-wheeler. Through this esteemed newspaper, I urge all like-minded people to think a hundred times before making the mistake I did.

Yours, etc., Prabir Kumar Pal, Kolkata, 11 December.



RAVAGED TOWN

SIR, I visited Chandannagar last Sunday, 17 January. Chandannagar evokes nostalgia as I was born and brought up here. My schooling was at Shri Aurobindo Vidyamandir from where I passed the Madhyamik in 1985, after which our family migrated to Kolkata. I visited my hometown almost after a year and was surprised as well as anguished to see its dilapidated condition. Right from the entry point at Delhi Road passing through Khalishani and Chandannagar rail station upto the strand, roads have been dug up everywhere, street corners are dirty and congested, and traffic management is shoddy. Even the Strand on the bank of the Hooghly river has not been spared from digging. There was mud and dust everywhere. There has also been an exponential growth of high-rise apartments robbing my hometown of all her beauty. This is certainly not the Chandannagar where I roamed about on my bicycle. Modernization is a boon but to rob the natural resources of a place and establish a promoter cum syndicate raj is an unpardonable crime.

Tears rolled down my eyes when I visited the senior section of my beloved school, Shri Aurobindo Vidyamandir. The school building looks like a haunted house. No repair has taken place perhaps in last four decades. The entire building is in shambles. I am proud to have been a student of this institution from Class KG to Class 10, i.e. from 1974 to 1985, and till date the school performs the best in Hooghly district in terms of academic performance. Why do the local councillor and MLA not take necessary steps to urge the state government to do the necessary repair works? Why are the local ruling party cadres who are ex-students of this school silent on this issue? Chandannagar is blessed with a rich culture and heritage. I would appeal to Government of India through this esteemed daily to do whatever is necessary to preserve its rich cultural heritage.

Yours, etc., Purushottam Chatterjee, Kolkata, 22 January.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

China's 'gift' to Pakistan

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Thursday announced that China has promised to provide 500,000 doses of a coronavirus vaccine to Pakistan by January 31. In a video message after a phone call with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi, Qureshi said China offered Islamabad to send an airplane and airlift the vaccines. The minister said he held a detailed conversation with the Chinese foreign minister in which he "discussed Pakistan's requirements", after Prime Minister Imran Khan had directed him to increase interaction with Beijing "considering the sensitivity of the situation". "I want to give the nation the good news that China has promised to immediately provide 500,000 doses of vaccine to Pakistan by January 31," he said. "They (China) have said you can send your airplane and immediately airlift this drug," he added, saying the development would "help save many lives" in Pakistan. In a tweet, Qureshi suggested the doses to be provided to Pakistan will be of the Sinopharm vaccine, which the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (Drsp) had approved for emergency use in the country earlier this week.

"With encouraging results of Chinese vaccine and our historic relationship, Pakistan has approved emergency use authorisation of SinoPharm (vaccine). Indeed Pakistan greatly appreciates the 500,000 doses of the vaccine gifted by China," he wrote. The vaccine was developed by the Beijing Institute of Biological Products, a subsidiary of state-owned conglomerate Sinopharm.

The company announced last month that preliminary data from last-stage trials had shown it to be 79.3 per cent effective. But Qureshi said he

DAWN informed his Chinese counterpart that Pakistan's requirement for vaccines is "more than this", and that it will need 1.1 million doses in the near future. At this, [the Chinese foreign minister] said 'we plan to fulfil this requirement of yours as well by the end of February and the 1.1m doses will be made available to you,' he revealed in the video message. China had decided to work for the "global public good" in the context of Covid-19, Qureshi said, adding that Foreign Minister Wang told him the first country they thought of to assist was Pakistan keeping in view the "all-weather strategic relationship" between the two countries.

"We want to assure Pakistan that our cooperation with you will continue," the minister quoted Wang as saying. Qureshi also said he and Foreign Minister Wang had discussed that trials of Chinese firm CanSino's vaccine in Pakistan were successfully moving forward and their results had been "quite encouraging". "Pakistan has a huge population in order to fulfil its needs, we also discussed what

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

GUHA ROY-DATTA — Asok and Bonny happily remember this day of 1971, when they were united.

The Vaccination Conundrum

SATYA MOHANTY

Vaccines are around the corner bringing much needed cheer at the year end. Modern life is all about instant gratification and people want to take the jab and move around like nothing ever happened. But as experts correctly emphasize vaccines will not prevent Covid-19 but vaccination will. The gigantic task of logistics of transport, storage and delivery has been planned perhaps reasonably well. So is the prioritization of 300 million population. But when vaccines are a product of nationalistic fervor, driven by the political drive to make it available at the earliest, inevitably there will be fear with regard to its efficacy and safety.

Vaccines normally go through rigorous testing which takes years. The collapsed timeline justifiably creates some doubt in the recipient population. It also becomes a difficult thing when politics and the pharma industry tango together. It is said about the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines that they have not been tested on children and pregnant women. They have not been tested adequately on Asian ethnicities. The Indian exercise started a little later than elsewhere, but the logistic plan seems to be in place. The cold storage and transportation plans are ready perhaps.

But it will be the biggest vaccination over a four-month period the country has ever seen. Trained inoculators to administer the intramuscular vaccine may not be adequate finally. To be fair, the country ordinarily handles 30-50 million vaccinations a year at the high point. But the population will require safety data, particularly when it is stated that Covaxin has been cleared without the Phase 3 trial data having been firmed up.

The indemnity issue is another road block. The manufacturers want to be indemnified against lawsuits filed against them. If the numbers of suits are few and far between, involving seriously affected people it is understandable. But if the numbers are larger, the companies cannot take the hit. They followed the timeline given by the politicians and want to be covered by the sovereign.

But looked at from the other side, only when pharma companies take the risk would they ensure that side-effects are minimal. If the risk is passed on to the sovereign while



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they pocket the profit, there will be an attempt to free ride and push the vaccine regardless of side effects. Let's not forget that Governments would like to give vaccination as quickly as possible to have political dividends. Since the Government of India will find it difficult to take that risk, it may just bring in a law estopping any litigation just like the US did.

If cases do not remain within the projected percentage of complications, people will stay clear of vaccination. There is a suggestion in the US that the default option should be vaccination with an opt-out clause. In India, this is unlikely to happen with priority inoculation and people are more likely to be herded in for vaccination. But when people do not turn up for vaccination, the number falls. Others meanwhile watch it and eschew vaccination. If the vaccination does

not reach 70 per cent, we have a Catch-22 situation. More the shortfall, more lukewarm will be the response and the desired herd immunity will recede further.

It is not just a matter of misconceptions or rumours. It is a palpable possibility that side effects will be watched for some time before people choose to take a job. While people can be educated and rumours quelled, how do you handle any reaction and the domino effect it unleashes sociologically? Rather than relying on public education which many experts feel has not worked very well in public health crises, it is the demonstration effect which will finally work. Going by experience elsewhere, 70 per cent of people will have to trust the vaccine so that it will reach the tipping point and the masses will be willing to take the job. Generic information that the 'vaccine is safe'

is a lot inferior to personalized guidance from people whom they trust. This is one vaccination where political leaders or religious heads will have a smaller role. People finally distrust both. The guidance should come from scientific sources and from those who have got the jab so that others would like to catch up with them.

If all these take time, herd immunity will most probably come by then. Modelling done by the National Model for Pandemic Spread consisting of finest mathematical minds and top clinicians concluded that in India for one reported infection, 90 infections have gone unreported. That will put the number at about 100 crore. But a serological prevalence survey is required. In some cities, towns and villages the figure could be way off. In UP and Bihar, it is 1:300 and in Delhi it is 1:25. Focus should be on

habitations with low infection and different defensive and combat plans should be worked out. Meanwhile complacency is not an option.

We will have to follow the 'New Normal' of wearing masks, keeping distance from each other and hand washing. This will involve avoiding crowded and confined places. Let not anyone be deluded that the need for the mask and recommended conduct will be over soon. Since our individualism is marked by self-absorption, we may find it to be a nuisance to begin with. But these recommended behaviours matter for others. Let's learn to speak up and insist on mask, social distancing and hand sanitization so far as others are concerned, while we try to avoid crowded, confined and close contact places.

The writer is a former Secretary, Government of India. The views are personal.

POLITICAL DIARY | KALYANI SHANKAR

The challenges that Harris faces

So much has been written about how new American Vice President Kamala Harris (of Indian origin) has broken the glass ceiling by becoming the first woman of colour, the first woman of Asian descent, and the first woman to reach the second-highest position in a country where white supremacy continues.

So how will she shape up as a Vice President? Will she be hands-on like Dick Cheney or a low profile Vice President like Mike Pence? She is bound to be on test under the Washington microscope.

The role of the Vice President has changed over the years. John Adams, the first American Vice president, called the job 'the most insignificant office.' But the role has changed over the years. It wasn't until the 1970s that the country's second-highest position began to assume a bigger role under President Jimmy Carter. He was an outsider in Washington, and he chose Walter Mondale as his VP, an absolute insider. This practice has continued since then. Barack Obama, then a political newcomer, chose Joe Biden, a veteran of the US Senate. Donald Trump went with Mike Pence. But Kamala Harris is different as she is not a Washington insider and offers a contrast to veteran Biden's age, gender, and race.

Biden and Harris have assumed charge while the U.S. battles with several complicated issues, includ-



ing the Covid-19 pandemic and its economic ramifications, racial justice, and climate change. Biden expects his team would work hard to deliver, particularly immediately in controlling Covid-19.

It is for the President to decide

what role his VP should play. So far, Biden has treated Kamala as a full partner and has sought her advice on many issues. She has interviewed Cabinet nominees and offered her views. "There's not a single decision I've made yet about personnel or

about how to proceed that I haven't discussed with Kamala first," Biden said in a CNN interview.

According to media reports, Kamala will be involved in all four major priorities they have identified. These are turning around the economy, tackling Covid-19, addressing climate change and racial justice - all big challenges.

First of all, she has a crucial role in the Senate in President Trump's impeachment. The Senate is vertically divided with 50 Democrats and 50 Republicans. She has the tie-breaking vote. The last time the Senate majority was split was in 2001 when Dick Cheney was vice president.

The second is her constitutional role. Hours after her swearing-in ceremony on Wednesday, Kamala plunged into her constitutional role as president of the Senate. She administered an oath to three new Democratic senators. When she resigned her Senate membership this week, she said, "I'm not saying goodbye. In many ways, I'm saying hello as your Vice President."

Thirdly, Kamala would have a bigger role in foreign policy. However, she cannot match Biden in terms of his deep relations with global leaders. She would though represent America abroad on many occasions.

Fourthly, her immediate priority is the passage of the \$1.9 trillion US coronavirus relief bill that Biden had announced soon after assuming office on Thursday.

Fifthly, as for her attitude

towards India, she is bound to go by American interests and support Biden's decisions. But with bipartisan support for India, there will not be too many complex issues. In any case, although Kamala embraces her Indian roots, she leans towards her African American identity.

It is known that Kamala is pro-immigration, her mother Shyamala being one of the immigrants in the 1960s, and has spoken in favour of immigrant women seeking jobs. She pushed for the H-4 visas. She was, however, critical of Kashmiri's bifurcation last year. "We have to remind the Kashmiris that they are not alone in the world. We are keeping track of the situation," Harris had said in a statement last year. She will be an American – nothing more and nothing less, as the American media predicts.

The key to a cordial relationship between the President and the Vice President is building mutual understanding and trust. Experts predict that Kamala will wield considerable power. Certainly, she will also face scrutiny and pressure because of her race, gender, and origin.

Kamala represents the American dream and is seen as the president-in-waiting as Biden, the oldest ever US President, has not clarified whether he will seek a second term. Kamala can claim to be in line for the 2024 presidential polls.

She knows the challenge ahead, which is why she told ABC, "I feel a huge sense of responsibility... I will be the first, but I will not be the last,"

NOW AND AGAIN Advertising our weaknesses

SHOVANLAL CHAKRABORTY

No doubt social media has a vice-like grip on our lives and activities. It occurred to me that now we seem to exist to trumpet ourselves on these platforms.

Holidaying was once meant for taking a break from our routines. But these days, no sooner do we reach the local airport than we start sharing photographs and videos. Instead of chilling out with our families quietly on those beautiful beaches or snow-clad mountains, we concentrate on instantly sharing 'selfies' with our friends back home.

There were times when we used to downplay such exclusive privileges as travelling and holidaying, but not anymore. I might use the 'travelling-to' option with a small 'airplane' icon on Facebook to loudly inform my cyber friends that I am flying on a vacation.

Whenever I visit an upmarket restaurant to dine, I am tempted to update my status. If still not satisfied, I can share an image of myself with the extravagant spread on the table.

There is no stopping on social media. When the board exam results are published, proud parents post their wards' outstanding performances, their A-plus, in WhatsApp groups. The parents of the 'lesser children' go silent for days, only to bounce back with fabulous pictures from a trip abroad.

The gratification that we derive from a response is immense - the emojis, thumbs ups and claps immediately uplift our mood.

When I sit beside the hospital bed of my ailing relative, a strange and compelling urge overtakes me. Why not click a selfie with one hand, placing the other on the forehead of the bed-ridden person and share it on social media? Well, I could be inspirational in these days when no one cares for any one.

Whenever a death is reported in a WhatsApp or Facebook group, irrespective of whether the deceased is young, old, known or a stranger, soon follow 'RIP, RIP' messages. The acronym comes really handy to manage our social obligations when we are so hard pressed for time.

Moderation was once considered a virtue. Not very long ago we used to hide our indulgences and check our celebrations, especially when we knew that ours is a poor country and not many others around are as fortunate as us.

Photo albums hidden in our wardrobes that used to rekindle our nostalgic memories are passe now, self-promoting selfies rule the roost. It seems that human behaviour patterns have never before transformed so rapidly since the rise of early civilisation.

The cyber world has re-defined our decorum and etiquette in a few years. Politeness, sensitivity, empathy, privacy and propriety have no place in virtual life. The social media encourages us to self-market but unfortunately we end up advertising our weaknesses.

100 YEARS AGO

HARDSHIPS UNDER THE AGE RULE

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - I wish the members of the Railways Commission, when considering the Labour question, would take into consideration how hardly and unjustly the 55 years of age rule bears on the lower class subordinates, and workmen. With very few exceptions when they reach the age of 55 years, and in cases where their services have been extended to 60 years of age, are they in a position, financially to be cast adrift? Most of these subordinates are men in splendid health, and full of energy and experience. Government employees at Home are allowed to work on until 65 years of age, with a probable extension to 70 years of age. The lower grade subordinates is no earthly reason why this class of employee should be subject to the age rule. They should be allowed to work on as long as they are capable of doing their work. There is no such thing as age rules with civil firms.

SYMPATHISER.

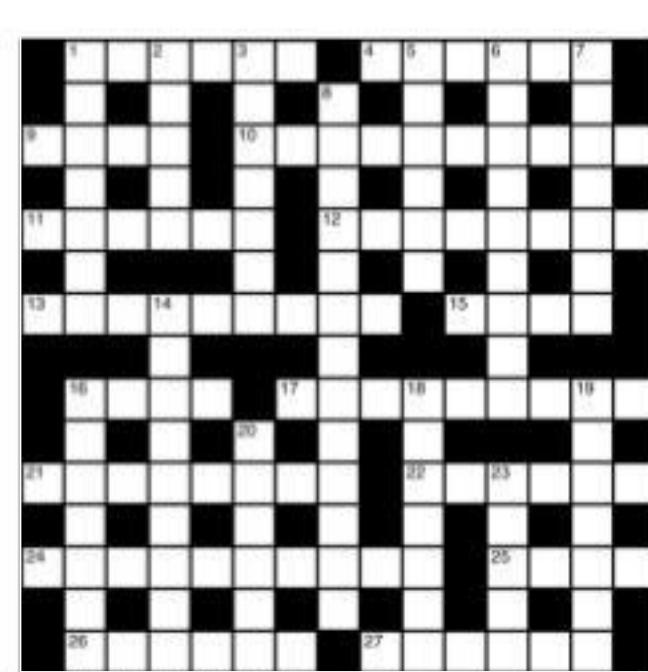
UNQUALIFIED MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - May I draw the attention of your readers to a serious public danger, the gravity of which does not seem to have been yet fully realised? There is a crowd of unqualified and unregistered medical practitioners in Calcutta and elsewhere attracting patients by a specious display of advertisements, claiming to be specialists in certain diseases, venturing to give intravenous injections and performing bacteriological feats that require skill and training. The late Lieutenant-Colonel Sutherland fought quackery in all its forms in the pages of the Indian Medical Gazette but as this journal is not generally accessible to the lay public, his articles unfortunately could not be read by the people. It is, indeed, scarcely conceivable that bogus doctors should be tolerated by the Government and patronised by the people. The Bengal Medical Council cannot interfere in the matter because it has powers to deal with registered practitioners only. It is time the law protected the public against fraud and quackery.

MEDICUS.

CROSSWORD



SOLUTION FOR 17 JANUARY

ACROSS

- 1 Surprisingly mobile blood clots (6)
- 4 Statement about rule applied to eggs (6)
- 9 Cover old swimming pool (4)
- 10 Pad in which Frenchman entertains partner for the evening (4-15)
- 11 Swimming race interrupted by American with recording equipment (6)
- 12 Damage ring at a Spanish resort (8)
- 13 Teacher's favourites covering clear iodine with hot piece of lab equipment (11)
- 15 Fictional bear's an adherent of Hindu philosophical system (4)
- 16 Soldiers returned with new evidence (4)
- 17 Unionist line adopted by Arab nation (9)
- 21 A short stick found during search of burial site (8)
- 22 Animal coming back with tailless bird (6)
- 24 Temporary transfer for Next employees close to retirement (10)
- 25 Spend money to secure Lessing's first dramatic work (4)

DOWN

- 26 Doctor given advantage in search for oysters? (6)
- 27 Police officers let suspect get spirit (6)
- 1 Remove hair from pie cooked near the end of the night (7)
- 2 Pound returned by Fair English fellow (5)
- 3 Boy clutching map of North European region (7)
- 5 Good artist Following through with drug (6)
- 6 Octopus originally caught in net close to sea left with a sad expression (9)
- 7 Germanic siren featuring in folklore leitmotif (7)
- 8 Dancing bears seem ill prepared at beginning of scene in musical (8,10)
- 14 Doctor and old lady taking part in tiresome process (9)
- 16 Notice allegedly found next to small opening in dense vegetation (7)
- 18 Sleepwear's close to neckwear (7)
- 19 It's set in stone to cause trouble (7)
- 20 Greedy type welcoming time to prepare snack (3,3)
- 23 Extremely destructive drug found in storage facility (5)

NO 28805

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



Northern Coalfields will easily achieve and surpass production target of 113.25 million tons for current fiscal.

P K SINHA
CHAIRMAN AND MD, NORTHERN COALFIELDS

THUMBNAILS

Maruti Swift record: Maruti Suzuki India on Saturday said its hatchback Swift has emerged as the best-selling car model in India in 2020 with 1,60,700 units. In 2020, the model has also crossed the cumulative sales milestone of 23 lakh units since its launch in 2005. It crossed the 5 lakh milestone in 2010, 10 lakh in 2013 and 15 lakh in 2016, the company said in a statement. Commenting on the milestone, Maruti Suzuki India executive director (marketing & sales) Shashank Srivastava claimed that "Swift has been the best-selling premium hatchback in the country for the past 15 years with over 2.3 million delighted customers." PTI

Forex reserves fall: After touching a record high in the preceding week, the country's foreign exchange reserves declined by \$1,839 billion to \$584,242 billion in the week ended 15 January, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended 8 January, the reserves had climbed by \$758 million to touch a lifetime high of \$586,082 billion. In the reporting week, foreign currency assets (FCA) - a major component of the overall reserves - decreased by \$284 million to \$541,507 billion, weekly data by the RBI showed. PTI

Telecom security: Telcos have asked the government to clarify about the entity that will be held liable if there is security breach in the network post implementation of National Security Directive (NSD) on the telecom sector, according to industry sources aware of the development. The telecom operators have given their input to the government in a meeting called by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) about one-and-a-half weeks back, industry sources said. PTI

Tata Power win: Tata Power Solar on Saturday announced that it has bagged an order worth Rs 1,200 crore from state-run power giant NTPC for setting up of 320 MW ground mounted solar project. Tata Power Solar, India's largest integrated solar company and a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Power, has received a "letter of award (LoA)" to build 320 MW of ground mounted solar PV project for NTPC, a company statement said. The order value of the project is approximately Rs 1,200 crore (\$162 million). PTI

Ducati launch: Luxury motorcycle brand Ducati on Saturday announced the launch of the all-new Ducati Scramblers in India. The MY21 Scrambler range for India now includes the Scrambler Icon, Icon Dark and 1100 Dark Pro at Rs 8,49 lakh, Rs 7.99 lakh and Rs 10.99 lakh, respectively, (ex-showroom pan India). The new series is more contemporary, comfortable and safer which further enriches and completes the Scrambler "Land of Joy" in India, the company said in a statement. SNS

'Halwa Ceremony' kickstarts Budget compilation process

Unlike the past, Budget documents will not be printed this year following the Covid-19 protocol

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur and senior officials of the finance ministry today participated in the symbolic "Halwa Ceremony" that marks the beginning of compilation of Budget documents.

Unlike the past, the voluminous Budget documents will not be printed this year following the Covid-19 protocol and will instead be distributed electronically to the members of Parliament (MPs). Previously, the ceremony marked the launch of printing exercise for the Budget.

This will be the first time since the presentation of independent India's first Budget on 26 November 1947, that the documents containing income and expenditure statement of the Union government along with the finance Bill, detailing new taxes and other measures for the new financial year, will not be physically printed.



» The finance minister has launched the "Union Budget Mobile App" for hassle-free access of Budget documents by members of Parliament (MPs) and the general public using the simplest form of digital convenience.
» The mobile app facilitates complete access to 14 Union Budget documents, including the annual financial statement (commonly known as Budget), demand for grants (DG), finance Bill etc. as prescribed by the Constitution, it said.

"In an unprecedented initiative, Union Budget 2021-22 will be delivered in paperless form for the first time. The Union Budget 2021-22 is to be presented on 1 February 2021," the finance ministry said in a statement.

On the occasion, the finance minister also launched the "Union Budget Mobile App" for hassle-free access of Budget documents by members of

Parliament (MPs) and the general public using the simplest form of digital convenience.

The mobile app facilitates complete access to 14 Union Budget documents, including the annual financial statement (commonly known as Budget), demand for grants (DG), finance Bill etc. as prescribed by the Constitution, it said.

Finance secretary Ajay

Bhushan Pandey, economic affairs secretary Tarun Bajaj, financial services secretary Debasish Panda, Dipam secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey, expenditure secretary T V Somanathan and chief economic adviser K V Subramanian and other senior involved in the Budget preparation and compilation process, were also present in the customary pre-Budget event.

"Later, the finance minister reviewed the status of the compilation of the Union Budget 2021-22 and extended her best wishes to the officials concerned," it said. The statement further said that the app has a user-friendly interface with embedded features of downloading, printing, search, zoom in and out, bidirectional scrolling, table of contents and external links, etc.

The app can also be downloaded from the Union Budget Web Portal (www.india-budget.gov.in), it said, adding, the app has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the guidance of the department of

economic affairs (DEA).

The Budget documents will be available on the mobile app after the completion of the Budget speech by the finance minister in Parliament on 1 February.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said the first part of the Budget Session will start on 29 January and continue till 15 February, and the second part of the session will be from 8 March to 8 April.

As part of the ritual, "halwa" is prepared in a big "kadhai" (large frying pot) and served to the entire staff involved in the Budget making exercise of the ministry. Halwa was served while maintaining Covid protocol with all present in mask and those distributing sweets were wearing gloves.

The significance of the event is that after the sweet dish is served, a large number of officials and support staff, who are directly associated with the Budget making, are required to stay in the ministry and remain cut-off from their families till the presentation of the Budget in the Lok Sabha.

Birla Corp posts 82% jump in Q3 net profit

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 23 JANUARY

M P Birla Group flagship company Birla Corporation Limited's December quarter net profit jumped by 82.1 per cent year-on-year to Rs 148.42 crore on the back of a 3.2 per cent growth in sales by volume, aggressive cost rationalisation and higher sales of premium products.

The company's net profit during the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal stood at Rs 81.49 crore. This was achieved through a mix of cost rationalisation and improved operating efficiency, aided by a modest recovery in cement demand, the company said.

Meanwhile, the company said it is expanding production capacity at multiple locations with the aim of scaling it up to 25 million tons by 2025.

Construction of the company's 3.9 MT cement plant at Mukutnagar in Maharashtra is progressing satisfactorily and the unit is expected to be commissioned in the third quarter of the next financial year, it said.

The company is planning to hook up incremental clinker capacity at Chanderi in Rajasthan in the first quarter of the next financial year, it added.

CIL ready to meet any surge in fuel demand from power sector

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

State-owned Coal India Ltd today said that it is well geared to meet any surge in demand for coal from the power sector.

The statement follows power demand touching an all-time high of 187.3 GW on Friday.

"CIL (Coal India) is well geared to meet any surge in demand for the dry fuel from the power sector especially on the back of close to 63 million tons stock at its pits," the PSU said in a statement.

The company is also pushing ahead for increased production, committed to shoring up the supplies to coal-fuelled power plants. In this backdrop, close to 67 per cent of the total coal-fired power generation in the country is fuelled through CIL's supplies.

Of the 199 GW of coal-

based power programmed for generation per day during the ongoing fiscal, 133 GW is scheduled from CIL linked coal.

Average coal-based power generation of power per day which was 2,795 BU till Friday spurted up to 3,072 BU, a jump of nearly 10 per cent on the morning of the record making day.

Coal-based power generation remains consistently high among all other categories.

"This increase in coal-based power generation bodes well for us. If this continues, we could expect our supplies to power sector to go up in near future," the company said adding that the power plants need to submit adequate programme at the coal companies to avoid any shortage of dry fuel as the demand started peaking.

Coal India is focusing on ramping up its supplies to pit-

head based power plants to higher levels. This would influence in cost per unit of power generated coming down.

Coal transportation cost to pithead power plants is comparatively lower than long distanced based ones, making the landed cost of coal lower. This in turn makes the generation cost economical.

Coal-based power generation accounted for 78.6 per cent of the country's total generation capacity on Friday when all India peak power demand, which is the highest supply in a day, surged to a new record of 187.3 GW in the morning eclipsing the previous high of 185.82 GW recorded on 20 January.

Of the total 3,906 billion units (BU) generated on Friday, coal-fired generation chipped in the bulk with 3,072 BU.

Petrol, diesel prices at all-time highs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

Petrol and diesel prices in the country today touched new all-time highs after rates were increased for the fourth time this week.

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 25 paise per litre each, according to a price notification from oil marketing companies.

This took the petrol price in Delhi to Rs 85.70 per litre and in Mumbai to Rs 92.28.

Diesel rate climbed to Rs 75.88 a litre in the national capital and to Rs 82.66 per litre in Mumbai, the price data showed.

This is the second consecutive day of rate increase and the fourth this week. In all, prices have gone up by Re 1 per litre this week.

Fuel prices, which vary from state to state depending on local sales tax or VAT, are now at record highs in the country, prompting cries for a cut in excise duty to ease the burden on consumers.

PLEA FOR EXCISE DUTY CUT

» Fuel prices, which vary from state to state depending on local sales tax or VAT, are now at record highs in the country, prompting cries for a cut in excise duty to ease the burden on consumers.

» Union oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan earlier this week blamed Saudi oil output cut for the surge in oil prices but remained non-committal on tax cuts.

Union oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan earlier this week blamed Saudi oil output cut for the surge in oil prices but remained non-committal on tax cuts.

Top oil explorer Saudi Arabia has pledged additional voluntary output cuts of 1 million barrels per day in February and March.

ary resumed daily price revision after nearly a month-long hiatus.

Since then, rates have gone up by Rs 1.99 a litre on petrol and Rs 2.01 in case of diesel.

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

Prior to the current highs triggered by the price hikes this month, fuel prices had last touched record high on 4 October 2018.

At that time, the government had cut excise duty on petrol and diesel by Rs 1.50 per litre in a bid to ease inflationary pressure and boost consumer confidence. Alongside, state-owned fuel retailers cut prices by another Re 1 a litre, which they recouped later.

This time, there are no indications of a duty cut so far.

- Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) ~ had on 6 Janu-

UltraTech reports over 2-fold jump in Q3 profit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

financial year 2020-21, as against Rs 9,611.08 crore, down 6.29 per cent.

During the quarter, it had a volume growth of 14 per cent to 22.82 million tons, it said.

"Recovery from the Covid-19 led to the disruption of the economy. This has been fuelled by quicker demand stabilisation, supply-side restoration and greater cost efficiencies," UltraTech Cement said in a post earnings statement.

Without referring to any particular allegation, Adani Group, in a statement posted on its Twitter handle, said some attacks had been mounted by vested interests to "sabotage India's strategic interests".

"Adani Group is impacted by the malicious campaigns by forces inimical to our national interest," it said in a post titled "An Open Letter on the need to act against false propaganda".

The group has denied all allegations of favouritism and had on farm laws said it does not do contract farming and

It went on to state that "accuracy, objectivity and impartiality" are core principles of fair and balanced journalism.

"But on numerous occasions, Adani Group has been targeted through false propaganda. We have also been a victim of manufactured online media campaigns aimed at spreading malicious lies about our operations and inflicting harm to our shareholders," it said.

Gujarat billionaire Adani and his group has often been accused of "unfairly" benefiting under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In recent weeks, it has been said to be the beneficiary of the three controversial farm reform laws.

The group has denied all allegations of favouritism and had on farm laws said it does not do contract farming and

only operates grain silos on behalf of the Food Corporation of India (FCI). raised about its Kattupalli Port in Tamil Nadu.

Adani today said it had "great respect" towards the media and has accepted contrary opinions.

"But if, under the pretext of free speech, we see damage to our strategic interests as well as impact on our shareholders that put their trust on us, we are left with no option

but act to protect our interests," it said, adding it has filed cases in courts as a final resort.

"We have complete faith in the Indian judiciary and total acceptance of the decision they make," it added.

The conglomerate opened the note saying freedom of speech is a fundamental right and Adani Group believes in free speech that promotes truth and serves the national interest.

Adani Group generates and distributes energy, operates seaports and airports, and runs many other critical assets.

"We reach out across many remote parts of the country and are proud that we are a source of direct and indirect employment to hundreds of thousands of people," it said, adding that the group has six listed entities.

Challenges for tea industry likely to continue in FY22

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 23 JANUARY

The tea industry may continue to face challenges in the next financial year with hike in wages and its impact on prices, as production returns to normal, according to a report.

Rating agency ICRA in the report also expects the challenges for the tea industry to remain in 2021-22, after considerable improvement in performance during 2020-21.

The impact on bulk tea prices once the production returns to normal in the new season would be a critical factor determining the profitability in the next financial year, the rating agency said.

West Bengal has recently announced a 15 per cent

PRICE & WAGE ISSUES



While it would be premature to comment on the exact level of tea prices, nonetheless, overall prices are likely to witness a negative bias, once the production returns to normal in the new season... Trend in prices apart, another challenge facing the industry is the increase in wage rates. West Bengal has already announced an interim wage increase, Assam is also likely to follow along similar lines.

KAUSHIK DAS
ICRA VICE-PRESIDENT

increase in wage rates, on an interim basis, which would increase the cost of production for bulk tea companies, it added.

Domestic tea prices have witnessed a significant increase in the current financial year, with the north India (NI) auction average increasing by 46 per cent year-on-year during April-December 2020 and the south India (SI) auction average up by 41 per cent during the same period, the report stated.

Tea prices witnessed a sharp increase on the back of a 10 per cent fall in domestic production, while consumption remained firm, it said.

While tea prices moderated during November-December 2020, following a seasonal

year 2020.

Thus, the profitability of NI-based bulk tea players is expected to witness a significant improvement in 2020-21, on the back of a sharp

improvement already witnessed in the first half of 2020-21 and significantly lower losses expected in the second half of 2020-21.

However, the sustainabil-

Cuttack pays glowing tributes to son of the soil Netaji

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CUTTACK, 23 JANUARY

Unlike the tussle between 'Parakram Divas' and 'Desh Nayak Divas' in neighbouring West Bengal, Cuttack - the birth place of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose celebrated his 125th Birth Anniversary with joy and reverence.

People made a beeline to 'Janakinath Bhawan', the ancestral house of the legendary Son of the Soil at Oriya Bazar here which has been converted to a museum. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and several political leaders visited the hallowed building.

Interestingly, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, in his



speech while laying a foundation stone for the proposed mega Bus Terminus named after Netaji, did not refer to the day as Parakram Divas, preferring to talk about 125th Birth Anniversary celebrations.

"It was a joyous occasion. There were ample signs of patriotic fervor as visitors paid floral tributes and caught

a glimpse of Netaji memorabilia preserved at the Netaji birthplace museum," said the Museum curator J. P. Das.

Janakinath Bhawan, Netaji's ancestral house the ancestral house in Oriya Bazar where the great leader was born on January 23, 1897, was converted into a national museum, housing articles, antiques, documents, books and other objects

of use found in the house and collected from various sources that are connected to Bose's life.

The iconic leader lived in Janakinath Bhawan with parents, eight brothers and six sisters. His father Janakinath Bose was an eminent legal practitioner during his time. Subhas Bose passed the entrance examination from Ravenshaw Collegiate School in 1913 and thereafter went to Calcutta to pursue higher studies.

The rare photographs of Anita Bose, daughter of Netaji, were this year's major attraction. Six photographs of Anita were on display this year.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laying the foundation stone for a modern bus terminus named after Netaji Subhas Chandra at Cuttack

said "It's a matter of pride for all Odias that Netaji was the son of Cuttack. Today, with the laying of the foundation stone for the Netaji Bus Terminus, the year-long celebration of the 125th anniversary of Netaji has begun."

Union Minister, Dharmendra Pradhan paying tributes to Netaji at the Janakinath Bhawan in Cuttack said "Netaji's valour and sacrifice will remain a source of inspiration for the younger generations for years to come". He spoke of Parakram Divas celebrations.

The state unit of the BJP however criticized the CM over relocation of the bus terminus project from Gopalpur to Khan Nagar and alleged that it was done to protect the interest of land grabbers at Gopalpur.

Instances of vaccine beneficiary list breach in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 23 JANUARY

There is no hullabaloo over it because many who are on the list did not turn up and hence there is no shortage of vaccine, he added.

The State recorded more than 100% vaccination target yesterday as with 16,384 healthcare workers receiving the jab against the target of 13,195, said officials. Those who had earlier skipped the sessions earlier joined hands in the mega vaccination drive.

Today the drive is underway to vaccinate 20,330 health workers at 221 session sites, said Health and Family Welfare Bijay Panigrahi.

Meanwhile the second consignment of Covaxin manufactured arrived here on Saturday. Covaxin is being administered in Bhubaneswar while Covishield is being distributed to the districts.

A report from Paradip district revealed another dis-

turbing case of fraudsters issuing fake COVID 19 negative test reports to wagers

. The arrested fraudster Kalindi Tarai was arrested from Abhayachandpur police station area on the outskirts of Paradip oil refinery project. The police seized fake negative reports which were to be sold to migrant workers at a price ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 1000 each. Armed with such fake test reports many migrants have returned to their workplaces in different states.

Meanwhile Odisha on Saturday reported 130 fresh COVID-19 cases and one fatality in the past 24 hours.

Odisha currently has 1,436 active cases. A total of 75,25,703 sample tests have been conducted in the state so far, including 24,012 on Friday.

IMD issues dense fog alert in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 23 JANUARY

The Bhubaneswar centre of Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday issued dense fog in eight districts of the State during the course of the next 24 hours.

Dense fog is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of North Coastal Odisha, Angul, Dhenkanal, Khurda, Nayagarh, Puri, Koraput, Malkangiri, Kandhamal and Kalahandi, it added.

Meanwhile the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) issued a fresh advisory to district Collectors and Superintendents of Police in view of the IMD's dense fog forecast.

The SRC, in an official communication, instructed police and transport department officials of the districts to initiate necessary measures for controlled movement of vehicles on National Highways during the dense fog.

Dry weather most likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha and shallow to mod-

erate fog very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of North Coastal Odisha, Angul, Dhenkanal, Khurda, Nayagarh, Puri, Koraput, Malkangiri, Kandhamal and Kalahandi, it added.

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Dry weather most likely to prevail over the districts of Odisha and shallow to mod-

Rich tributes paid to Veer Surendra Sai

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SAMBALPUR, 23 JANUARY

Rich tributes were paid to legendary freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai on his birth anniversary on Saturday with Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan unveiling a statue at the Jharsuguda Airport named after the freedom fighter.

Pradhan said the VSS Airport at Jharsuguda has the potential to be the gateway for development given the immense coal reserves and the steel and power plants in the region.

It is part of the Look East policy of PM Narendra Modi, he said.

Elsewhere hundreds of people besides leaders from all the political parties gathered at Khinda, which is the birthplace of Surendra Sai and paid homage to the hero of the freedom struggle.

Ministers Susant Singh, Naba Kishore Das, Deputy Chief Whip, Government of Odisha, Rohit Pujari, Barajnagar MLA, Kishore Mohanty visited Khinda to pay tribute to the legendary freedom fighter, Union Minister



for petroleum and natural gas, Dharmendra Pradhan, Sambalpur MP, Nitesh Ganga Deb, Rengali MLA, Nauri Naik besides many other leaders visited Surendra Sai's birth place in the afternoon.

Veer Surendra Sai was born in a royal family on 23rd January 1809. He started revolting against the British at the age 18 only in 1827. However, Sai was captured by the British in 1840 and was kept at Hazaribagh prison.

During the Sepoy mutiny, the rebels broke the Hazaribagh prison in 1857 and Surendra Sai was freed.

In 1864, Surendra Sai was again sent to Asirgarh jail near Khandwa, where he died on 28th February 1884. He had spent 37 years of his life in jail.

Over 4,000 DLs suspended in Odisha for MV Act violations

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 23 JANUARY

Taking to task the motor vehicle act violators, the Odisha Transport Authority (STA) has suspended more than 4,000 driving licenses (DLs) of motorists and bikers in the past three weeks of the current month.

While DLs of 2,688 bikers have been suspended for helmet-less driving, 728 motorists and bikers have been slapped DL suspension for rash driving till 21 January. 255 offenders who talked on mobile phones while driving also faced DL suspension.

The breakup of those who faced DL suspension punitive measure of drunk driving-78, driving without wearing seat belts-32, transport of goods exceeding the permissible weight-66, carrying excess passengers-40, unauthorised crossing traffic signal-99 and other violations-281.

As many as 2,398 bike riders were killed in road accidents in 2019 in Odisha while two-wheelers were involved in 4,688 road mishaps, said officials.

accidents in 2019 in Odisha while two-wheelers were involved in 4,688 road mishaps, said officials.

As many as 38,204 people have been killed in road accidents in the State since the past one decade. Of the deceased persons, 26,742 were either teenagers or youths below the 30 year age groups, according to findings by the State Road Safety Council (SRSC).

The rate of fatality in the State stands higher to the national average. Odisha's fatality rate (death per 100 accidents) is estimated at 47

in comparison to the national average of 32.

Four arrested for killing friend

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BARIPADA, 23 JANUARY:

Four friends had been arrested for allegedly killing their friend following a fight on Saturday at Bangiriposi police in Mayurbhanj district.

They were identified as Ramdash Marandi(20), Nunaram Marandi(20), Deepak Nayak(26) and Jagannath Soren(24).

The deceased was identified as Bimal Singh(20) son of Ramesh Singh. He was stoned to death by the four accused persons.

Police said Ramdash Marandi had been involved in another murder case earlier.

Chintamani Panigrahi's role in memorial in Manipur

Battle of Red Hill – INA & Japanese march stalled

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 23 JANUARY

The Battle of Red Hill was fought from May 20-29 in 1944. The small hillock was on the Tiddim Road, 16 kms away from Imphal. It was the last major battle fought by the INA and the Japanese on Indian soil, said historian Anil Dhir while recounting the contribution of Odia leader late Chintamani Panigrahi in erecting a war memorial.

The Battle of Red Hill unfortunately proved a disaster for the advancing Indo-Japanese forces. Nearly 200 Japanese soldiers died, the INA too suffered huge casualties.

The peace memorial was constructed by the efforts of Japanese War Veteran Lt. General Iwaichi Fujiwara. The General is acknowledged as the Godfather of Netaji's Indian National Army. In 1974, he led a delegation of surviving war-heroes to Manipur and visited the spot.

He suggested the making of a Memorial at Red Hill.

The Japanese government kept on insisting for a memorial, but disturbed conditions in the State did not make it possible.

When Prime Minister Narashimha Rao visited Japan in June 1992, the Japanese

counterpart took up the matter with him.

He contacted Chintamani Panigrahi, the then Governor of Manipur who insisted on Chief Minister R. K. Dorendra Singh and it was because of his singular efforts that the project saw the light of the day.

The work started in September 1993 and the Japanese completed it in February 1994.

On 21 March 1994; the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Imphal, the memorial was inaugurated against the backdrop of the three national flags of the United Kingdom, Japan and India, in the presence of 161 Japanese war veterans.

Late Chintamani babu's role in the making of the India Peace Memorial remains unacknowledged, lamented Dhir.

Range Centre in the idyllic Wheeler's Island is close to the Nasi-1 and Nasi-2 nesting grounds of the turtles. The high-power lights installed at the centre for its coastal security-related watch and vigil programme often disorient the delicate animals.

The delicate species while invading the beach to lay eggs often get disoriented by the illuminated ray. Instead heading towards the nesting ground, the turtles get disoriented to move towards the test range centre. The soothing ambience of this natural heritage is adversely affected by high-powered light.

The DRDO has its Missile Test Range Centre in the Wheeler's Group of Island along the Bay of Bengal close

to the coast off Gahirmatha marine sanctuary in Orissa's Kendrapara district.

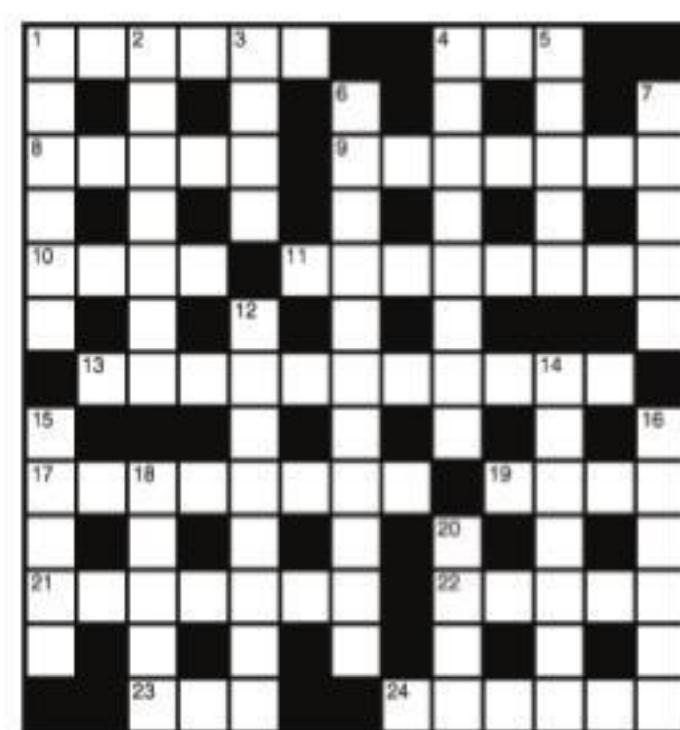
The Gahirmatha beach, which is the world's largest known rookery of these species, has been playing host to lakhs of these endangered turtles every year.

The Forest Department has deployed two high-speed boats to patrol the marine waters of Gahirmatha sanctuary.

To ensure the safety of endangered sea turtles, 16 patrolling camps have been setup off the coast in Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur districts. Of them, two are offshore camps located at Babubali and Agarnashi which come under Kendrapara district.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Little Bighorn general (6)	1 Nut (6)
4 British river (3)	2 Sports arena (7)
8 Climb (5)	3 Biblical garden (4)
9 Antagonistic (7)	4 Follower (8)
10 Discharge (4)	5 Proclamation (5)
11 Disparage (8)	6 Minatory (11)
13 Give everlasting fame to (11)	7 Flat round hat (5)
17 Jewel (8)	12 Engineer (8)
19 Pointed tooth (4)	14 Law (7)
21 Belief (7)	15 Encourage (3,2)
22 Deep blue (5)	16 Exit (6)
23 Neckwear item (3)	18 Damp (5)
24 Bottoms up! (6)	20 Impetuous (4)

By arrangement with The Independent
Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

• AIIMS 26588500, 26588900

• Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour

Chemist Shop 42000447

• Vidya Sagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304

• Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747

• Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403

• Guru Tegh Bah

*I just want to say thank you from President Biden and the whole, the entire Biden family... I truly appreciate all that you do*

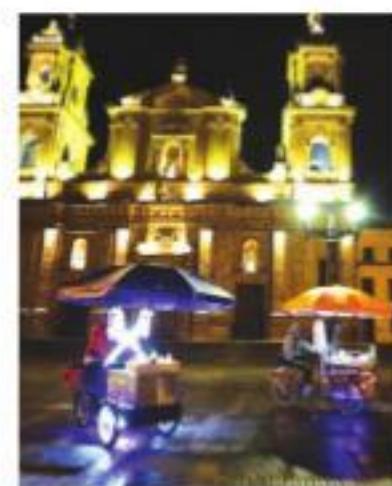
US FIRST LADY JILL BIDEN

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	30	25 H
HONG KONG	23	17 CL
TOKYO	7	4 R
LONDON	5	1 H
DUBAI	24	16 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	13	7 CL
NEW YORK	2	-4 H
MOSCOW	2	-1 H

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

THUMBNAILS



Street vendors leave Bolívar Square at the start of an official continuous multi-day curfew in an effort to contain the spread of new coronavirus infections, in Bogotá, Colombia.

AP

China law empowers coast guard: China has authorised its coast guard to fire on foreign vessels and destroy structures on features it claims, potentially raising the possibility of clashes with regional maritime rivals. The Coast Guard Law empowers the force to take all necessary measures when national sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction are being illegally infringed upon at sea.

AP

Mexico looks to reopen schools: Mexico will start vaccinating teachers and other school personnel in one of the country's 32 states this weekend with an eye toward resuming in-person classes there as early as late next month, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has said.

AP

Missile intercepted over Riyadh: Saudi Arabia said Saturday it intercepted an apparent missile or drone attack over its capital, Riyadh, amid the kingdom's yearslong war against neighbouring Yemen's Houthi rebels.

AP

Biden govt to review US-Taliban deal

WASHINGTON, 23 JANUARY

The Biden administration has said it will review the US-Taliban deal to assess whether the militant group is reducing violence in keeping with its side of the agreement in the Afghan peace accord.

During a telephonic conversation with his Afghan counterpart Hamdullah Mohib, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan underscored that the US will support the peace process with a robust and regional diplomatic effort, "which will aim to help the two sides achieve a durable and just political settlement and permanent ceasefire", National Security Council spokeswoman Emily Horne said on Friday.

"Sullivan also made clear the United States' intention to review the February 2020 US-Taliban agreement, including to assess whether the Taliban was living up to its commitments to cut ties with terrorist groups, to reduce violence in Afghanistan and to engage in meaningful negotiations with the Afghan government and other stakeholders," she said.

The Trump administration had signed the peace deal with Taliban in February last in Doha. The accord drew up plans for withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan in exchange for security guarantees from the insurgent group. As part of the deal, the US committed to withdraw its 12,000 troops within 14 months. There are currently only 2,500 American troops left in the country.

The Taliban committed to prevent other groups, including Al Qaeda, from using Afghan soil to recruit, train or fund raise toward activities that threaten the US or its allies.

PTI

After riot, review of domestic extremism

Biden administration announces inter-agency review in the wake of the 6 January Capitol Hill attack by supporters of former president Trump

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 23 JANUARY

The Biden administration has announced an inter-agency review of domestic extremism in the wake of the January 6 Capitol Hill attack by supporters of former president Donald Trump.

"The January 6 assault on the Capitol and the tragic deaths and destruction that occurred underscored what we have long known: The rise of domestic violent extremism is a serious and growing national security threat, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference on Friday.

The Biden administration will confront this threat with the necessary resources and resolve, she said.

The Capitol Hill riot, which temporarily halted the count-



ing of Electoral College votes, left five people dead and led to Trump's second impeachment. Law enforcement agencies are under scrutiny for their preparations for January 6.

We are committed to developing policies and strategies based on facts, on objective and rigorous analysis, and on a respect for constitu-

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on domestic violent extremism.

This assessment will draw on the analysis from across the government and, as appropriate, non-governmental organisations, Psaki said.

"The key point here is that we want fact-based analysis upon which we can shape policy. So this is really the first step in the process, and we'll rely on our appropriate law enforcement and intelligence officials to provide that analysis, she said.

The second will be the building of an National Security Council capability to focus on countering domestic violent extremism.

As a part of this, the NSC will undertake a policy review effort to determine how the government can share infor-

mation better about this threat; support efforts to prevent radicalisation, disrupt violent extremist networks, and more, she said.

There's important work already underway across the interagency in countering DVE, and we need to understand better its current extent and where there may be gaps to address, so we can determine the best path forward, the White House press secretary said.

Psaki said the third will be coordinating relevant parts of the federal government to enhance and accelerate efforts to address DVE.

"This considered, an NSC-convened process will focus on addressing evolving threats, radicalisation, the role of social media, opportunities to improve information sharing, operational responses, and more," she said.

Virginia senator who defended rioters faces censure effort

ASSOCIATED PRESS
RICHMOND, 23 JANUARY

The Virginia Senate appears likely to censure a GOP state senator whose public apology fell flat after she had defended those who stormed the US Capitol.

Senator Amanda Chase, a hardcore acolyte of former President Donald Trump, sought to head off a censure resolution on Friday by giving a floor speech declaring she was completely horrified by the January 6 insurrection and condemned the violence at the Capitol.

If I have offended any of you in this room, because I

am very passionate about the Constitution, I apologise, said Chase, who is running for governor.

I would like to put this behind us and move forward in a constructive positive manner.

It was a markedly different tone from Chase, who previously had been defiant in the face of possible censure.

Chase has previously called for martial law to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, and lost access to her Facebook account after falsely blaming leftist activists for the Capitol insurrection.

Biden, Trudeau discuss strategic partnership

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 23 JANUARY



Joe Biden spoke with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in his first call to a foreign leader as US President, highlighting the strategic importance of their bilateral cooperation to strengthen economic and defence ties, combating the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges posed by climate change.

Biden also spoke with his Mexican counterpart Lopez Obrador on Friday, US media reported.

President Biden and his team are scheduled to make a number of calls to their foreign counterparts in the coming week.

We will repair our alliances and engage with the world once again, not to meet yesterday's challenges but today's and tomorrow's challenges, Biden had said in his inaugural address on Wednesday.

In his first call to a Prime

Minister Trudeau as President of the United States, Biden highlighted the strategic importance of the US-Canada relationship and reinvigorating their bilateral cooperation on an ambitious and wide-ranging agenda, including combating the COVID-19 pandemic, strengthening economic ties, defence, and global leadership to address the pressing challenge of climate change.

According to the White House, the President acknowledged Trudeau's disappointment regarding the decision to rescind the permit for the

Keystone XL pipeline and reaffirmed his commitment to maintain an active bilateral dialogue and to further deepen cooperation with Canada.

Biden has revoked a permit for the USD 9 billion Keystone XL pipeline, which would funnel oil from Alberta across the border to the US.

The President and the Prime Minister discussed the importance of our shared values, the current security environment, including maintaining a strong NATO deterrence and defence posture, and the ongoing missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. They also briefly reviewed the upcoming NATO Defense Ministerial and agreed to discuss it again in more detail in the coming weeks, Kirby said.

speak again in a month to continue to build out our bilateral cooperation, the White House said in a readout of the call.

The new Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin spoke by phone with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg shortly after arriving at the Pentagon.

This was his first call made to a foreign leader as the Defence Secretary. This reinforces the importance of the NATO Alliance to the United States, Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said.

The two leaders discussed the importance of our shared values, the current security environment, including maintaining a strong NATO deterrence and defence posture, and the ongoing missions in Afghanistan and Iraq. They also briefly reviewed the upcoming NATO Defense Ministerial and agreed to discuss it again in more detail in the coming weeks, Kirby said.

Supporters' words may haunt Trump at impeachment trial

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 23 JANUARY



The words of Donald Trump supporters who are accused of participating in the deadly US Capitol riot may end up being used against him in his Senate impeachment trial as he faces the charge of inciting a violent insurrection.

At least five supporters facing federal charges have suggested they were taking orders from the then-president when they marched on Capitol Hill on Jan. 6 to challenge the certification of Joe Biden's election win.

But now those comments, captured in interviews with reporters and federal agents, are likely to take center stage as Democrats lay out their case. It's the first time a former president will face such charges after leaving office.

I feel like I was basically following my president. I was following what we were called to do. He asked us to fly there. He asked us to be there, Jenna Ryan, a Texas real estate agent who posted a photo on Twitter of herself flashing a peace sign next to a broken Capitol window, told a Dallas-Fort Worth TV station.

Jacob Chansley, the Arizona man photographed on the dais in the Senate who was shirtless and wore face paint and a furry hat with horns, has similarly pointed a finger at Trump.

Chansley called the FBI the day after the insurrection and told agents he traveled at the request of the president that all 'patriots' come to D.C. on January 6, 2021, authorities wrote in court papers.

Chansley's lawyer unsuccessfully lobbied for a pardon for his client before Trump's term ended, saying Chansley felt like he was answering the call of our president.

Authorities say that while up on the dais in the Senate chamber, Chansley wrote a

threatening note to then-Vice President Mike Pence that said: It's only a matter of time, justice is coming.

Trump

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first

to

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to

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a

trial

after

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office.

Vice President Kamala Harris will administer the ceremonial oath to Austin next week. President Joe Biden thanked the senate for confirming Austin and working to get his cabinet in place.

It's an honour and a privilege to serve as our country's 28th secretary of defence, and I'm especially proud to be the first African American to hold the position. Let's get to work, Austin tweeted.

As opening arguments in the trial will begin the week of February 8, House Democrats who voted to impeach Trump last week for inciting the storming of the Capitol on Jan. 6 to challenge the certification of Joe Biden's election win.

Chansley, the Arizona man photographed on the dais in the Senate who was shirtless and wore face paint and a furry hat with horns, has similarly pointed a finger at Trump.

We will never give up. We will never concede. It doesn't happen, Trump said. You don't concede when there's theft involved. Our country has had enough. We will not take it anymore. Later he said: If you don't fight like hell you're not going to have a country anymore. He told supporters to walk to the Capitol to peacefully and patriotically make your voices heard.

Trump has taken no responsibility for his part in fomenting the violence.

This is the third time that Congress has given such a waiver to a retired general. The previous one being of General (retired) James Matlin who was appointed as defence secretary by former President Donald Trump in January 2017 and George Marshall in 1947. Austin had retired as a four-star Army general in 2016.

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By King's departure that December, suspicion had grown that he had waited a little too long to hang up those suspenders. Once the leader in cable TV news, he ranked third in his time slot with less than half the nightly audience his peak year, 1998, when Larry King Live drew 1.64 million viewers.

He found a new sort of celebrity as a plainspoken natural on Twitter when the platform emerged, winning over more than 2 million followers who simultaneously mocked and loved him for his esoteric style. I've never been in a canoe. #Itsmy2cents, he said in a typical tweet in 2015.

ICY WINTERS



A woman walks through chunks of ice on the frozen Kapchagay reservoir outside Almaty, Kazakhstan.

AGENCIES

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LOS ANGELES, 23 JANUARY

Larry King, the suspender-sporting everyman whose broadcast interviews with world leaders, movie stars and ordinary Joes helped define American conversation for a half-century, died Saturday. He was 87.

In its early years, Larry King Live was based in Washington, which gave the show an air of gravitas. Likewise King was the plainspoken go-between through whom Beltway bigwigs could reach their public, and they did, earning the show prestige as a place where things happened, where news was made.

King conducted an estimated 50,000 on-air interviews. In 1995 he presided over a Middle East peace summit with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, King Hussein of Jordan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. He welcomed everyone from the Dalai Lama to Elizabeth Taylor, from Mikhail Gorbachev to Barack Obama, Bill Gates to Lady Gaga. Especially after he relo-

cated to Los Angeles, his shows were frequently in the thick of breaking celebrity news, including Paris Hilton talking about her stint in jail in 2007 and Michael Jackson's friends and family members talking about his death in 2009. King boasted of never over-preparing for an interview. His nonconfrontational style relaxed his guests and made him readily relatable to his audience.

I don't pretend to know it all, he said in a 1995 Associated Press interview. Not 'What about Geneva or Cuba?' I ask, 'Mr. President, what don't you like about this job?' Or 'What's the biggest mistake you made?' That's fascinating.

At a time when CNN as the lone player in cable news was deemed politically neutral, and King was the essence of its middle-of-the-road stance, political figures and people at the centre of controversies would seek out his show.

And he was known for getting guests who were notoriously elusive. Frank Sinatra, who rarely gave interviews and often lashed out at reporters, spoke to King in 1988 in what would be the singer's last major TV appearance. Sinatra was an



...we may need to go further to protect our borders because we do not want... a new variant come back in

UK PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON

HINTING AT TIGHTER BORDER RULES AFTER REPORTS OF A NEW SOUTH AFRICAN VIRUS STRAIN

The Sunday Statesman
NEW DELHI, 24 JANUARY 2021

Wuhan returns to normal as world still struggles

Wuhan accounted for the bulk of China's 4,635 deaths from Covid-19, a number that has largely stayed static for months

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WUHAN, 23 JANUARY

A year ago, a notice sent to smartphones in Wuhan at 2 a.m. announced the world's first coronavirus lockdown that would last 76 days.

Early Saturday morning, residents in the central Chinese city where the virus was first detected were jogging and practicing tai chi in a fog-shrouded park beside the mighty Yangtze River.

Life has largely returned to normal in the city of 11 million, even as the rest of the world grapples with the spread of the virus' more contagious variants.

Efforts to vaccinate people for Covid-19 have been frustrated by disarray and limited supplies in some places. The scourge has killed over 2 million people worldwide.

Traffic was light in Wuhan but there was no sign of the barriers that a year ago isolated neighborhoods, prevented movement around the city and confined people to their housing compounds and even apartments.

Wuhan accounted for the bulk of China's 4,635 deaths from Covid-19, a number that has largely stayed static for months. The city has been largely free of further outbreaks since the lockdown was lifted on April 8, but questions persist as to where the virus originated and whether Wuhan and Chinese authorities acted fast enough and with sufficient transparency to allow the world to prepare for a pandemic that has sickened more than 98 million. China on Saturday

LOOKING BACK AT CHINA'S COVID-19 OUTBREAK AND LOCKDOWN IN WUHAN

MID-DECEMBER 2019

Patients begin showing up in Wuhan hospitals complaining of flu-like symptoms including high fever, cough and breathing difficulties.



27th DECEMBER

A Chinese lab assembles a near-complete sequence of the virus, showing it to be similar to the coronavirus that caused the 2002-03 SARS outbreak. The lab alerts health authorities, but the information is kept under wraps.

30th DECEMBER

Doctors begin warning about the disease independently on social media — most prominently Dr. Li Wenliang, who shares a lab report indicating the pathogen is a SARS-like virus.

31st DECEMBER

Officials close Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which was linked to dozens of the earliest cases. Li is punished by police and his superiors and told he is "spreading rumors."

3rd JANUARY 2020

The Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention obtains a full sequence of the virus but doesn't release it. China reports the outbreak to the WHO, but Chinese authorities order labs and medical institutes to destroy patient samples.

9th JANUARY 2020

WHO says Chinese investigators have conducted gene sequencing of the virus, an initial step toward treatment and a vaccine. It does not recommend any specific measures for travelers.

13th JANUARY

The first case outside China is identified in Thailand.

14th JANUARY

Chinese health officials say in an internal meeting that "clustered cases suggest human-to-human transmission is possible" and order emergency preparations for a pandemic. In public, they downplay the virus's ability to infect.

MID-JANUARY

The Lunar New Year travel rush — millions of people leave Wuhan to return home or pass through on their journeys.

18th JANUARY

Tens of thousands of Wuhan families take part in a mass Lunar New Year banquet hosted by the city. Many became infected.

20th JANUARY

A top Chinese medical expert, Dr. Zhong Nan-shan, announces on state television that the virus is transmissible between people.

23rd JANUARY

The Wuhan lockdown begins with a notice sent to people's smartphones at 2 a.m. announcing the airport and train and bus stations will be shut at 10 a.m. Construction begins on the first of two hastily built field hospitals as thousands of patients overwhelm the city's health care system. Eventually, most of the rest of Hubei province would be locked down, affecting 56 million people.

2nd FEBRUARY

The first field hospital, Huoshenshan, opens 10 days later. Eventually, more than a dozen venues such as gyms and conference centers are converted to sprawling medical wards to treat and isolate the less serious cases.

7th FEBRUARY

Li Wenliang, the doctor reprimanded for sharing a lab report about the virus, dies of Covid-19. His death brings a national outpouring of grief and anger at authorities for punishing him.

FEBRUARY-MARCH

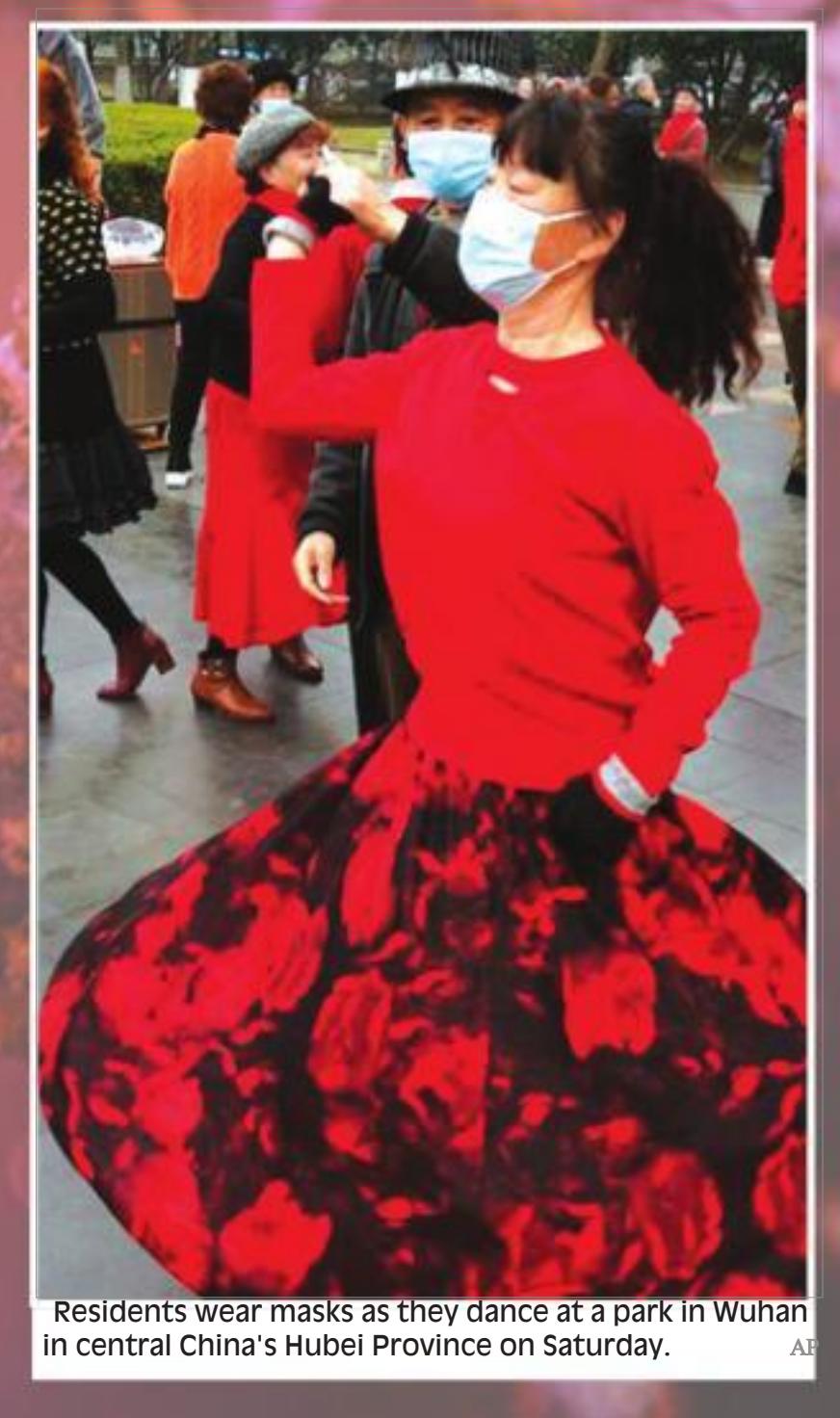
Wuhan's streets are deserted apart from ambulances and security personnel as the city's 11 million people are confined to their homes.

24th MARCH

Authorities announce they will end the lockdown of most of Hubei province at midnight, as new cases subside. Wuhan remains locked down for two more weeks.

8th APRIL

Wuhan's lockdown lifted. Residents celebrate their freedom after 76 days.



Residents wear masks as they dance at a park in Wuhan in central China's Hubei Province on Saturday. AP

announced another 107 cases, bringing its total to 88,911. Of those, the northern province of Heilongjiang accounted for the largest number at 56. Beijing and the eastern financial hub of Shanghai both reported three new cases amid mass testing and lockdowns

of hospitals and housing units linked to recent outbreaks.

Authorities are wary of a new surge surrounding next month's Lunar New Year holiday and are telling people not to travel and to avoid gatherings as much as possible. Schools are being let out a week

early and many have already shifted to online classes.

Mask-wearing remains virtually universal indoors and on public transport. Mobile phone apps are used to trace people's movements and prove they are both virus-free and have not been to

areas where suspected cases have been found. Wuhan has

been praised for its sacrifice in the service of the nation, turning it into a sort of Stalingrad in China's war against the virus, commemorated in books, documentaries, TV shows and florid panegyrics from offi-

cials including head of state and leader of the Communist Party Xi Jinping. China has doggedly defended its actions in the early days of the outbreak, saying it helped buy time for the rest of the world while pushing fringe theories that the virus was brought to the city from

outside China, possibly from a laboratory in the US.

After months of negotiations, China finally gave permission last week for the World Health Organization to send a team of international experts to begin investigating the virus' origins. They are cur-

rently undergoing two weeks of quarantine. A panel of experts commissioned by the WHO criticized China and other countries this week for not moving to stem the initial outbreak earlier, prompting Beijing to concede it could have done better.

Thousands of Hong Kongers locked down

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HONG KONG, 23 JANUARY

Thousands of Hong Kong residents were locked down on Saturday in an unprecedented move to contain a worsening outbreak in the city, authorities said.

Hong Kong has been grappling to contain a fresh wave of the coronavirus since November.

Over 4,300 cases have been recorded in the last two months, making up nearly 40 per cent of the city's total.

Coronavirus cases in Hong Kong's Yau Tsim Mong district, a working-class neighbourhood with old buildings and subdivided flats, made up about half of the infections in the past week.

Sewage testing in the area picked up more concentrated traces of the virus, prompting concerns that poorly built plumbing systems and a lack of ventilation in subdivided units may present a possible path for the virus to spread.

Authorities said in a statement Saturday that an area comprising 16 buildings in Yau Tsim Mong will be locked down until all residents have undergone tests. Residents will not be allowed to leave their homes until they have received their test results to prevent cross-infection.

Persons subject to compulsory testing are required to stay in their premises until all such persons identified in the area have undergone testing and the test results are mostly ascertained, the government said in a statement.

Hong Kong has previously avoided lockdowns in the city during the pandemic, with leader Carrie Lam stating in July last year that authorities will avoid taking such extreme measures unless it had no other choice.

The restrictions, which were announced at 4 a.m. in Hong Kong, are expected to end within 48 hours.

It appealed to employers to exercise discretion and avoid docking the salary of employees who have been affected by the restrictions and may not be able to go to work. Hong Kong has seen a steady increase in the number of new cases.

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Debate rages over 12-week gap between vaccine doses in UK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 23 JANUARY



Senior medics are at odds in the UK over the optimum gap between the two doses of vaccines being administered for protection against Covid-19.

The two vaccines currently being injected among the country's priority groups, Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca, both require a booster shot a few weeks later.

Initial advice for the second dose to be delivered within 21 days was modified by the UK government scientists to up to 12 weeks apart, with the aim of vaccinating larger numbers with at least one jab to inject some level of immediate protection.

The government's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) claims unpublished data suggest that the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is still effective with doses 12 weeks apart.

But American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer has said it has tested its vaccine's efficacy only when the two doses were given up to 21 days apart, creating some doubt over its efficacy with a larger time gap.

In a letter to Prof. Whitty, the British Medical Association (BMA) has said it agreed that the vaccine should be rolled out "as quickly as possible" but called for an urgent review and for the gap to be reduced.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a gap of four weeks between doses, to be extended only in exceptional circumstances to six weeks.

Speaking alongside UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson at a Downing Street briefing in London on Friday, England's Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Professor Chris Whitty reiterated that increasing the gap between doses to a maximum of 12 weeks would allow "many more people to be vaccinated much more quickly".

In a letter to Prof. Whitty, the British Medical Association (BMA) has said it agreed that the vaccine should be rolled out "as quickly as possible" but called for an urgent review and for the gap to be reduced.

In England one in 10 of all adults have received their first dose, including 71 per cent of over-80s and two thirds of elderly care home residents

Dr Chaand Nagpaul, chair of the BMA Council, told the BBC there were "growing concerns" that the vaccine could become less effective with doses 12 weeks apart.

"Obviously the protection will not vanish after six weeks, but what we do not know is what level of protection will be offered [after that point]. We should not be extrapolating data when we don't have it," he said.

The debate is playing out as Johnson confirmed 5.4 million people across the UK have now received their first dose of the vaccine against Covid-19, with a record 400,000 vaccinations between Thursday and Friday.

In England one in 10 of all adults have received their first dose, including 71 per cent of over-80s and two thirds of elderly care home residents

'New UK variant may be more deadly'

THE INDEPENDENT
LONDON, 23 JANUARY

Early evidence suggests the variant of coronavirus that emerged in the UK towards the end of last year may be more deadly, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said.

Based on preliminary data briefing by scientists at the New and Emerging Respiratory Virus Threats Advisory Group (NERVTAG), Johnson admitted that it would seem the new variant was deadlier but stressed that the two vaccines being administered in the UK -- Pfizer/BioNTech and Oxford/AstraZeneca -- are effective against all variants.

The new variant was first detected in Kent in September. It is now the most common form of the virus in England and Northern Ireland, and has spread to more than 50 other countries.

It was already classified as a more highly-transmissible variant but its risk level was so far not believed to be any greater than the original strain.

In addition to spreading more quickly, it also now appears that there is some evidence that the new variant

There is much more to do, and the target remains very stretching indeed, but we remain on track to reach our goal of

offering a first dose to everyone in the top four priority groups by the middle of February, said Johnson.

Anti-terrorism court jails Saeed's 3 aides in terror financing case

LAHORE, 23 JANUARY

A Pakistani Anti-Terrorism Court has sentenced three leaders of Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) terrorist organisation to six months in prison in a case of terror financing.

Saeed's brother-in-law Hafiz Abdur Rehman Makki, JuD spokesperson Yahya Mujahid and Zafar Iqbal were handed down the six-month imprisonment each by the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore.

With Friday's sentencing, the collective imprisonment of JuD leaders in the terror financing case registered with the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) of the Punjab police.

The verdicts against them will run concurrently in the terror financing cases registered with the CTD of the Punjab police.

The three convicts were present in the court when the judge announced the verdict, he said.

The CTD had registered as many as 41 cases against the leaders of JuD in different cities of Punjab, the court official said, adding that the trial courts have so far decided 37 cases.

In a recent verdict, operations commander of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terror group Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi was given a 15-year imprisonment on three counts in a case of terror financing.

Early this week, the ATC handed down a 14-year imprisonment each to Iqbal and Mujahid while a six-month sentence to Makki in another terror financing case.

The ATC has sentenced Saeed for a collective imprisonment of 36 years on terror financing charges in five cases so far. His jail terms will run concurrently.

The LeT, led by JuD chief Saeed, is responsible for carrying out the 2008 Mumbai attack that killed 166 people, including six Americans.

Saeed, a UN designated terrorist whom the US has placed a \$10 million bounty on, was arrested last year in the terror financing cases. PTI

Protests across Russia demand Navalny's release; 850 arrests

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 23 JANUARY



Protests erupted in over 60 Russian cities on Saturday to demand the release of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, the Kremlin's most prominent foe.

Russian police arrested more than 850 protesters, some of whom took to the streets in temperatures as frigid as minus-50 Celsius.

In Moscow, about 5,000 demonstrators filled Pushkin Square in the city centre, where clashes with police broke out and demonstrators were roughly dragged off by helmeted riot officers to police buses and detention trucks. Navalny's wife Yulia was among those arrested.

The protests stretched across Russia's vast territory, from the island city of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk north of Japan and the eastern Siberian city of Yakutsk, where temperatures plunged to minus-50 Celsius, to the Russia's more populous European cities.

The range demonstrated how Navalny and his anti-corruption campaign have built

a Berlin hospital two days later. Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established that he was exposed to a Soviet-era Novich



GOOGIA'S RECORD

Olympic champion Sofia Goggia (photo, left) is dominating the World Cup downhill season like no woman since ski great Lindsey Vonn. Goggia won her fourth straight downhill on Saturday to tie a World Cup streak last achieved by Vonn in 2018.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Kuldeep likely: The Indian team management is likely to field Chinamang bowler Kuldeep Yadav in the forthcoming four-Test series against England in February-March. The left-arm spinner was not played in the four-Test series in Australia even as India tried as many as 20 players due to injuries.

PSG wins: Paris Saint-Germain coach Mauricio Pochettino made a surprising return to watch Kylian Mbappe snap a four-game scoreless run with two goals as the league leaders crushed 10-man Montpellier 4-0. PSG moved three points clear of second-place Lille.

National Racing Championship: Teen sensation Amir Sayeed from Kottayam competing in the JK Tyre FMSI National Racing Championship for the first time, sealed the Novice Cup category championship on Saturday. Even though with two more races to go, he has ensured his win.

Lahiri misses cut: Anirban Lahiri made small errors but paid a big price for it as he missed the cut at the American Express Championships. Following up on a solid 68 on Stadium Course, Lahiri carded one-over 73 at Nicklaus Course and missed the cut by one shot.

Goa hold on for a point against Kerala

AGENCIES
GOA, 23 JANUARY

10-men FC Goa managed to fend off a tough press by Kerala Blasters to settle for a point with a 1-1 draw in the Hero Indian Super League at GMC Stadium, Bambolim, on Saturday.

The Gaurs took the lead through a 25th-minute strike from Jorge Ortiz Mendoza while Raul KP(57) scored with a brilliant header in the second half. Goa were reduced to 10 men in the second half after Ivan Gonzalez received marching orders, receiving two yellow cards within a span of seconds.

Goa started with what they do best—intriguing short passes, maintaining maximum ball possession and keeping Kerala on the backfoot.

The Gaurs deservedly took the lead in the 25th minute from a set-piece. Ortiz's freekick from the left took a slight deflection off Sahal Abdul Samad's head and looped over Gomes.

Kerala had their goal disallowed just before the breather. Facundo Pereyra chipped in a cross from a corner, which fell to Bakary Kone who used his thigh first, and then his arm to find the back of the net.

Dream run of Indian doubles pairs ends with semifinal defeat at Thailand Open

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BANGKOK, 23 JANUARY

The Indian mixed doubles pair of Satwikairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnapa produced a spirited performance before going down narrowly to top seeds Dechapol Puavaranukroh and Sapsiree Taerattanachai in the semifinals of the Toyota Thailand Open here on Saturday.

Up against the world number three Thai pair, Satwik and Ashwini, who are ranked 36th, showed great skills and temperament as they scripted an extraordinary fightback after losing the opening game by a whisker.

However, in the end, Dechapol and Sapsiree prevailed 22-20 18-21 21-12 over the Indians in a 57-minute battle.

Satwik and Ashwini, who spent most of the last year away from the court in two different cities and could only practice together for a few weeks, on Friday became the first Indian mixed doubles pair to reach the semifinals of a BWF World Tour Super 1000 event.

Earlier, the impressive run of Satwik and Chirag Shetty also came to an end after a close semifinal defeat in men's doubles.

The Indian pair, ranked 10th in the world, lost 18-21 18-21 to world number nine Malaysian combination of Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik in a 35-minute match.

The Thai pair then stepped up the pressure as Satwik found the net thrice, which created a decisive gap. Soon they led 18-11 and held match points when the Indians erred at the net again. Dechapol sealed it with a smash.

The duo kept moving together till 18-18. But Dechapol found the net and then Satwik produced another trademark smash as the Indian duo roared back into the contest.

In the decider, the Thai pair were up 3-0 and extended it to 10-7. The experienced pair continued their good run and managed to create a gap of 15-11 after Ashwini found the net.

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SHORT POINT

How the Chinese went about their business was left to the imagination of those interested in their affairs but putatively punishing taxes - where high-pay foreign footballers were concerned - levied in the country's Super League came to be explained in terms of a simultaneous, official drive to ensure the development of home-grown youths. Spending ceased being extravagantly lavish in the glamour tournament. If European clubs had apprehended trouble for

themselves when Chinese clubs targeted and bagged some of the bigger boys in the game, they found the altered reality a bit of all right even though they never stopped being wary.

The point relevant to India here is that if we have any plan for our own comprehensive talent-spotting - cum - nurturing programme, this is how we could be raising the money for it. If China can prioritise a nationwide

project over an annual competition where foreigners' presence is its USP, there is no reason why we should not be able to hit the same path. The question though that we need to ask ourselves is: can India ever be deemed a sporting superpower - which is on our wish-list - by bypassing the world's No 1 spectator sport?

Quite unlikely, that, but since our decision-makers love softer options, they steer clear of the more difficult tests. That is how we play ourselves out of the game.

And it was Wolves having to hang on to avoid being forced into extra time by a disciplined Chorley side that belted its lowly status.

No wonder manager Jamie Vermiglio wasn't just savoring his chance to take on a Premier League side. A primary school headmaster in his day job, Vermiglio felt far from outclassed by his Wolves counterpart.

I thought we were fantastic

I feel really proud, of course I do, Vermiglio said. "But I feel disappointed as well and I never thought I would come off the field feeling the way I

and was strong in the duels and created problems.

I felt the scenario was created for a surprise to happen. We spoke about that but the boys were professional and achieved what we wanted. I have been on the other side and played in the lower divisions against big teams, so I know what it meant for Chorley."

This was not a significantly weakened Wolves side, with the starting lineup featuring Fabio Silva the team's 40 million euro record-signing.

I thought we were the better team in the second half, Chorley forward Connor Hall said.

We had them on the ropes for 10-15 minutes so we can be proud of ourselves. They showed us respect bringing a strong side and we didn't do ourselves any harm. It is mad. In a couple of days time we will look back with pride.

Being live on television across Britain and around the world could certainly help some of the players.

Most of them could step up to a level, Vermiglio said. There's

no way we could perform like that consistently at that level week in, week out. Chorley isn't even top of National League North. It is only ninth in the 22-team standings. Cup games get a little bit of something else out of you," Vermiglio said.

They are just 11 people coming up against 11 people and if you are that organized you can stay in a game of football and that's what we have done. The pandemic meant the only fans who got to glimpse this array of Premier League talent were those who perched onto walls next to houses packed into streets around the tiny stadium with one stand.

Neither the fans nor the team know when they will be back in action at Victory Park, with the league suspended due to a tightening of coronavirus restrictions nationally. Warnings to players to social distance and not finding a way past Wolves, perhaps meant this game did not end with the club posting a video of the players singing the Adele ballad Someone Like You.

Sport

the Sunday Statesman

Posted at RMS, Delhi, Postal Reg. No. DL/TND/11/6089/2018-19-20

Ajinkya asked me if I could bowl with injury, I had to say yes: Navdeep Saini

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

A groin strain prevented India pacer Navdeep Saini (in photo) from giving his best in the Brisbane Test but fearing that he may not get such a big stage again, he remained at the beck and call of his captain and ended up bowling five overs despite injury.

The 28-year-old, who finally made his Test debut in the Australia series after years of wait, said he risked aggravating his injury by bowling in the second innings but given what was at stake, "it was no brainer".

"Ajinkya bhaiya asked me if I would be able to bowl with the injury, I just had to say yes," Saini, who was in the middle when Rishabh Pant hit the winning runs at the Gabba, said.

Having taken four wickets in his debut game at Sydney,

"I just wished if could keep



going with that injury and support my team. I knew I might not get a stage like that again. Captain asked me if I could do it. I was in pain but said I would do whatever I could.

"I am recovering now and should be fit soon," said the lanky fast bowler from Karnal who was

fasttracked into first-class cricket by former India opener Gautam Gambhir and received his maiden Test call-up in back in 2018.

Saini, who has also played 10T20 Internationals and seven ODIs, is not part of India's squad for the first two home Tests

against England starting February 5 in Chennai. Out of his four Test wickets, the first one was most special as he trapped another debutant, Will Pucovski, in front of the stumps with a full and fast incoming delivery.

"All wickets were special but yes you can't forget the first one. Because until that happens, you keep thinking about that first wicket."

With senior bowlers like Mohammad Shami and Umesh Yadav out of the series, the pressure to perform instantly had increased on the likes of Saini, who had not played Tests before but had a substantial experience of playing IPL and shorter formats for India.

Having not bowled with red-ball in Australia ever prior to the series, Saini said it was an enriching experience.

"It is easy to get excited in Australia with the bounce on

offer. It is natural to think about bowling short balls then but Test cricket is not only about that, it is about patience and bowling in the same channel consistently.

"To be able to do well in Australia, you have to be mentally very strong, they don't give up till the very end. The management was very supportive including the captain and Rohit bhaiya. They all told me to bowl the way I would bowl in Ranji Trophy," said Saini, who is back home after five long months in the world of bio-bubbles.

Mohammed Siraj, the find of Australia tour in coach Ravi Shastri's words, was seen countering Saini consistently in the latter's maiden Test. It helped the Delhi pacer immensely as he and Siraj go back a long way.

"He is one of my best mates. We have played a lot together. Talking about his extraordinary journey, Saini, son of a busdriver, said he never planned to be a professional cricketer, it was only fate at play.

"I played with tennis ball for the major part of my growing up years. It all started when I played Ranji trophy. That is when I felt I could play professionally. Before that I was just playing without an aim, I had no idea. It all happened step by step after I played for Delhi," added Saini.

England spinners' tap may run dry on Indian pitches

ENGLAND'S SPIN TRIO FOR TESTS VS INDIA

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 23 JANUARY

Touring England spinners' failure to take a single wicket in hosts Sri Lanka's first two tests of the ongoing second Test in Galle, has put a question mark on their ability to perform in India when their four-Test tour begins early next month.

While both off-spinner Dom Bess and left-arm spinner Jack Leach shared 14 wickets in England's first Test win over Sri Lanka, the Sri Lanka batsmen's ability to play them out and score 381 in first two tests of the second Test may worry the English team management on the sudden ineffectiveness of their spin bowlers.

England finished 98 for two at stumps on day two, still 283 runs behind Sri Lanka.

Lasith Embuldeniya, who took the new ball from the City End, accounted for both openers. Root joined Yorkshire teammate Jonny Bairstow with the side in trouble at five for two and counterattacked, adding an unfinished 93 runs for the third wicket.

Root, the English captain who posted a double hundred in the first Test, was unbeaten on 67 off 77 balls with 10 fours while Bairstow was on 24.

Root was the more dominant partner of the two England batsmen, using the sweep shot to good effect both the conventional and reverse.

Sri Lanka know how crucial Root's wicket is and they unsucces-

cess against India in England, failed to get wickets the last time England toured India in 2016-17. He managed just 10 wickets in five Tests matches at an average of 64.9.

Former India spinner Maninder Singh says he is not sure England spinners would be successful in India.

"I have my doubts [they will trouble India batsmen]. The English spinners are not used to bowling on the surfaces you get here. They are used to bowling on good wickets.

Bowling on turning pitches requires some different skills and is also an art," Maninder, who played 35 Test matches, said.

"The lengths and lines of spinners on Indian surfaces are different from those on good pitches. And adapting is not easy," said the former left-arm spinner.

India and England play the first two matches in Chennai and the next two in Ahmedabad. The weather is likely to be hot in India and that could result in dry wickets, with not much help in the air. England spinners, who tend to get natural drift or movement when bowling in England due to the cooler and wetter weather at home, will have to adapt and bowl lines and lengths different from what they do at home.

The last time England toured

Root helps England recovery in 2nd Test

AGENCIES
GALLE (SRI LANKA), 23 JANUARY

Joe Root reached an unbeaten 67 to put England back on course after they lost their openers cheaply in the second Test against Sri Lanka on Saturday.

England finished on 98 for two at stumps on day two, still 283 runs behind Sri Lanka.

Lasith Embuldeniya, who took the new ball from the City End, accounted for both openers. Root joined Yorkshire teammate Jonny Bairstow with the side in trouble at five for two and counterattacked, adding an unfinished 93 runs for the third wicket.

Root was the more dominant partner of the two England batsmen, using the sweep shot to good effect both the conventional and reverse.

Sri Lanka know how crucial Root's wicket is and they unsucces-

sfully reviewed a leg before wicket shout with the batsman on 39.

Earlier, Sri Lanka did well to post 381 runs having batted for five sessions.

They lost centurion Angelo Mathews (11