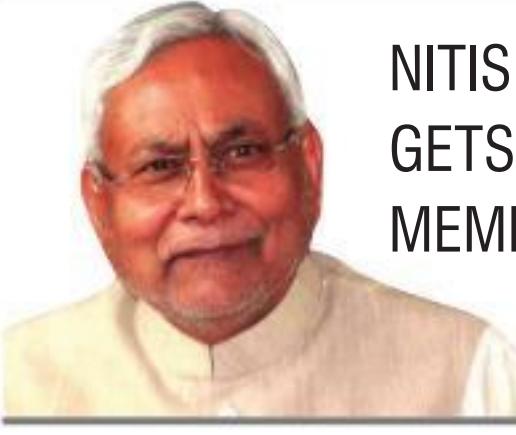




PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



NITISH CABINET
GETS 17 NEW
MEMBERS



PALESTINIAN
POLL



TRUMP'S SECOND
IMPEACHMENT
TRIAL BEGINS



NADAL ADVANCES
IN OZ OPEN

P5

P6

P10

P12

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Moderate to dense fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 27 and 10 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100%	Min: 42%
TEMPERATURE	
Max: 26.5°C (3)	Min: 07.8°C (-1)
SUN RISES	SUN SETS
07:03 hrs	18:08 hrs
MOON RISES	MOON SETS
06:53 hrs	16:41 hrs

THUMBNAILS



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

Deep Sidhu arrested: Actor-activist Deep Sidhu wanted in connection with the Red Fort violence on Republic Day has been arrested by the Delhi Police, officials said on Tuesday. The arrest was made by a team of Delhi Police's Special Cell, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav. Later, Yadav said that Sidhu was arrested from Karnal Bypass at 10.40 pm on Monday, adding that he was wanted in connection with the case of instigating the crowd at the Red Fort on Republic Day. "The Crime Branch will investigate his role in detail," the DCP said. P3

Bank strike: The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), an umbrella body of nine unions, on Tuesday gave a call for a two-day strike from 15 March to protest against the proposed privatisation of two state-owned lenders. In the Union Budget presented last week, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the privatisation of two public sector banks (PSBs) as part of its disinvestment plan. P8

PM misty-eyed at Ghulam Nabi farewell

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

Prime minister Narendra Modi broke down several times in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday while reminiscing about his close association with Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad whose term is coming to an end next week.

Modi was participating in the farewell speech for Leader of Opposition Azad and three other members from Jammu and Kashmir - Nazir Ahmad Laway, Shamsheer Singh Manhas, Mir Mohammad Fayaz - whose terms in the Upper House are coming to an end.

When he was Gujarat chief minister, Modi recalled, Azad telephoned him about a terrorist attack on a group of Gujarati tourists in Srinagar.

In his poignant speech, Modi said Azad was weeping as he gave the information of the attack that killed eight persons. The PM was in tears

again, halted his speech briefly, and sipped water. Azad had called him from the airport again that night, he said.

"He was worried about the victims like his own family," Modi said, and the House reinforced him with long thumping of desks.

The prime minister said, "I respect him on the basis of incidents and experience." Azad's calmness and humility, and a desire to do something for the nation would not let him rest, he said.

Modi said whoever becomes the Leader of the Opposition after Azad would have to work hard to reach his level.

Azad had suggested a meeting of party leaders, Modi said when he decided to call a meeting of floor leaders on Covid-19 which exhibited Azad's vast experience.

Azad took care of the garden of his official bungalow, Modi said, and brought a bit of Kashmir there. His bunga-

low often won the first prize in competitions.

In his response, Azad said that of his 41 years' legislative experience, 28 years were in the Rajya Sabha, 10 years in the Lok Sabha and three in the state Assembly.

He said the sudden deaths of Sanjay Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and the Odisha supercyclone in 1999, too, shook him, like the deaths of the Gujarat tourists the PM has alluded. Azad said the tourists were killed just as his government shifted to Srinagar from Jammu after winter.

"I pray to God to end militancy and terrorism in the country as it has taken lives of many civilians and security personnel," he said amidst thumping of desks. On Kashmiri Pandits, who had to flee the former state due to terrorism, he said all would have to make efforts for their return to their homes in the Kashmir Valley.

Will issue OTT guidelines soon, says Javadekar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

The government will soon issue guidelines for regulation of OTT (over the top) platforms that will address issues such as sensitive content, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Tuesday.

Replying to a Zero Hour mention, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said a lot of suggestions and complaints on the regulation of OTTs have been received.

"Guidelines and direction are almost ready. It will be soon implemented," he said in his brief submission.

Earlier, raising the issue through a Zero Hour men-

tion, Mahesh Poddar of the BJP said the content and language on OTT platforms was discriminatory and offensive.

Objectionable content on OTT platforms includes sexual discrimination and abusive language, he said adding that the government should, without delay, implement the Internet regulations.

There are at least 40 OTT platforms, including global ones such as Netflix, Amazon Prime and HotStar (Disney Plus), and hundreds of news content websites.

"It is an important issue. We get a lot of suggestions and complaints," Javadekar said.

A demonstration of their skills using real samples was

Pioneering paws: Army using dogs to detect Covid

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

In a first for the country, the Indian Army is using its dogs for quick detection of Covid-19 to cut down time delays associated with regular diagnostic techniques.

The canine members of the armed force are known for their pronounced olfactory capability and have earlier helped in explosive and narcotics detection, search and rescue operations, and other challenging tasks. Now, they have another job.

Two dogs, two-year-old cocker spaniel Casper and one-year-old Jaya, a chippiparai, which is an indigenous breed from Tamil Nadu have been trained to detect Covid by sniffing samples of sweat and urine, senior Army officials said.

A demonstration of their skills using real samples was

UPSC civil service: Not in favour of age limit relaxation, Centre tells SC

NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

The Centre Tuesday told Supreme Court it is against granting one-time relaxation on age limit to UPSC civil service aspirants, including those who had exhausted their last attempt in 2020 exam amid the pandemic and would get one more chance this year provided they are not age barred, as it would be discriminatory to other candidates.

The Centre told this to a Bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar which reserved its verdict on a plea which had sought one more chance in the UPSC's civil services exam to those aspirants who could not appear in their last attempt in 2020 due to the pandemic.

Additional Solicitor General S V Raju, appearing for the Centre, said that initially the government was not willing to concede the extra chance and it was later done at the suggestion of the Bench. This is not the exam where you prepare at the last minute. People prepare for years together. Raju then bench, adding, My first offer remains.

The Centre had on 5 February told SC that it was agreeable to give an extra chance as a one-time relaxation to those civil service aspirants, who had appeared in their last attempt in the 2020 exam and are otherwise age-barred.

It, however, had said no relaxation shall be granted for 2021 exam to those candidates who have not exhausted their attempts or are otherwise age-barred from appearing in 2021 exam.

Great leveller: Chepauk shocker after Brisbane heroics

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY
KOLKATA, 9 FEBRUARY

The question that the honest-to-goodness Mr Average Man found asking himself, and his neighbour just across the wicker fence, today, was simplicity itself: how can we pull it off against Australia in Australia and return home in glory to go belly up against England?

Well, any attempted answer to that will have to reckon with the fact that if India had been wizards down under, it was not as if they metamorphosed into muggles overnight. Even JK Rowling would perhaps be incapable of that dramatic transformation.



Backroom mavericks think these things up - rather than wait for normality to return -

and the game is left picking up the pieces. The juggernaut was quite all right in Australia, where the pitches were emphatically not the fast bowler's graveyard. But Chepauk was.

The wicket here never allowed the contest between bat and ball to be even. It was so batting-friendly to begin with that the archetypal tearaway would have been excused for pulling out after his first spell of heart-shattering disappointment and asking for his ticket home. And then India's spinners - more Shahbaz Nadeem than Ravichandran Ashwin - permitted themselves the luxury of oodles of no-balls. That was like so

many spelling mistakes in a dictionary. There probably is no tweaker in competitive cricket anywhere in the world who has not been told of the utter unacceptability of no-balls from him, given that, unlike his quick peer, he is not really required by his craft to steam fast-forward in and let the batsman have it.

So when England hit up their massive first-innings total, all that India could be realistically expected to achieve was a draw. Not everyone was inclined to think similarly, though.

There were stalwarts who said that the hosts too would have their season in the sun with the bat but India, in their

first knock, managed only so much and, in the second, a lot less than that. Counted on to wring England's neck, they ended up wringing their own hands. Today, with nine wickets intact, they needed 381 runs but, on a fourth-innings track, it was not destined to be a joy ride to paradise, which seemed hopelessly to recede as the journey went on. Not that it took a lot of time. The fact that a spinner and a veteran new-ball bowler took as many as seven wickets underlined the capricious wicket's contrarian partiality the second time around.

Batsmen were its betes noires now, though Virat Kohli's batting gave the caustic critic enough reason to claim that the wicket was no minefield strewn with tripwires. India, of course, batted very, very shabbily but to say that would not be deny that the best that they might have hoped for was a draw-on the wicket they had been given.

The West Indies wowed us the other day all right and recollections of it led one farther back to a comic strip in which we had had one character telling another that we'd all die one day. "But on the other days, we won't," said the interlocutor. It, of course, is great when the incredible is also reality but then there is this thing about life: it tends to discourage the popular craving for miracles.



Modi Govt failed the country in 11 different ways starting from mismanagement of pandemic to failure in checking crimes against women...

TRINAMUL CONGRESS RAJYA SABHA MP DEREK O'BRIEN
ACCUSING CENTRE FOR MISMANAGEMENT

No fresh Covid death logged in Delhi after over 10 months

AAP govt asserts that 'Delhi's collective will is gradually winning over the infection'

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

No fresh coronavirus-related death was today recorded in the national capital after a gap of over 10 months. Delhi logged 100 fresh Covid cases, with the Arvind Kejriwal government asserting that "Delhi's collective will is gradually winning over the infection".

The cumulative death toll stood at 10,882, and the positivity rate dipped to 0.18 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi, saying, it was a "good news for Delhites". "Today no death has been reported due to Covid infection in Delhi. Congratulations to people of Delhi. Corona cases have also come down and vaccination drive has picked up pace. People of Delhi have fought a tough battle against Corona. We have to still take all precautions," he stated.

The 100 new cases were detected out of 56,410 tests conducted the previous day.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain tweeted: "Today



no death has been reported due to COVID infection. Delhi's collective will is gradually winning over the infection. I congratulate the people of Delhi for taking proper precautions and our healthcare and frontline workers who have fought this battle tooth and nail".

The infection tally in the city rose to 6,36,260, the health bulletin said. The active cases tally dropped to 1,052 from 1,096 the previous day.

The total number of tests conducted the previous day included 31,300 RT-PCR tests and 25,110 rapid antigen tests, the bulletin said.

The city had recorded 96 coronavirus cases on January 27, the lowest in over nine months.

Last Friday and Sunday, two deaths were reported in the national capital, same as on 2 February, which was the lowest in the last 10 months.

Meanwhile, NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr VK Paul told reporters that from the pandemic point of view, "consistent gains" are being made in terms of declining new cases and new deaths. However, he said, the last national sero-survey findings have shown that over 70 per cent of the population are "still sus-

ceptible" to the disease, and stressed that herd immunity has to be achieved through vaccination.

"Deaths are being reported below 100 consistently and in the last 24 hours no new death has been reported in Delhi," Paul said.

According to today's bulletin, of the total number of 6,050 beds in Covid hospitals in Delhi, 5,554 were vacant. It said that 135 beds in Covid care centres were occupied by people under quarantine, including travellers who have returned by Vande Bharat Mission and bubble flights.

The number of tests done per million, as yesterday was over 5.9 lakh while the total number of tests stood at over 1.12 crore.

The bulletin said that 6,42,326 Covid patients have recovered in Delhi so far. The number of containment zones in the city dropped to 950 from yesterday's 962.

The number of people under home isolation dropped to 441 from 442 the previous day. Delhi had yesterday recorded 125 fresh Covid cases and 3 coronavirus-linked fatalities, even as the positivity rate had stood at 0.23 per cent.

12,717 more people in Capital get Covid shots, highest in a day

PTI
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

More than 12,700 beneficiaries received COVID-19 vaccine shots in Delhi on Tuesday in the fourth week of the inoculation drive, the highest single-day turnout by numbers till date, officials said.

The turnout was over 70 per cent, a marked improvement from the figures a day before -- 9,740 (54 per cent turnout). Besides healthcare workers, frontline workers, who include, police, civil and defence staff, and DJB and electricity department employees, among others, are also getting jabs since the last couple of days.

Also, the number of scheduled days, from initially being four days -- Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday -- have now been extended to six days a week, Monday-Saturday. After a sluggish start, since the exercise was kicked off on January 16, the inoculation drive picked up pace in the past few days.

The targeted number for vaccination on February 9 was 15,100, officials said.

"Today, 12,717 people were administered coronavirus vaccine, and AEFI (adverse events following



Delhi Police commissioner S N Shrivastava getting vaccinated for Covid-19 on Tuesday.

immunisation) was reported in seven persons. This is the highest number (of people vaccinated) achieved in a day so far," a senior official of the Delhi Health Department said.

The number of people vaccinated against COVID-19 till date in Delhi, majority of them being healthcare workers, had crossed the one lakh-mark a few days ago.

Under the nationwide mega vaccination drive launched on January 16, a total of 4,319 (53 per cent

health workers against a target of 8,117, were administered the shots at 81 centres

across the city on day one. On the second scheduled day, the figures had stood at 3,598 (44 per cent of the target). The sharp fall had come after one severe and 50 minor adverse effect cases were reported, on the opening day of the vaccination drive.

The count on the third schedule day was much higher at 4,936 (48 per cent).

Various reasons were being attributed to the low turnout in the initial days, including some technical issues and apprehensions related to adverse events.

However, the government has maintained that no case

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

COURT NOTICE
(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)
IN THE COURT OF
SH. ANUPREET SINGH
Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurugram
Kuldeep Singh Saini
Versus
General Public,
CNR No. HRGR02-000620-
2021

Next Date: 03-03-2021
Publication issued to:
General Public, Gurugram.
In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 19-03-2021 at 10:00 a.m.
For details logon to
https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&district=gurugram.

Dated, this day of 08-02-2021.

Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurugram
Seal of the Court

COURT NOTICE
(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)
IN THE COURT OF
SH. AMAN DEEP DEWAN
Additional District and
Sessions Judge, Gurugram
CNR No. HRGR01-000641-
2021

Sadhana
Versus
General Public and Anr.

Notice to:
General Public.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 19-03-2021 at 10:00 a.m.
For details logon to
https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&district=gurugram.

Dated, this day of 05-02-2021.

Additional District and
Sessions Judge,
Gurugram
Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF
SH. AASHISH GUPTA
AC/CC/ARC (South East)
Saket Courts, New Delhi
SS-01/2020

In the matter of:
Annie Manchanda, d/o Lt.
Harbhajan Singh, r/o R-29,
Greater Kailash, Part-1, New
Delhi.

– Petitioner
Versus
1. State (The Govt of Delhi);
2. Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Old Tehsil Building,
Internal Path, Seth Sarai,
Mehrauli, New Delhi-110030.

– Respondent

Whereas, an application U/s 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by Annie Manchanda, successor of Late Smt. Harbans Kaur and Late Smt. Surinder Kaur for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debt & securities decreased. And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on 13-04-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Therefore, the public at large is hereby given notice that any person having objection to the grant of Succession Certificate in favour of the said applicant, he may appear and file objections in writing, in person or through duly appointed pleader, on the said date and time.

Given under my hand and Seal on 08-02-2021.

ACI/CC/ARC (South East)
Saket Courts, New Delhi
Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING
ATTENDANCE OF
DEFENDANT
(Order 5, Rule 20 of the
Code of Civil Procedure)
In the Court of
Ms. Sukhvinder Kaur
District Judge
(Commercial Court)-02
Room No. 56, Third Floor
Shahdara District Courts,
Delhi
CS COMM No. 277/2020
ASK Automotive Private
Limited

– Plaintiff
Versus
Dharmjeet
– Defendant

To,
Dharmjeet, House No. 668,
Gali No. 6, Saboli, Near Gov-
ernment Senior Secondary
School, New Delhi-110093.

The Defendant above-
named.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 1st day of March, 2021, at 10 a.m. the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and
the Seal of the Court on this
06th day of February, 2021.

District Judge
(Commercial Court)-02
Shahdara District Court,
Delhi

Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF
SH. S. RANA
Addl. District Judge-05
(Commercial Court)
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
PC No. 23/2020
N.D.O.H. - 06-04-2021

Sagar Mittal
Versus

State
CITATION UNDER SECTION
271 OF THE INDIAN
SUCCESSION ACT

Whereas an petition under
Section 276/278 of the Indian
Succession Act 1925, for grant
of Probate and Letters of
Administration and for issue
of process for sale of property
in respect of the Estate of deceased
Lt. Sh. Raj Kumar Mittal, r/o Lt. Kalu
Ran Mittal, r/o B-10/9, Group
Indl. Area, Wazirpur, Delhi-52,
Who died on 19-11-2016 at New Delhi, has been made
by Sh. Sagar Mittal, s/o Lt.
Sh. Raj Kumar Mittal, r/o B-42,
Harder Nagar, North Delhi-110084.

Whereas the 05-04-2021 has
been fixed for hearing of the
case. Notice is hereby given so
that any person having any
interest in the Probate/Letters of
Administration and for issue
of process for sale of property
in respect of the Estate of deceased
Lt. Sh. Raj Kumar Mittal, r/o Lt. Kalu
Ran Mittal, r/o B-10/9, Group
Indl. Area, Wazirpur, Delhi-52,
Who died on 19-11-2016 at New Delhi, has been made
by Sh. Sagar Mittal, s/o Lt.
Sh. Raj Kumar Mittal, r/o B-42,
Harder Nagar, North Delhi-110084.

Given under my hand and
the Seal of this Court on this
28th day of January, 2021.

Addl. Rent
Controller-1
Central District
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.

Seal of the Court

PUBLIC
NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE

On instructions from and
on behalf of Sh. Chander
Gulati, s/o Late Shri Mangat
Ram, r/o House No. 535, Dr.
Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110095
(Hereinafter referred to as
my Client), I hereby notify to
general public that my
aforesaid Client, due to the ill-
treatment, constant harassment
and threats being extended
to him by Shri Mukesh Gulati and his
associates, has severed all relations
with Mukesh Gulati. My

Client hereby disown and
inherit the aforesaid Mukesh
Gulati from all his properties
both movable and immovable
and he will not have any
share, right or claim over
property, bank accounts and
any other assets of my Client
whatever and wherever they
may be. My Client will not be
responsible in any manner
whatsoever for the acts of
said Mukesh Gulati. Anybody
dealing with Shri Mukesh
Gulati shall be doing so at
his/her own risk and conse-
quences.

Given under my hand and
the Seal of the Court on this
06th day of February, 2021.

Additional Rent
Controller-1
Central District
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.

Seal of the Court

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NOTIFICATIONS

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Given under my hand and
the Seal of the Court on this
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whatsoever for the acts of
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dealing with Shri Mukesh
Gulati shall be doing so at
his/her own risk and conse-
quences.

Given under my hand and
the Seal of the Court on this
06th day of February, 2021.

Additional Rent
Controller-1
Central District
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.

Seal of the Court

PUBLIC
NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE

On instructions from and
on behalf of Sh. Chander
Gulati, s/o Late Shri Mangat
Ram, r/o House No. 535, Dr.
Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110095
(Hereinafter referred to as
my Client), I hereby notify to
general public that my
aforesaid Client, due



The BJP has turned the country into a crematorium, but we will not allow the same to happen in Bengal

MAMATA BANERJEE

WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2021

03

R-Day violence: Deep Sidhu sent to 7-day police custody

Actor-activist Sidhu, accused in Red Fort violence, was arrested by Delhi Police on Monday night from Karnal

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

A Delhi court today sent actor-activist Deep Sidhu to 7-day police custody in connection with the Red Fort violence during farmers' tractor parade in the national capital against the Centre's controversial three new agri laws on the Republic Day.

Metropolitan magistrate Prigya Gupta sent Sidhu to the Delhi police custody after the police alleged he was one of the main instigators of the violent incidents at the Red Fort on 26 January.

Sidhu's counsel, however, claimed he had nothing to do with the violence and was at the wrong place at the wrong time.

The police had announced a cash reward of



Rs 1 lakh for information leading to Sidhu's arrest.

Earlier in the day, Delhi Police announced the arrest of Sidhu. The arrest was made by a team of Delhi Police's Special Cell, said deputy commissioner of police (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav.

Yadav said that Sidhu was arrested from Karnal Bypass at 10.40 pm yesterday, adding that he was wanted in connection with the case of instigating the crowd at the Red Fort on Republic Day.

"The Crime Branch will investigate his role in detail," the DCP said. Asked where he was hiding after the 26 January violence, Yadav said the investigation was at an initial stage.

"He was a prominent player behind the Republic Day violence. We have evidence about that how he

had been instigating youngsters with his provocative speeches on 25 January and 26 January. Even he instigated youths when he was hiding from the police," said Yadav.

After the Republic Day violence that had left over 500 security personnel injured and one protester dead, Sidhu was posting videos on social media.

"Sidhu was in contact with a woman friend who lives in California. He used to make videos and send it to her, and she used to upload them on his Facebook account," police sources said. He kept changing his locations to evade arrest, they said.

On 26 January, thousands of protesting farmers who reached ITO from the Ghazipur border clashed with police. Many of them driving tractors reached the

Red Fort and entered the monument, where a religious flag was also hoisted.

In the FIR registered in connection with the Red Fort violence, police alleged that two magazines with 20 live cartridges were snatched from two constables by protesters who also damaged vehicles and robbed anti-riot gear.

The mob later hoisted different flags there. They also started creating nuisance on the rampart. The unruly mob was asked to come downstairs. They went to Meena Bazaar area to enter the Red Fort. When the police tried to take them out of Lahore Gate, the mob became violent and attacked personnel. The mob thrashed the police personnel and threw them in the wells," police had alleged in the FIR.

der fee equal to one-month contract money as surrender fee.

However, such surrender fee would be equal to two months dues in case applications are submitted during 1 June to September 15 (Monsoon period).

The CM said in case of fresh mines to be auctioned the condition for increase of annual dead rent after every three year period of lease would be 10 per cent instead of existing rate of 25 per cent. Apart from this, the rate of interest on delayed payment of government dues would be reduced from 21 per cent per annum to 12 per cent annum, he added.

Khattar, who was presiding over a first-of-its-kind meeting with the mining contractors of the state today, the waiver will be subject to the condition that the proportionate production for said 26 days is reduced from approved capacity.

The CM further announced that the interest on non-payment of the pending dues, if any, pending as on 24 March, 2020 for the period 26 days would also be waived off, as a one-time relief package.

He said that mining contractors or leaseholders in case of seeking surrender (unconditional request) of lease will be allowed the same subject to condition that they submit an application with no dues certificate up to the calendar month and also pay surren-

Khattar announces waiver for mining sector



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 9 FEBRUARY

HP CM warns officers against delay in devp project works

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 9 FEBRUARY

the officers responsible the delay.

The chief minister said the MLAs priority meeting aims at providing an opportunity to the MLAs to prioritize their developmental priorities of their respective areas.

He said that the present state government has ensured that the Corona pandemic does not affect the pace of development.

He had himself laid foundation stones and inaugurated developmental projects worth Rs 3500 crore virtually during the period of corona

pandemic.

He thanked the MLAs for their active cooperation to tackle the pandemic. He said that the state government also decided to release Rs 50 lakh from the MLA Fund so that the MLAs could ensure development of their areas.

Thakur also thanked the people of the state for their wholehearted support to the present State Government by ensuring victory of BJP supported candidates in elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions and Urban Local Bodies.

He said that under the Himachal Grahini Sividha Yojana, all the eligible families were provided free gas connections, which ensured that Himachal Pradesh became the first smoke-free state of the country where every household had been provided with gas connection. He said that the State Government has started a Him Care Scheme under which 4.63 lakh families got registered and till date 1.25 lakh families have been provided financial assistance of Rs. 121 crore.

The chief minister said

that all the MLAs must come up with suggestions which could be incorporated in the state budget for the year 2021-22 so as to ensure development of every area of the state and welfare of every section of the society.

He said that the officers must ensure to sanction the MLA priorities firstly through the projects announced in the Annual Budget of Union Government for the year 2021-22. This would ensure that maximum benefits of the new schemes announced in the Union Budget.

Thakur said that the state government would ensure topmost preference to the MLAs' priorities and would ensure time-bound completion of the DPRs.

The chief minister said that officers must take all the suggestions made by the MLAs seriously.

He said that the officers must also get first hand information regarding ongoing projects by ensuring maximum field visits. He said that officers must seriously take up the work assigned to them for development of the state.

Capt: Farm laws will sound death knell for BJP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 9 FEBRUARY

anywhere in the world has ever survived for long by ignoring the interests of its own citizens, and the BJP scripted its own destiny in the shape of those draconian farm laws, Amarinder said.

Naturally, the farmers are angry with the BJP and are looking for every opportunity to vent their anger on their leaders, he said, adding that were it not for the excessive police deployment during the visits of these leaders, things could have really got out of hand. Given the threat perception due to the farmers' ire against the BJP, Punjab Police is deploying unprecedented number of personnel wherever their leaders are going for campaigning, he said, adding that senior police officers are themselves supervising the arrangements.

The BJP's desperation to blame everyone but itself for the mess it is in indicates how badly it is set to lose not just these civic polls but also the 2022 Punjab Assembly elections, said the CM.

To the party leadership's assertion that it will spring a surprise in Punjab in the Assembly polls, he remarked with sarcasm: "Yes, there will be a big surprise in 2022, with BJP's very existence being wiped out from our soil."

Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday virtually launched 56 services newly added to the "Sewa Kendras" (service centres).

Underlining the importance of changing the way of working in the new digitalised era, to make it more transparent and efficient, Amarinder said his government was committed to bring in greater transparency and efficacy in governance by taking the total number of citizen-centric services available at these Kendras to 500 in the next three months.

With today's launch, the number of services at the Sewa Kendras now stands at 383, with a daily footfall of 60000. Blaming the Akalis for the unviable, poorly managed and underutilized Sewa Kendras, resulting in a huge drain on the state exchequer, Amarinder

said as many as 2144 Sewa Kendras were running with minimal footfall and poor delivery of services, while only 170 government services were available in these Kendras under the previous regime.

Besides, a sum of Rs 400 Crore was recklessly spent on constructing these white elephants, which cost Rs 250 Crore annually to the state government to run these centres. His government, on coming to power in 2017, decided at its very first cabinet meet to establish unified service delivery centres for online delivery of services, the CM recalled.

Apart from this, a conscientious decision was taken for amalgamation of all the existing centres such as Sividha Centres, Saanjh Kendras, Fard Kendras, etc. with complete computerization and digitization to ensure public delivery system in a seamless manner.

The rationalisation led to reduction in the number of Sewa Kendras from 2147 to 516, and subsequent fresh tendering transformed the project into a self-sustaining revenue-sharing contract model, with no burden on the state exchequer, he added.

Noting that the State Government started earning Rs Six Crore annually from these Sewa Kendras rather than paying for its running, the CM said consequently the number of services was increased to 327 from 170 being provided during the tenure of SAD-BJP government.

The 56 new services added to the Sewa Kendras today include 37 that were earlier provided by Police department through Saanjh Kendras, 18 which were so far under the purview of the Transport department through their offices, and one (mutation service) that the Revenue department had been delivering through Fard Kendras in the state.

Haryana police seize 527 kg narcotic

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 9 FEBRUARY

The Haryana Police on Tuesday claimed to have foiled an attempt to push a big drug consignment into the state and seized 527 kilogram 800 gram 'Doda post' (a kind of opium) from a truck in Hisar district. One accused was also arrested in this connection.

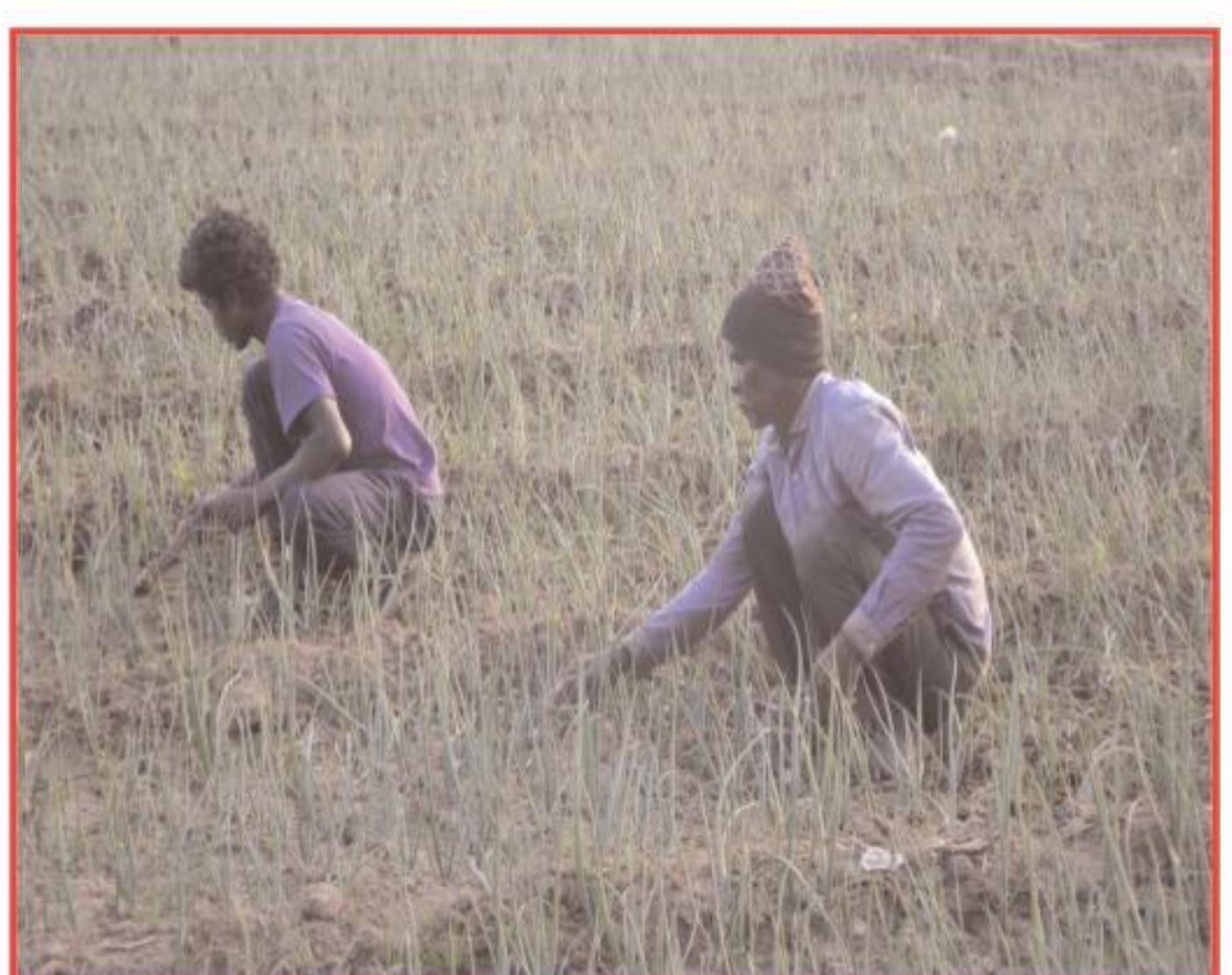
Giving this information today, a Haryana Police

spokesperson informed that a police team during night patrolling, had got a secret input about smuggling of drugs in a truck.

Based on the information, police established barricades on Mangali-Kaimiri road and intercepted a truck. When searched, the team found 29 bags of 'Doda Post' (527 kg 800 gram) hidden behind almond bags. The arrested accused was identified as Rajender, a resident of Fatehabad district.

"Primary probe reveals the arrested accused along with his associate used to smuggle narcotic substances. He started from Mumbai on 4 February and reached Hisar via Mangalwada (Rajasthan) from where he had loaded 29 bags of 'doda post' in the vehicle," the spokesperson said. A case under NDPS Act has been registered against him and further probe is underway.

BARE SUBSISTENCE



Farm labourers hard at work at Zirakpur near Chandigarh on Tuesday.

PARDEEP SAINI

Glacier disaster: NGOs oppose hydro power projects in Himachal tribal belt

SANJEEV KUMAR
SHIMLA, 9 FEBRUARY

ities of construction of hydro power projects in Himalayan region.

There were growing risks of lake formations and glacial lake outbursts but it was a matter of concern that the findings of these studies had not been converted into policy.

The state government needs to consider the fragile ecology of the tribal belt of Himachal and accordingly prepare a plan for sustainable development rather than focusing on monetary benefits from hydro power projects.

In the joint statement, the 13 NGOs and civil rights groups stated that lack of concern for the environment was the reason that the dam building agenda continues unabated and unabashed in the Himalayas.

"In Himachal, hydro power projects worth 10,000 MW have already been built by changing land use that have gobbled forests, farms, caused landslides, soil erosion and impacted the river ecosystems at an enormous scale.

According to the State Disaster Management Authori-

ty, most of Himachal's hydropower projects in operation or under construction fall in areas highly vulnerable to various hazards like landslides and floods.

In fact, the Avay Shukla Committee report which was submitted to HP High Court has recommended a moratorium on new hydropower projects in the state for this reason. But the state government has ignored the report completely," they said.

They further stated that most of the planned projects that were yet to come up in

Himachal were in the climate vulnerable and ecologically fragile regions of Kinnair and Lahaul Spiti.

These were located in the upper Satluj valley and Lahaul on Chandraabha river, also known as Chenab, where tribal communities were resisting these projects.

Further, these are also geologically unstable terrains prone to earthquakes and avalanches.

A study by researchers from the University of Potsdam, Germany that analysed 273 hydropower projects in

the Himalayas in India, Nepal and Bhutan found that about 25 per cent of them were likely to face severe damage from quake-triggered landslides.

They alleged that once clearances were granted non-compliance of environmental norms and social accountability was rampant.

Further, these are also geologically unstable terrains prone to earthquakes and avalanches.

These environment groups expressed concern over inac-

tion by the Union government at multiple levels and its repeated thrust on large dams in the Himalayas.

"No amount of monetary compensation can placate the anguish of those who have suffered irreparable losses.

No amount of trying to hide behind words like 'natural disaster' and 'act of god' can deceive the people. The lack of accountability and intent of all the institutions, agencies and political representatives involved stands amply exposed," they added.

YSR's sister hints at floating party in T'gana

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, 9 FEBRUARY

VSSharmila, Andhra Pradesh CM and YSRCP president YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's sister is set to float

her own party in neighbouring Telangana though her brother has distanced himself from her decision, apparently because he wants to maintain cordial relations with neighbours. Sharmi-

lawho has campaigned in the past and conducted *padayatras* on behalf of her brother today held a meeting with her father's loyalists in Telangana at her Lotus Pond residence in Hyderabad.

Reminding them about her father and former CM of unified Andhra Pradesh YS Rajasekhara Reddy's legacy she talked about bringing back "Rajanna Rajyam (reign)" in Telangana.

TENDER

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG

CORRIGENDUM

The key dates of online tender for the work Providing CAD works to Lift Irrigation Scheme in Baroti, Mandap Jodhan area & their adjoining villages in Tehsil Dharampur District Mandi HP invited vide this office NIT No. NO.EE/DMR (Bharati)/CB/Tender/NIT/2020-15538-15610 dated 25.01.2021 is hereby extended to below mentioned dates:-

- Bid submission end date 11.02.2021 at 5:00 PM.
- Physical submission of earnest money deposit and cost of tender documents upto 11:00 AM on 12.02.2021.
- Bid opening date 12.02.2021 at 11:30 AM.

Other terms and condition shall remain unchanged.

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be downloaded from the website www.hptenders.gov.in

Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti Division Dharampur
Bharati

5657/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER					
Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD Cost of Tender	Time of completion	Cost of form
1.	Providing Medium Lift Irrigation Project to Change Area from Anandpur Hydel Channel in Tehsil Sh. Naina Devi Ji District Bilaspur (SH:- Dismantling and shifting of MSERW pipes of various dia encountered with Railways Track near Dabat pump house.)	287433/-	50650/-	Three Months	400/-
Last date of filing/ uploading the tender through e-tendering 15-02-2021 up to 11:00 AM The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be obtained from the website https://hptenders.gov.in					
Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Bilaspur					
5642/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK					

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate/percentage rate tender on Form No. 6&8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Arki Division, HP. PWD. Arki on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh for the following works from the competent (In this regard the decision of the Executive Engineer shall be final) contractors enlisted with HP. PWD in appropriate class whose registration stood renewed as per revised instruction and also registered dealers under the Himachal Pradesh sales Tax Act, 1968. The application for tender form will be received on 05.03.2021 upto 4.00 P.M. The tender form will be issued on 06.03.2021 upto 4.00 P.M. The tender form will be received on 08.03.2021 upto 10.30 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M. in the presence of the contractors or their authorized representative who may like to be present. The form can be had from this office against cash payment as shown below (Non refundable) during the working hours on 05.03.2021 The earnest money should be deposited in the shape of National Saving certificate, Time deposit/Post Office saving bank account in any of the Post Office in H.P. duly pledged in the name of the Executive Engineer, Arki Division, HP. PWD. Arki and tender form will be issued only those contractors who will deposit the Earnest Money at the time of sale of tender. The conditional tenders shall not be entertained. If holiday is declared suddenly by the govt. on the above date due to some reason the tender shall be received and opened on the next working day. The intending contractors/firms will have to produce all required documents at the time of making application such as Income Tax clearance certificate for the proceeding year, registration/renewal of registration and sales tax number (Under H.P.G.S.T.) Act. Special care should be taken to write the rates both in figures and in words, failing which their tender will be rejected. No tender form shall be issued to the contractors/firms who have already two works in HP.PWD. The offer of the tender shall remain open for 120 days from the date of opening of the tender. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept or reject the tender without assigning any reason.

S.No.	Name of work	Estimated cost.	Earnest money	Form cost of form	Time
1.	Annual Maintenance of Mann Larech Charskar road Km: 0/0 to 4/500(SH:- Providing renewal coat of 30mm thick bituminous concrete at Km. 0/0 to 2/10)	2,06,248/-	4200/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
2.	A/R & M/o Galog Kunihar road Km: 0/0 to 14/46(SH:-Improvement of black spot in various RDs in Km. 4/015 to 4/075, 4/585 to 4/705, 4/795 to 4/915 and C/o R/wall in Km. 4/255 to 4/268, 4/330 to 4/344)	4,48,403/-	9000/-	6&8 350/-	3 Months
3.	C/o link road to village Palata Km: 0/0 to 1/500(SH:-Providing & Laying WBM Grade, I, II in Km: 0/0 to 0/600)	3,34,924/-	6700/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
4.	C/o link road Rauri to Nauni Mainthi Km: 0/0 to 2/400(SH:-P/L WBM G-III Km: 0/0 to 2/080)Under SSCP	4,95,946/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
5.	C/o link road from Banighatti to Baighat Km: 0/0 to 3/500(SH:-C/o R/wall at RD 2/225 to 2/240 & 2/490 to 2/510)Under SSCP	3,12,544/-	6300/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
6.	A/R & M/o Darla Kanswala Paroo road Km: 0/0 to 12/0(SH:-Repair to Pot holes Km: 1/0 to 3/0)	4,99,548/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
7.	A/R & M/o Darla Kanswala Paroo road Km: 0/0 to 12/0(SH:-Repair to Pot holes Km: 6/0 to 8/0)	4,86,222/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
8.	C/o link road from Banighatti to Baighat Km: 0/0 to 3/500(SH:-C/o R/wall at RD 2/125 to 2/155)Under SSCP	3,83,672/-	7700/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
9.	A/R & M/o Galog Kunihar road 0/0 to 14/365(SH:-Repair of pot holes of various reaches at Km: 8/0 to 14/0)	4,98,444/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
10.	C/o Bania Devi to Sewra road Km: 0/0 to 3/0(SH:-Metalling & Tarring in Km: 1/250 to 1/750)	3,53,287/-	7100/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
11.	C/o link road Bantighatti to Baighat Km: 0/0 to 3/500(SH:-Formation cutting in Km: 5/0 to 5/500)	3,68,364/-	7400/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
12.	C/o link road Bantighatti to Baighat Km: 0/0 to 5/500(SH:-Formation cutting in Km: 4/500 to 5/0)	4,66,843/-	9400/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
13.	C/o link road Bantighatti to Baighat Km: 0/0 to 5/500(SH:-Formation cutting in Km: 4/000 to 4/500)	4,66,843/-	9400/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
14.	C/o link road Bantighatti to Baighat Km: 0/0 to 5/500(SH:-Formation cutting in Km: 3/500 to 4/0)	4,85,687/-	9800/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
15.	C/o link road to village Shelly Km: 0/0 to 3/0(SH:-C/o R/wall at various reaches at Km: 0/0 to 3/0(Job No. I)	4,98,000/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
16.	Improvement of Black spot on Buila Koel Snog road Km: 0/0 to 28/600(SH:-Improvement of curves at RD 26/165 to 26/435)	2,07,923/-	5000/-	6&8 350/-	3 Months
17.	C/o Nari Katal Gambir road in Km: 0/0 to 1/500(SH:-Metalling & Tarring in Km: 1/250 to 1/750)	3,53,287/-	7500/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
18.	C/o link road Panesh Fagera to village Seri 0/0 to 2/500(SH:-Metalling & Tarring in Km: 0/0 to 0/500)	3,53,281/-	7100/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
19.	C/o & M/T of Jabal Badhai Ropri Lily Farm Nalsunallah road in Km: 0/0 to 5/0(SH:-Metalling & Tarring in Km: 2/135 to 2/850)	4,60,997/-	9500/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
20.	C/o & M/T of Jabal Badhai Ropri Lily Farm Nalsunallah road in Km: 0/0 to 5/0(SH:-Metalling & Tarring in Km: 2/850 to 3/565)	4,60,997/-	9500/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
21.	C/o & M/T of Jabal Badhai Ropri Lily Farm Nalsunallah road in Km: 0/0 to 5/0(SH:-Metalling & Tarring in Km: 3/565 to 4/280)	4,60,997/-	9500/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
22.	C/o & M/T of Jabal Badhai Ropri Lily Farm Nalsunallah road in Km: 0/0 to 5/0(SH:-Metalling & Tarring in Km: 4/280 to 5/0)	4,60,997/-	9500/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
23.	C/o Bania Devi to Sewra road Km: 0/0 to 3/0(SH:-Metalling & Tarring in Km: 1/750 to 2/250)	3,53,281/-	7100/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
24.	C/o link road Sihari to Sakore Km: 0/0 to 4/500(SH:-C/o R/wall at RD 0/125 to 0/150 and 0/090 to 0/140)	1,84,239/-	3700/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
25.	C/o link road from Panesh Fagera road to village Seri Km: 0/0 to 2/500 (SH:-P/L GH-III in Km: 0/0 to 0/600)	1,23,064/-	2500/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
26.	C/D of Sayri to Shah Chanog road Km: 0/0 to 7/750(SH:-Protection wall of Balain Bridge in Km: 7/337 to 7/350)	2,01,347/-	4100/-	6&8 350/-	3 Months
27.	Balance work for Govt. Sr. Secondary School building at Bughar Chakhar in Tehsil Arki distt. Solan(SH:-P/L Steel truss & Preainted steel sheets roofing etc.)	4,96,918/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
28.	Balance work for Govt. Sr. Secondary School building at Bughar Chakhar in Tehsil Arki distt. Solan(SH:-C/o RCC Columns,beams & ceiling slab etc.)Balance work thereof	3,81,030/-	7600/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
29.	C/o link road to village Shelly Km: 0/0 to 3/0(SH:-C/o R/wall at various reaches at Km: 0/0 to 3/0(Job No.II))	4,98,000/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
30.	C/o link road to village Shelly Km: 0/0 to 3/0(SH:-C/o R/wall at various reaches at Km: 0/0 to 3/0(Job No.III))	4,98,000/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
31.	C/o Shalaghat Soira road Km: 0/0 to 9/500(SH:-C/o wire crates wall at RDs 2/180 to 2/210)	2,12,367/-	4300/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
32.	A/R & M/o SAKB road Km: 17/500 to 32/300(SH:-Improvement/widening of narrow stretches and sharp curve in Km: 21/070 to 21/135)	1,54,656/-	3100/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
33.	Improvement of black spot on Shalaghat Soira road Km: 0/0 to 9/0(SH:-Providing and fixing crash barrier Km: 1/100 to 1/295)	4,98,879/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
34.	C/o Shalaghat Soira road Km: 0/0 to 9/0(SH:-C/o R/wall at Km: 3/210 to 3/225, 6/970 to 6/980, 7/940 to 7/960, 8/280 to 8/300 and B/wall 7/320 to 7/345)	4,99,653/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	3 Months
35.	Improvement of black spot on Shalaghat Soira road Km: 0/0 to 9/0(SH:-Providing & fixing crash barrier Km: 4/0 to 4/100 and 6/700 to 6/795)	4,97,993/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
36.	C/o link road village Banighatti to Baighat in Km: 0/0 to 2/500(SH:-C/o V shape road side and PCC Parapets in Km: 0/0 to 1/0)	4,94,823/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
37.	C/o link road Mangoo to Mandav Km: 0/0 to 2/0(SH:-C/o wire crate R/wall at Km: 1/855 to 1/870)under DMFT	3,25,146/-	7000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
38.	C/o Darla Kanswala Paroo Kainchimore road Km: 0/0 to 2/20(SH:-C/o RCC, slab culvert 3.00mtrs span at RD 17/825)	4,49,670/-	9000/-	6&8 350/-	1 Month
39.	C/o link road from Bus stand Sehro to Govt. High School Sehro Km: 0/0 to 0/500(SH:-C/o R/wall at RD 0/130 to 0/150)	1,68,402/-	3400/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
40.	C/o link road Mangoo to Mandav Km: 0/0 to 2/0(SH:-P/L WBM Grinding-I at Km: 0/0 to 1/500)Under DMFT	4,99,300/-	10,000/-	6&8 350/-	2 Months
41.	Improvement of black spot on Saryanji Baridhar road Km: 0/0 to 4/500(SH:-Providing and laying W metal crash barrier in Km: 0/270 to 0/440)	4,48,846/-	9000/-	6&8 350/-	3 Months
42.	Improvement of black spot on Naugao Beri road km: 0/0 to 4/465(SH:-Providing & Laying W metal crash barrier in Km: 4/180 to 4/362)	4,89,292/-	10,00		



A promise was made to farmers that their income will be doubled, but when there is a crisis, the entire BJP is standing against them

ITERATING THE DEMAND OF WITHDRAWAL OF THE CENTRE'S THREE CONTENTIOUS FARM LAWS

Congress Leader Sachin Pilot

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2021

Cabinet expansion triggers revolts in Bihar BJP

BJP leaders allege the party did not try to make a fine balance of caste, region and experience in the new expanded Cabinet

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, 9 FEBRUARY

The much-awaited first Cabinet expansion of chief minister Nitish Kumar in Bihar today saw many new and surprising faces getting place there, causing heartburns among the old guards and triggering revolt in the BJP.

The Cabinet expansion took place well 84 days after Kumar took oath as the chief minister on 16 November after the NDA won elections with a clear majority.

While the BJP got rid of the deadwood who remained the usual faces in the Cabinet in the past 15 years, the JD-U has given preference to both experience and talents.

The surprise inclusion of faces in the Nitish Cabinet from the BJP side include Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain, former union minister, Niraj Kumar Bablu, brother of late film actor Sushant Singh Rajput who committed suicide last year and former Lok Sabha Member Janak Ram.

What was surprising is that prominent old and trusted leaders such as Nand Kishore Yadav and Prem Kumar were not given the place in the



Cabinet although they were overactive on social media these days. In their places, fresh faces like Subhash Singh, Narayan Prasad and Alok Ranjan Jha were given the ministerial berths.

However, the BJP move triggered revolt in the party with a senior party leader Gyanendra Singh Gyanu openly questioning the decision of the party. Alleging the BJP has gone to the "Yadavs and Banias (businessmen)", Gyanu said the upper caste legislators were not given proper repre-

sentation in the Cabinet.

"The eligibilities of the legislators have not been looked into. People with criminal antecedents have been made the ministers while persons with clean image have been shown the door. This party is bound to face serious consequences of this blunder," Gyanu said and claimed he had the support of around 15 legislators.

He alleged the party has also not tried to make a fine balance of caste, region and experience in the cabinet.

"About 50 percent of the BJP legislators are from upper caste but none from them were made the deputy chief minister. The party has gone into the hands of Yadav and Baniyas," he alleged. Gyanu further charged the state party leadership with keeping the Prime Minister and Home Minister in dark and including all the wrong leaders into the Cabinet.

The JD-U, on the other hand, maintained its old and experienced leaders in the Cabinet such as Shrawan

Modan Sahni and Sanjay Kumar Jha.

Kumar, Madan Sahni and Sanjay Jha. What, however, was surprising was the inclusion of former DGP Sunil Kumar in Nitish cabinet. Two others leaders, such as Sumit Kumar Singh and Jaman Khan who lent their support to the Nitish Kumar government were also given the place in the Nitish cabinet. Singh had won elec-

Nitish Cabinet gets 17 new members

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, 9 FEBRUARY

eight and has been left with 12 members in the Cabinet.

The state Cabinet can have up to 36 members including the chief minister. With the expansion, Cabinet strength has risen to 34. One member each was inducted from the quotas of smaller allies Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP).

"Decision about the allocation of portfolios has been taken. You all will get to know about the same once the notification is issued," the chief minister said.

With the exception of Pramod Kumar who held key portfolios in the previous government, the BJP placed

its trust in "fresh faces". Other BJP leaders who took oath were Nitin Nabin, Samrat Chaudhary, Neeraj Kumar Singh "Bablu", Janak Ram, Subhash Singh, Alok Ranjan Jha and Narayan Prasad.

There are few debutants, including Zama Khan who got elected on a BSP ticket but joined the party recently, and Independent MLA Sumit Singh who has pledged full support to the CM.

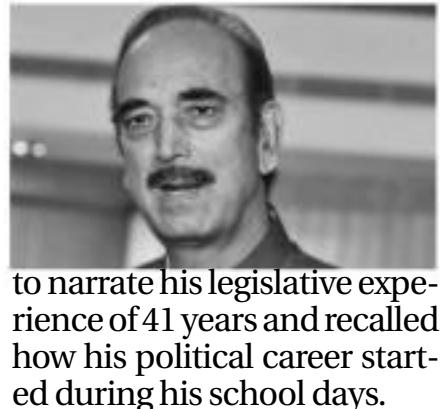
Others from the JD(U) who took oath included Sanjay Kumar Jha, Shrawan Kumar, Madan Sahni and Lesi Singh.

Sunil Kumar, a former IPS officer who joined the JD(U) last year have also been given ministerial berths.

der and rioting. While becoming the chief minister in 2005, Kumar himself had set a standard that none facing criminal or corruption charges will be included in his cabinet. It was under this practice that Jitan Ram Manjhi, Ramanand Prasad Singh, Ramadhar Singh and Mewalal Chaudhary had to resign as ministers earlier.

Azad: A proud Hindustani Muslim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY



Outgoing leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad on Tuesday said he feels proud to be an Indian Muslim. Delivering his farewell speech in the Upper House of Parliament, the veteran Congressman recalled his association with several leaders, including stalwarts from other parties, which helped him learn many things.

"When I was a college student in Jammu and Kashmir, both 14 August and 15 August used to be celebrated. The majority used to celebrate 14 August. I was among those few fortunate people, about a dozen, who used to celebrate 15 August," Azad said.

The former Union minister said he is among those "lucky" people who have never gone to Pakistan. "When I read about the state of affairs in Pakistan, I feel proud that I am a Hindustani Muslim," he said. Azad made him patriotic.

He said it would take weeks

pride for themselves as they have kept away from the evils that are there in the neighbouring countries, Azad said.

However, he also added: "The majority community should also take two steps forward." Remembering his tenure as the chief minister of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, Azad said: "I had said my government would be a government of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and if any minister worked on the basis of religion and party, I would be ashamed".

Azad specially thanked former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and late Congress leader Sanjay Gandhi, saying he reached here only because of them.

"I have worked with five Presidents and around four or five Prime Ministers as a member of their Cabinets. I also got the opportunity to work as party in-charge of states and

Union Territories 35-36 times," he said, adding that he got to learn several things from these experiences. Azad remembered how he got chances to work with senior Congress leaders and even with stalwarts of other political parties while negotiating on behalf of his party, including Iyoti Basu of the CPI(M), M Karunanidhi of the DMK, J Jayalalithaa of the AIADMK, Chandra Shekhar, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Parkash Singh Badal, G K Moopanar, K Karunakaran, Farooq Abdulla and Mufti Mohammad Sayeed.

However, Azad said he had a special bond with late BJP leader and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. "I cannot forget that Indira ji used to tell me and Fotedarji (Makhan Lal Fotedar), who was then her political secretary, to be in touch with Atal ji. She did not say the BJP, but asked us to be in touch with Atal ji," he said.

India, Af sign accord to build Shahtoot Dam to meet Kabul's drinking needs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

Reinforcing its commitment to help Afghanistan stand on its own feet, India today signed a landmark agreement with the war-torn nation for the construction of the nearly \$300 Shahtoot (Lalandar) Dam that would meet the safe drinking needs of the Kabul city and provide irrigation water to neighbouring areas.

The accord was signed by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Afghan counterpart Hanif Atmar after a virtual summit between PM Narendra Modi and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

The project is a part of the 'New Development Partnership' between India and Afghanistan. The proposed dam on a tributary of the Kabul river would also reha-

bilitate the existing irrigation and drainage network, aid in flood protection and management efforts in the area, and also provide electricity to the region.

This is the second major dam being built by India in Afghanistan, after the India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam (Salma Dam), which was inaugurated in June 2016.

"Signing of the MoU on Lalandar (Shahtoot) Dam is a reflection of India's strong and long-term commitment towards the socio-economic development of Afghanistan and the enduring partnership between our two countries. As a part of our development cooperation with Afghanistan, India has completed more than 400 projects covering all 34 provinces of Afghanistan," the MEA said.

In his remarks at the summit with the Afghan President, Modi highlighted the civilisational relationship between India and Afghanistan and gave an assurance of India's continued support for a peaceful, united, stable, prosperous and inclusive Afghanistan.

The PM expressed concern over the increasing violence in Afghanistan, saying both India and Afghanistan wanted to see an end to terrorism and extremism in the region.

"Peace and violence cannot go hand in hand. We support an immediate ceasefire (in Afghanistan)," he added.

Speaking on the occasion, President Ghani said India's development assistance was iconically marked on the Afghan landscape. "With Shahtoot Dam, Kabul's snow and rain will be harnessed to quench the thirst of two million citizens of Kabul," he said.

Salar Jung III descendants move Delhi HC: The descendants of Hyderabad's Nawab Mir Yousuf Ali Khan Salar Jung III approached the Delhi High Court seeking direction to the government to consider their representations for releasing his assets in their favour. The plea said the MHA has taken over estate of Salar Jung III, ought to have considered their representations and release assets in their favour as they are the first legitimate successors of Nawab Mir Yousuf Ali Khan Salar Jung III. PTI

Kangana's Twitter a/c suspension hearing: Bombay High Court on Tuesday said it would hear a plea seeking either suspension of the Twitter account of Kangana Ranaut on 9 March though the petitioner sought an urgent hearing claiming the actor recently posted a tweet calling the protesting farmers as 'terorists'. PTI

Gujarat BJP MLA threatens reporter

AHMEDABAD, 9 FEBRUARY

As campaigning for elections to the six municipal corporations is picking up, a BJP legislator has openly threatened journalists for asking uncomfortable questions.

Madhu Shrivastava, BJP MLA from Waghodia in Vadodara, threatened a television reporter with death when he later asked him whether his son had three children.

"I am telling you I'll get you killed by my men", MLA Madhu Shrivastava was video-recorded as telling a local television channel reporter.

The question about the BJP MLA's number of children had arisen as his nomination for Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC) was rejected as per a 2005 norm that allows only two children for local body poll aspirants. The BJP legislator from Waghodia is infamous for allegedly threatening eye-witnesses of the Best Bakery massacre case in which 14 people were killed during the 2002 post-Godhra riots.

The state BJP having refused to nominate its MLA son Deepak for the Vadodara Municipal poll, junior Shrivastava had to file his nomination as an independent.

Kashmir observes shutdown on Afzal Guru's death anniv

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 9 FEBRUARY



Normal life was hit across Kashmir on Tuesday due to a shutdown to mark the eighth death anniversary of Parliament terror attack mastermind Mohammad Afzal Guru who was hanged in New Delhi's Tihar Jail on this day in 2013.

Most business establishments remained shut and public transport remained off the road. There was no response to the shutdown call in any of the ten districts of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and various other separatist organisations had called for shutdown today and also on 11 February to mark the death anniversaries of Guru and Bhat.

Unlike previous years, authorities did not clamp restrictions on death anniversaries of Guru and Bhat.

R-Day violence: SC stays arrest of Tharoor, Sardesai & others

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the arrest of Congress MP Shashi Tharoor and six journalists, including Rajdeep Sardesai, in connection with FIRs filed against them for their allegedly "misleading" tweets on the violence during the farmers' tractor rally here on the Republic Day.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde issued notices and sought responses from the Centre and others on the petitions filed by Tharoor, Sardesai and journalists Mrinal Pande, Zafar Agha, Parvesh Nath, Vinod K Jose and Anant Nath.

When the bench said it was issuing notice in the matter, senior lawyer Kapil Sibal,

appearing for Tharoor, said that no coercive action be taken against them in the meantime.

Nothing is going to happen. Where is the danger, said the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian.

Sibal objected to the observation of the bench that nothing would happen to the petitioners in the meantime, saying Solicitor General Tushar Mehta is appearing for Delhi Police and the cops of other states might knock at my doors and arrest me in the meantime.

"Kindly protect us in the meanwhile," Sibal said, prompting the bench to ask the law officer whether the police was planning to arrest Tharoor and others.

Mehta said that horren-

dous tweets were made. Horrendous tweets have been made, Mehta said, adding, I can show you what horrendous effect these tweets have with such lakhs of followers. The bench asked Mehta, Are you going to arrest them? The solicitor general said, I am before your lordships. Please hear it tomorrow. The bench asked Mehta whether he was appearing for all the concerned states. I will appear for all, he said.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for one of the journalists, said no religious sentiment has been hurt and it was a 26 January report on some person being allegedly shot and then it was corrected to something else. On 30 January, Delhi Police had filed a case against Tharoor, Sardesai and others.

Both sides discussed a wide range of issues on the UNSC agenda. The Indian team briefed the Chinese side on India's priorities during its UNSC tenure. Both sides agreed to continue their engagement on key issues on the UNSC agenda.

India became a non-permanent member of the UNSC on 1 January for a two-year term.

Crypto currency Bill soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

The government will soon bring a Bill on crypto currencies as existing laws are inadequate to deal with issues concerning them, minister of state for finance Anurag Thakur told the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. Thakur said regulatory bodies like RBI and Sebi do not have any legal framework to directly regulate cryptocurrencies as they are not currencies, assets, securities or commodities issued by identifiable users.

The existing laws are inadequate to deal with the subject, he said.

INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR
(An Institute of National Importance under MHRD, Govt. of India)
Date: 09.02.2021
Advt. No. MT 1646

Applications are invited for two JRFs (Engineering Sciences) and two Technical Assistants for an SERB, GoI IMPRINT Project. Please visit the website <http://www.iest.ac.in> (W. Code DRC-011/20-21) under 'Employment' for details. Dean (R&C)

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that a lady namely **Pooja@Anju, W/o Nitin R/o Near Balimiki Mandir, Village Surhera, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since 28.11.2020 from her house. In this regard, **DD No. 37A dated 29.11.2020 has been registered at P.S. Jaffarpur Kalan, New Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing/kidnapped lady but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing/kidnapped lady is as under:

Name: **Pooja@Anju**, Gender: Female, Age: 24 years, Height: 5', Complexion: Fair, Face: Oval, Hair: Black, Wearing: Yellow colour suit-salwar and sandal on her feet.

If anyone has any information regarding this missing/kidnapped lady, kindly inform SHO/Jaffarpur Kalan, New Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/43/DW/2021

SHO
P.S. Jaffarpur Kalan, New Delhi,
Ph. No. 011-25318081, 25318100

Modi-Biden pledge for stronger regional architecture through 'Quad'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden have agreed to intensify cooperation between their two countries to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific, including support for freedom of navigation, territorial integrity, and a stronger regional architecture through the "Quad", in what is clearly seen as their firm resolve to counter China's growing aggressive behaviour on maritime issues.

In their first telephonic conversation late last night

since Biden assumed office on

Agitprop addicts?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling out the protesters without a pause always eager to lend their full-throated support to any going cause in Parliament on Monday has recharged his supporters and left his critics apoplectic. Neither group, however, seems interested in introspection before articulation. It may be helpful, therefore, to spell out for them the thrust of the Prime Minister's speech. That there is an emergent breed of agitprop addicts, as it were, who seemingly live only to participate in varied protests covering a virtual smorgasbord of issues ~ the "andolanjivis" Mr Modi referred to ~ is a fact. This entirely non-productive and parasitic jamaat/biradiri, according to the Prime Minister, pops up everywhere ~ from student stirrups to lawyers' agitations, sometimes directing the show from behind the curtains and at other times taking centre stage. While some may have a quarrel with the choice of words used by Mr Modi, his assertions cannot be denied. In fact, the various toolkits doing the rounds which the Ordinary Joe, Jaya or Jai is being urged to use to accentuate protests using social media as a force multiplier are par for the course given the group think embedded in the rabid opposition to the ruling dispensation which is amenable to backing any agitation as long as it is anti-BJP. Nothing wrong in that, of course; it is a free country. But as long as the rules are followed and no laws are broken. The Prime Minister also referred sarcastically to the abbreviation FDI which, he said, was welcome when limited to Foreign Direct Investment (in India's economy) but not when it was a Foreign Destructive Ideology from which the country has to be "saved". Critics immediately pounced upon this return of the oft-quoted "foreign hand" by former PM Indira Gandhi which she used to cover up a plethora of sins, drawing a parallel with the current PM's tactics.

Mr Modi has repeatedly said that he has no problem with agitations and/or protests against his government but he will continue to call out those against the national interest. In stating this, he has even pulled up those of his supporters who were calling the Sikhs names. The Opposition, both political and otherwise, have been asserting that the government is both incapable and unwilling to make that distinction which is why they tar all protests against the establishment with the "anti-national" brush. This kind of exchange doesn't do much for the level of national political discourse. The BJP, too, must not forget the variety of protests it lent its voice to and its cadres participated in when it was in the Opposition. The Congress, Left and regional parties, on the other hand, are behaving as if the Indian electorate has in a free and fair poll elected the devil incarnate to power to dislodge whom all is fair. Hypocrisy abounds across the political spectrum. All sides would do well to appreciate the thrust of what the Prime Minister has said.

Palestinian polls

Palestine, chronically in ferment, is gearing up for elections. The Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, has announced that parliamentary and presidential polls, verily the first in 15 years, will take place later this year. The exercise is intrinsically an effort to heal longstanding internal divisions that cannot but impinge on his governance. Theoretically, the new Parliament and presidency will be put in place by the people who are expected to score a victory in Palestine's democratic engagement. They, therefore, will play a pivotal role in the overall democratic construct. The announcement can be viewed in the context of efforts to unify the fractious Palestinian ranks in light of the so-called Middle East plan of the United States and the accelerated normalisation between Arab countries, notably the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Israel. According to a decree issued by Mr Abbas's office over the weekend, the Palestinian Authority (PA), which has limited self-rule in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, will hold legislative elections on May 22 and a presidential vote on July 31. The raging crisis has also influenced international relations, like for instance Pakistan informing the UAE that it "can't recognise Israel until the Palestine issue is resolved". Peace in Palestine cannot be achieved amid unlawful demolitions. Historically, this has been a contentious issue that has affected the foreign policies of a welter of nations. A huge responsibility to restore election-time normalcy thus devolves on President Abbas before the voters turn up at the polling stations. The Palestinians' last parliamentary ballot in 2006 resulted in a surprise win by Hamas, widening an internal political rift that led to the group's seizure of the Gaza Strip in 2007 and contributed to a long delay in scheduling further elections. Gaza has been under an Israeli blockade since 2007 when the Hamas movement started controlling the enclave. "The President instructed the election committee and all state apparatuses to launch a democratic election process in all cities of the homeland," the decree said, referring to the occupied West Bank, Gaza and occupied East Jerusalem. President Abbas expects polls "in all governorates of Palestine, including East Jerusalem", which was annexed by Israel following the war in 1967, but is considered occupied territory.

Israel has banned all activity by the Palestinian Authority in East Jerusalem, and there is no indication yet that it will allow a Palestinian vote within Jerusalem, which it considers its "undivided capital". Elections will, therefore, pose a major risk for Mr Abbas's Fatah party and also for Hamas as both faced protests in recent years over their inability to reconcile with one another, advance Palestinian aspirations for statehood or meet the basic needs of those in the territories they govern. Indeed, Fatah and Hamas have been publicly calling for elections for more than 10 years but have never been able to mend their rift.

Future Perfect

The proposal of the Government to put the Farming Acts on hold for two years is eminently sensible if it plans to utilise the interregnum to prepare the ground for implementation of the Acts. Indeed, if sufficient money and sincere efforts are put in by the Government, private investment would not be required to rejuvenate agriculture



At a time when the coronavirus pandemic has not retreated fully, the Chinese are camping at our borders and farmers are wreaking mayhem in the capital, forecasts have been made of double-digit GDP growth for the coming financial year. A week in politics and economics is a long time but soothsayers are not deterred by caution or common sense. Such rosy forecasts are more than welcome, deflecting attention from the uncertain present, with the intended audience feeling happy, not even bothering to think that should the prophecy of 11.5 per cent growth in FY 2021-22 fortuitously come true, they would still be roughly at the same level at which they were two years ago.

The coronavirus pandemic further damaged our economy, which was already in decline. Demonetisation, guaranteed to flush out black money, was the first major initiative to go awry. Even before the economy could recover from the shock of demonetisation, along came GST, designed to boost trade and commerce. Both initiatives failed to achieve their stated objectives and, in combination, proved ruinous for the economy. Thereafter, we had a complete lockdown for 68 days which did not annihilate coronavirus ~ total cases which were less than 500 at the beginning of the lockdown went up to 2,00,000 by its end ~ but decimated the economy with the GDP falling by 23.9 per cent in the first quarter of financial year 2020-21.

Lack of proper planning and foresight marred these initiatives. The Reserve Bank of India issued 53 notifications and the Government made 21 announcements relating to demonetisation in the fifty odd days after demonetisation. A number of these instructions, modified or overruled earlier instructions. Obviously, the Government did not factor-in venial human behaviour like money mules being employed to exchange old notes, misuse of Jan Dhan accounts and involvement of bank personnel in the improper exchange of old notes. Additionally, enough new notes were not printed in advance, leading to a shortage of currency with the public, that caused great hardship during the demonetisation period.

Similarly, the GST regime has gone through myriad changes in its three and half years of existence, resulting in great confusion for all concerned.

A common thread running

through all such examples is the Government's belief that if a proper legal structure is put in place, the desired results would follow automatically. The recently introduced Farming Acts reflect this philosophy. Discussions between the Government and farmers and detailed analyses by experts have revealed that the Government had aimed to increase farmers' income by having them cultivate non-traditional crops and making them give up their reliance on chemical fertilisers and pesticides, which would reduce input cost substantially and prove beneficial for the environment.

One of the Farming Acts [Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Service Act, 2020] legalises contract farming, envisioning the coming together of farmers to form Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), to bargain with corporates. Implemented sincerely, the three Farming Acts are capable of ushering in an agricultural revolution but no preparation was made for the operationalisation of the Farming Acts prior to their enactment or even till now.

For example, switching over to cultivation of non-traditional crops is not easy. Firstly, the appropriate crops for a particular region have to be identified. Then, the know-how for planting and growing has to be disseminated and finally, a market for such crops has to be created. Similarly, farmers have to be helped in forming FPOs, without which individual farmers would be at the mercy of corporates. No wonder, in absence of the basic framework to implement the Farming Acts, the farmers did not believe the Government's assurances. Fuelled by the mistrust in the minds of the farmers, the Farming Acts have set up an ugly confrontation between the farmers and the Government.

A large dose of targeted investment is needed to make farming remunerative. Instead of fulfilling its responsibility towards farmers, the Government tried to attract private investment in agriculture through the Farming Acts, which, given the profit orientation of corporates, may or may not materialise. The farmers fear that investment by corporates in

agriculture would be exploitative like that of the village moneylender. Additionally, farmers are afraid of the disruptions that a new ecosystem would bring. The precarious financial condition of the farmers makes them wary of being left at the tender mercies of corporates. As farmers see it, they are opposing the new laws to save their livelihoods.

In the recent past, the Government had been less than charitable towards farmers. For example, out of an allocation of Rs.3.34 lakh crore in Budget 2019 for agriculture and allied activities, only Rs.2.35 lakh crore was spent. As part of the fiscal stimulus, the Finance Minister announced a stimulus package of Rs.4.30 lakh crore for farmers, out of which Rs.3.80 lakh crore was in the form of credit and only Rs.50,000 crore was in the form of Government spending.

From the sketchy details available in the public domain, Food Micro Enterprises got Rs.10,000 crore, fisheries got Rs.20,000 crore, animal husbandry infrastructure got Rs.15,000 crore, herbal cultivation got Rs.4,000 crore and bee-keeping and vegetable cultivation got Rs.500 crore each. The precise way in which these allocations are to be spent has not been spelt out so far, even after eight months. Significantly, the cash stimulus of Rs.50,000 crore makes up only half of the last year's Budgetary shortfall of Rs.99,000 crore.

Till now most of the Government's largesse has been reserved for commerce and industry. After Budget 2019, the FM announced a reduction in corporate tax rates, providing a relief of Rs.1.40 lakh crore to corporates. Tax rates for Foreign Portfolio Investors were also cut. Amongst other reliefs, the FM released Rs.70,000 crore for Public Sector Banks' recapitalisation and Rs.30,000 crores to Home Finance Companies, a Rs.20,000 crore fund was created for finishing stalled housing projects and export incentives of Rs.50,000 crore were announced. Around 80 per cent of the stimulus of Rs.25 lakh odd crores announced by the FM from April to November 2020, has gone to MSMEs and corporates.

A matching investment in the agricultural sector would

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In fiscal 2020-21, the rupee has appreciated by 3.53 per cent till 2 February, as per the information provided by RBI

ANURAG SINGH THAKUR
MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

THUMBNAILS

Tata Steel profit: Tata Steel swung back into black in the October-December quarter posting a consolidated profit of Rs 4,010.94 crore for the quarter on the back of increased income. The company had clocked a loss of Rs 1,228.53 crore in the year-ago quarter, Tata Steel said in a BSE filing. During the October-December period of the current fiscal, its total income rose to Rs 39,809.05 crore from Rs 35,613.34 crore a year ago. Its expenses were at Rs 34,183.18 crore, lower from Rs 35,849.92 crore in October-December 2019-20.

PTI

Cancer drug: Drug firm Alembic Pharma on Tuesday said its associate company Rhizen Pharmaceuticals' AC's novel drug Umbralisib has received accelerated approval from the US health regulator for treatment of cancer of the lymphatic system. In a regulatory filing, Alembic Pharma said, Rhizen Pharmaceuticals AG's, "...Umbralisib, which was licensed to TG Therapeutics, has secured United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) accelerated approval for the treatment of adult patients, with relapsed or refractory marginal zone lymphoma (MZL) and follicular lymphoma (FL)".

PTI

E-commerce FDI: Amid domestic traders complaining alleged violations of FDI norms by foreign online players, commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said the government is considering to come out with certain clarifications to ensure that the e-commerce sector works in the "true spirit" of the law and rules. He said the current FDI policy for the e-commerce sector is robust and well-designed.

PTI

GAIL purchase: The Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) on Tuesday said state-owned GAIL (India) Ltd has acquired five per cent stake of the IEX in its arm Indian Gas Exchange (IGX). However, the company did not divulge the details about the value of the transaction. Last month, Adani Total Gas and Torrent Gas had acquired five per cent stake each in the IGX.

PTI

Bodal Chemicals: Ahmedabad-based Bodal Chemicals Ltd on Tuesday said it will acquire Mawana Sugars Ltd's Siel Chemical Complex (SCC) in Punjab for nearly Rs 140 crore. SCC is one of the largest players in the chlor-alkali segment in north India with current caustic soda capacity of 82,500 million tons per annum.

PTI

IBM-Shree Cement pact: IBM has announced a collaboration with Shree Cement to run their database and core business applications. The implementation will allow Shree Cement to seamlessly enhance its productivity and bring in supply chain efficiencies across its manufacturing plants.

SNS

BPCL to buy out Oman Oil stake in Bina refinery

It also hopes to complete a separate sale of its stake in Numaligarh Refinery by the next month-end

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

Privatisation-bound Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) will buy out Oman Oil Company's shares in Bina refinery project in the next 10 days, and is hoping to complete a separate sale of its stake in Numaligarh Refinery by the next month-end, its director-finance said today.

BPCL holds a 63.68 per cent stake in Bharat Oman Refineries Ltd (BORL), which built and operates a 7.8-million-ton oil refinery at Bina in Madhya Pradesh.

"Discussions (to acquire 36.62 per cent stake of OQ S.A.O.C.) have concluded. We can come out with an announcement of the acquisition of the stake in next 10 days or so," BPCL director (finance) N Vijayagopal told reporters on an earnings call.

OQ S.A.O.C. was formerly known as Oman Oil Company.

Without giving details, he said the deal details such as acquisition price will form

BPCL Q3 PROFIT DOUBLES

► BPCL has reported more than doubling of its net profit for the December quarter on the back of inventory gains resulting from rising oil prices.
► Net profit in October-December at Rs 2,777.6 crore was 120 per cent



part of the announcement likely in the next 10 days.

BORL was incorporated in February 1994 to build a refinery at Bina in Madhya Pradesh. The unit initially could turn 6 million tons of crude oil annually into fuel, which was subsequently raised to 7.8 million tons.

Before the company is pri-

higher than Rs 1,260.6 crore net profit in the same period a year back.

► The company booked Rs 771 crore inventory gains after the fuel it made from crude oil it bought at lower prices got sold at higher rates.

vatised, BPCL will exit Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) by selling its 61.65 per cent stake to a consortium of Oil India Ltd and Engineers India Ltd, Vijayagopal said.

It is selling stake because the government had as per the Assam Peace Accord, agreed to keep NRL in the public sector.

"The consortium of Oil India and Engineers India Ltd will acquire 49 per cent and the rest 13.65 per cent will be sold to the government of Assam," he said, adding the company board at its meeting on Monday approved the share purchase agreement.

Oil currently holds 26 per cent equity in NRL, while the government of Assam has around 12.35 per cent.

The value for 61.65 per cent stake in NRL is reportedly around Rs 7,000 crore.

"NRL stake sale is happening at a rapid pace," he said. "Valuation is being done by valuers and if things go as planned, the transaction will be completed by 31 March."

The completion of the transaction is subject to the deal getting requisite government approvals, he noted.

Post NRL sale, BPCL would be left with three refineries at Mumbai, Kochi in Kerala and Bina.

The government is selling its entire 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL in the nation's biggest privatisation till date.

Vedanta Group and private

equity firms Apollo Global and I Squared Capital's Indian unit Think Gas have put in an expression of interest for buying the government stake.

The sale of NRL is the first step towards the disinvestment of BPCL.

The government has already indicated that it expects to complete BPCL privatisation by the first half of the fiscal beginning April (2021-22).

The sale is key to achieving the Rs 1.75 lakh crore disinvestment target set for 2021-22.

BPCL will give the buyer ownership of around 15.33 per cent of India's oil refining capacity and 22 per cent of the fuel marketing share.

NRL is looking to expand its refining capacity from 3 million tons per annum to 9 million tons year at an investment of Rs 22,594 crore. The project is expected to be completed by 2024.

The expansion also involves setting up of crude oil pipeline from Paradip in Odisha to Numaligarh and a product pipeline from Numaligarh to Siliguri in West Bengal.

two PSBs, setting up of bad bank, disinvestment in LIC, privatisation of one general insurance company, allowing FDI in insurance sector up to 74 per cent, aggressive disinvestment and sale of public sector undertakings, etc," he said. The meeting observed that all these measures are retrograde and hence need to be opposed, he added.

After deliberations, it was decided to give the call for a two-day ~ 15 March and 16 March - strike against the government's moves, AIBOC general secretary Soumya Datta said.

Members of UFBU include All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA), All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC), National Confederation of Bank Employees (NCBE), All India Bank Officers' Association (AIBOA) and Bank Employees Confederation of India (BEFI).

Others are Indian National Bank Employees Federation (INBEF), Indian National Bank Officers Congress (INBOC), National Organisation of Bank Workers (NOBW) and National Organisation of Bank Officers.

ter ended December.

The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 155.32 crore in the corresponding year-ago period.

Total income of the bank increased to Rs 5,786.51 crore during the October-December period of 2020-21 as against Rs 5,197.94 crore in the same quarter of 2019-20, IOB said in a regulatory filing.

The bank's asset quality showed improvement with gross non-performing assets (NPAs) falling to 12.19 per cent of the gross advances by 31 December 2020, as against 17.12 per cent by the end of December 2019.

In value terms, gross NPAs were valued at Rs 16,753.48 crore, down from Rs 23,733.86 crore.

Central Bank profit: State-owned Central Bank of India on Tuesday reported a 6.5 per cent rise in its net profit to Rs 165.41 crore in the third quar-

Apple contractor Wistron to restart K'taka unit soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, 9 FEBRUARY

Shut since December following violence owing to labour unrest at its Karnataka facility, Wistron, Taiwanese contract manufacturer for Apple Inc, said today its operations here will start soon, as the state government asserted it was ready to extend all cooperation.

"We are looking forward to restarting our operations and welcoming back team members," David Shen, chief executive officer of Wistron Smart Devices, said in a statement.

He said since the violent incident at their Narasapura facility in Kolar district in December last year, the company has been working hard on improving across the board to raise standards and fix the issues.

Govt sanctions 187 lakh Kisan Credit Cards

NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

All employees have been promptly and fully paid, and we implemented new hiring and payroll systems to ensure everyone is paid correctly and provided the correct documentation going forward," Shen added.

The company official said Wistron will be delivering enhanced training programmes for all workers.

According to him, the management has put in a place a new system for workers to get information and raise any concerns they may have, anonymously.

While thanking the employees for their patience and support, Shen said the firm has worked through corrective actions.

Karnataka labour minister A Shivaram Hebbar said company officials were willing to start their operations from 15 February.

The government today said that it has sanctioned 187.03 lakh Kisan Credit Cards with credit limit of Rs 1.76 lakh crore to farmers till 29 January.

In a Press statement, the finance ministry mentioned a special drive to cover farmers under Kisan Credit Card (KCC) is going on since February 2020 to provide them hassle-free and timely credit for their agriculture operations.

"As per the information furnished by public sector banks & Nabard, 187.03 lakh KCC with credit limit of Rs 1.76 lakh crore have been sanctioned to farmers across the country during this drive up to 29th January 2021," said Anurag Singh Thakur, Union minister of state for finance and corporate affairs. SNS

Adani Ports Q3 profit rises by 16%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) today reported a 16.22 per cent increase in its consolidated profit to Rs 1,576.53 crore for the third quarter ended on 31 December 2020.

The country's largest integrated logistics player had clocked a consolidated profit of Rs 1,356.43 crore in the corresponding period a year earlier, the company said in a regulatory filing to the BSE.

Its total consolidated income increased to Rs 4,274.79 crore for the third quarter, as against Rs 3,830.43 crore in the year-ago period.

The company's total expenses during the quarter under review increased to Rs 2,258.62 crore, compared to Rs 2,091.40 crore in the year-ago period.

Karan Adani, chief execu-

tive officer and whole-time director of APSEZ said: "The strong and lasting recovery at APSEZ has been the cornerstone of our journey in the recent past. It's a proven certitude that our business now operates closer to a pure-play utility. Our portfolio of assets, increasing market share in India, and prominence of our network with leadership positions have an unparalleled value proposition."

He said the team at APSEZ continues to innovate and establish operational excellence as the key differentiator, thus improving margins.

IOB profit: State-owned lender Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) on Tuesday reported a net profit of Rs 212.87 crore for the quarter ending December 2020 as provisions for bad loans declined. The bank had posted a staggering net loss of Rs 6,075.49 crore in the year-

ago quarter. IOB had posted a net profit of Rs 148.14 crore for the July-September quarter of 2020-21.

Total income of the bank increased to Rs 5,786.51 crore during the October-December period of 2020-21 as against Rs 5,197.94 crore in the same quarter of 2019-20, IOB said in a regulatory filing.

The bank's asset quality showed improvement with gross non-performing assets (NPAs) falling to 12.19 per cent of the gross advances by 31 December 2020, as against 17.12 per cent by the end of December 2019.

In value terms, gross NPAs were valued at Rs 16,753.48 crore, down from Rs 23,733.86 crore.

Central Bank profit: State-owned Central Bank of India on Tuesday reported a 6.5 per cent rise in its net profit to Rs 165.41 crore in the third quar-

Passenger vehicle retail sales fall 4.4%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 FEBRUARY

FADA DATA

► According to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA), which collected vehicle registration data from 1,273 out of the 1,480 regional transport offices (RTOs), PV sales stood at 2,94,817 units in January 2020.
► Two-wheeler sales declined by 8.78 per cent to 11,63,322 units last month, as compared to 12,75,308 units in January 2020.

Commercial vehicle sales also slipped 24.99 per cent to 55,835 units, as against 74,439 units a year ago.

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judged the demand which returned postlockdown. Industry's underestimation of post-covid rebound along with chipmakers prioritising higher-volume and more lucrative consumer electronics market has created a vacuum for semiconductors," he noted.

This has resulted in a shortage in supply for all categories of vehicles, especially passenger vehicles, even though enquiry levels and bookings remained high, Gulati said. Semiconductors are silicon chips that cater to control and memory functions in products ranging from automobiles, computers and cellphones to various other electronic items.

The usage of semiconductors in the auto industry has gone up globally in recent times,

It is fair to say that we stand with the duly elected representatives of the people of Burma in their efforts to speak for the people of the country.



SEEKING IMMEDIATE AND FULL RESTORATION OF THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT IN MYANMAR

US STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON NED PRICE

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2021

09

'Iran may pursue nuke weapon'

International Atomic Energy Agency says that structured programme ended in 2003

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN, 9 FEBRUARY

Iran's intelligence minister has warned the West that his country could push for a nuclear weapon if crippling international sanctions on Tehran remain in place, state television reported Tuesday. The remarks by Mahmoud Alavi mark a rare occasion that a government official says Iran could reverse its course on the nuclear programme. Tehran has long insisted that the programme is for peaceful purposes only.

A 1990s fatwa, or religious edict, by the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei states that nuclear weapons are forbidden.

A 1990s fatwa, or religious edict, by the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei states that nuclear weapons are forbidden.

fault but those who pushed it, Alavi was quoted as saying. If a cat is cornered, it may show a kind of behaviour that a free cat would not, he said and added that Iran has no plans to move toward a nuclear weapon under current circumstances.

The 81-year-old Khamenei, who has the final say on all matters of state in Iran, on Sunday urged the United States to lift all sanctions if it wants Iran to live up to commitments under its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. However, President Joe Biden has said the US won't be making the first move.

Following the killing last

December of an Iranian scientist credited with spearheading the country's disbanded military nuclear programme, Iran's parliament has approved a law to block international nuclear inspectors later this month, a serious violation of the accord. Alavi, the intelligence minister, was also quoted as saying that a member of the Iranian armed forces facilitated the killing of the scientist, which Iran has blamed on Israel.

The minister did not expand on what he meant and it was not clear if the soldier had carried out the explosion that killed the scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

Israel, which has been suspected of killing Iranian nuclear scientists over the last decade, has repeatedly declined to comment on the attack.

This was the first time that Iran acknowledged a member of its armed forces may

have acted as an accomplice in the killing of Fakhrizadeh, who headed Iran's so-called AMAD program, which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN's nuclear watchdog, says that structured programme ended in 2003. US intelligence agencies concurred with that assessment in a 2007 report.

However, Israel insists Iran still maintains the ambition of developing nuclear weapons, pointing to Tehran's ballistic missile program and research into other technologies.

Israel has long accused Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons, and the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and world powers put strict limits on Iranian nuclear activities to prevent it from reaching weapons capability.

In exchange, Iran was given sanctions relief.

In December Iran's President Hassan Rouhani vowed to avenge Fakhrizadeh's killing, saying his country will decide time or venue of any retaliatory action.

In response to former President Donald Trump's so-called maximum pressure campaign against Iran, the country began to gradually violate its atomic commitments under the nuclear deal, and threatened further provocations in a bid to increase its leverage and get Biden to prioritise a return to the deal as he moves to dismantle Trump's legacy.

As part of those steps, Iran has begun enriching uranium closer to weapons-grade levels and said it would experiment with uranium metals, a key component of a nuclear warhead. Iran insists that all breaches of the pact are easily reversible.

PLAY TIME



Kindergarten children play in a classroom on the opening day of schools and kindergartens in Bucharest, Romania. AP

China blocks Clubhouse, app used for political discussion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 9 FEBRUARY

Zeng Jiajun, a former tech worker, fell in love with social media app Clubhouse, a window through the ruling Communist Party's pervasive censorship, after listening to a free-wheeling discussion between members of China's Uighur minority and Han majority that wound up lasting 12 hours.

Thousands of Chinese flocked to the app, which allowed unfettered discussion with people abroad about democracy, Taiwan and other sensitive topics at a time when President Xi Jinping's government is increasingly hostile to independent voices.

This kind of communication is rare, Zeng said. Hearing someone's voice can make both sides realize we're all human.

On Monday, that window slammed shut when Chinese users lost access to Clubhouse, adding it to thousands of websites and social media apps the ruling party blocks the public from seeing using the world's most extensive system of internet filters.

Service in China was cut off at about 7 p.m. (1100 GMT) on Monday, according to GreatFire.org, a nonprofit U.S. group that monitors Chinese internet filtering and tries to help users circumvent it. Clubhouse didn't respond

to requests for comment.

Xi's government refuses to acknowledge the existence of its internet filters, known informally as the Great Firewall of China. Researchers abroad trace blockages to servers at state-owned China Telecom Ltd. through which internet traffic is required to pass. Xi's government is trying to promote the notion of internet sovereignty, or the right of political leaders to limit what their publics see online.

A foreign ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin, said Tuesday he had no information about Clubhouse. He said the internet in China is open but is managed in accordance with relevant laws.

Prachanda seeks support from India and China against Oli's move to dissolve Parl

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KATHMANDU, 9 FEBRUARY

Chairperson of the Nepal Communist Party's splinter faction Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' said on Tuesday that his party has appealed to the international community, including India and China, to extend support to its ongoing struggle against Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli's "unconstitutional and undemocratic move" to dissolve the House of Representatives.

Nepal plunged into a political crisis on December 20 after Oli, in a surprise move, dissolved the House of Representatives, amidst a tussle

da said during an interaction with a select group of international media representatives based in Kathmandu.

"I believe that the Supreme Court would not endorse Prime Minister Oli's unconstitutional and undemocratic move to dissolve the House of Representatives," he said ahead of his faction's massive protest rally in Kathmandu on Wednesday. He also warned that if the House is not reinstated, the country would plunge into a grave political crisis. Prachanda said that his party has appealed to the international community, including neighbouring India and China, to extend support

to their ongoing struggle against Oli's unconstitutional move of dissolving the House of Representatives.

"We have conveyed to the international community that Oli's move has resulted in the demise of democracy and we seek support from the international community including India, China, European Union and the US to protect hard earned federalism and democracy," said Prachanda. India has described Oli's sudden decision to dissolve Parliament and call for fresh elections as an "internal matter" that is for the country to decide as per its democratic processes.

Huawei founder sees no end to US sanctions

BEIJING, 9 FEBRUARY

The founder of Huawei said Tuesday he doubts President Joe Biden will remove US sanctions that battered the telecom equipment giant's smartphone sales but expressed confidence the company can survive.

Speaking in the central city of Taiyuan, Ren Zhengfei said strong sales of network gear and other technology should make up for Huawei's weaker handset business, according to a transcript released by the company.

We can still survive even without relying on phone sales, he was quoted as telling reporters. Huawei Technologies Ltd., China's first global tech brand, is at the center of conflict with Washington over technology and security. American officials say the maker of network equipment and smartphones might facilitate Chinese spying, an accusation Ren and other executives deny.

Then-President Trump cut off Huawei's access to U.S. processor chips and other technology needed to make smartphones in 2019. Last year, Trump tightened those curbs by prohibiting suppliers from using U.S. technology to make chips for Huawei designed by its own engineers.

Ren said he expects Biden to consider U.S. chip and other suppliers that are losing billions of dollars in sales to Huawei.

Myanmar junta cracks down on crowds defying protest ban

ASSOCIATED PRESS
YANGON, 9 FEBRUARY

Police cracked down on demonstrators opposing Myanmar's military coup, firing warning shots and shooting water cannons to disperse crowds that took to the streets again Tuesday in defiance of rules making protests illegal.

Reports of many injured demonstrators drew strong concern from the U.N.'s office in Myanmar.

"According to reports from Nay Pyi Taw, Mandalay and other cities, numerous demonstrators have been injured, some of them seriously, by security forces in connection



with the current protests across the country," the U.N. said. "The use of disproportionate force against demonstrators is unacceptable," said Ola Almgren, the U.N. Resi-

dent Coordinator in Myanmar.

Water cannons were used in Mandalay, Myanmar's second-biggest city, where witnesses said at least two warning shots were fired in early

attempts to break up the crowd. Gunfire could be heard on videos from the city, some of which showed riot police flailing wildly with their batons at people trying to flee. Reports on social media said police arrested more than two dozen people there.

Police also used water cannons in the capital, Naypyitaw, for a second day and fired shots into the air. Police were reportedly to have also shot rubber bullets at the crowd in Naypyitaw, wounding several people.

Photos on social media showed an alleged shooter—an officer with a short-barreled gun—and several injured people. Protesters posted photos online of bullet casings they

said they found at the scene.

Unconfirmed social media reports circulated of shootings with live rounds and deaths among the protesters, with the potential of sparking violent retaliation against the authorities—an outcome proponents of the country's civil disobedience movement have warned against. The AP was unable to immediately confirm the reports.

The weekly magazine 7Day News reported on its Twitter account that a 19-year-old woman was shot by police in Naypyidaw and was undergoing an emergency operation at the city's main hospital. It cited Min Thu, the local chairman of the National League

for Democracy party of ousted national leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The growing defiance is striking in a country where past demonstrations have been met with deadly force and are a reminder of previous movements in the Southeast Asian country's long and bloody struggle for democracy. The military used deadly force to quash a massive 1988 uprising against military dictatorship and a 2007 revolt led by Buddhist monks.

The decesses issued Monday night for some areas of Yangon and Mandalay banned rallies and gatherings of more than five people, along with motorized processions, while

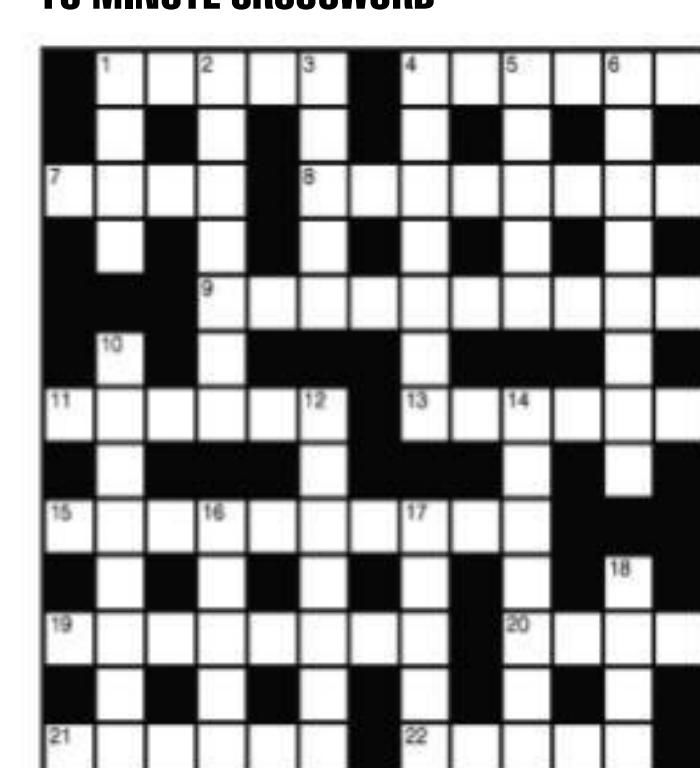
also imposing a 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. curfew. It was not clear if restrictions were imposed for other areas. Violation of the orders, issued under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, is punishable by up to six months in prison or a fine.

Demonstrations were also held in other cities Tuesday, including Bago—where city elders negotiated with police to avoid a violent confrontation—and Dawai, in northern Shan state.

In Magwe in central Myanmar, where water cannons were also used, unconfirmed reports on social media said several police officers had crossed over to join the protesters' ranks.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD

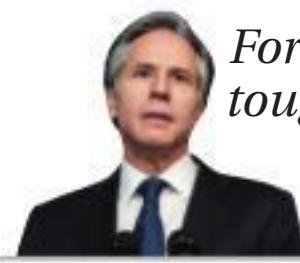


SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Twice twenty (5)
4 Masticated (6)
7 Group of countries (4)
8 Formal interview (8)
9 Firmly-held belief (10)
11 Light wind (6)
13 Tempt (6)
15 Amass (10)
19 Theology (8)
20 Of sound mind (4)
21 Extension (6)
22 Tendon (5)

DOWN
1 Thin coating (4)
2 Process for re-use (7)
3 Long (5)
4 Painkiller (7)
5 Happening (5)
6 Gradually intrude (8)
10 Small part (8)
12 Learned (7)
14 Crime against the state (7)
16 Join together (5)
17 Chasm (5)
18 Once more (4)

Specific
1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22.
2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22.
3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101, 103, 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145, 147, 149, 151, 153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 167, 169, 171, 173, 175, 177, 179, 181, 183, 185, 187, 189, 191, 193, 195, 197, 199, 201, 203, 205, 207, 209, 211, 213, 215, 217, 219, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249, 251, 253, 255, 257, 259, 261, 263, 265, 267, 269, 271, 273, 275, 277, 279, 281, 283, 285, 287, 289, 291, 293, 295, 297, 299, 301, 303, 305, 307, 309, 311, 313, 315, 317, 319, 321, 323, 325, 327, 329, 331, 333, 335, 337, 339, 341, 343, 345, 347, 349, 351, 353, 355, 357, 359, 361, 363, 365, 367, 369, 371, 373, 375, 377, 379, 381, 383, 385, 387, 389, 391, 393, 395, 397, 399, 401, 403, 405, 407, 409, 411, 413, 415, 417, 419, 421, 423, 425, 427, 429, 431, 433, 435, 437, 439, 441, 443, 445, 447, 449, 451, 453, 455, 457, 459, 461, 463, 465, 467, 469, 471, 473, 475, 477, 479, 481, 483, 485, 487, 489, 491, 493, 495, 497, 499, 501, 503, 505, 507, 509, 511, 513, 515, 517, 519, 521, 523, 525, 527, 529, 531, 533, 535, 537, 539, 541, 543, 545, 547, 549, 551, 553, 555, 557, 559, 561, 563, 565, 567, 569, 571, 573, 575, 577, 579, 581, 583, 585, 587, 589, 591, 593, 595, 597, 599, 601, 603, 605, 607, 609, 611, 613, 615, 617, 619, 621, 623, 625, 627, 629, 631, 633, 635, 637, 639, 641, 643, 645, 647, 649, 651, 653, 655, 657, 659, 661, 663, 665, 667, 669, 671, 673, 675, 677, 679, 681, 683, 685, 687, 689, 691, 693, 695, 697, 699, 701, 703, 705, 707, 709, 711, 713, 715, 717, 719, 721, 723, 725, 727, 729, 731, 733, 735, 737, 739, 741, 743, 745, 747, 749, 751, 753, 755, 757, 759, 761, 763, 765, 767, 769, 771, 773, 775, 777, 779, 781, 783, 785, 787, 789, 791, 793, 795, 797, 799, 801, 803,



Former US president Donald Trump was right to take a tougher approach on China

US SECRETARY OF STATE TONY BLINKEN

REITERATING THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION'S POLICY OF ENGAGING BEIJING FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH.

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	03°C	01°C CL
LONDON	0°C	-02°C H
DUBAI	30°C	25°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C H
NEW YORK	02°C	01°C H
MOSCOW	-13°C	-09°C H

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

THUMBNAILS



A seagull sits on a partly ice-covered lamp in Moscow on Tuesday. ■ IANS

Ex-Nazi guard charged: German prosecutors have charged a 100-year-old man with 3,518 counts of accessory to murder on allegations he served during World War II as a Nazi SS guard at a concentration camp on the outskirts of Berlin, authorities said Tuesday. The man is alleged to have worked at the Sachsenhausen camp between 1942 and 1945. ■ AP

Pak temple row : Pakistan's Supreme Court has ordered the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government to immediately start rebuilding a century-old Hindu temple that was vandalised by a mob in the province, and submit a timeline for its completion. ■ PTI

Pak-Turkey drill begins : A three-week long joint military exercise involving Pakistani and Turkish special forces began in Pakistan on Tuesday. The opening ceremony of the exercise was held at the Special Service Group headquarters in Tarbela, the Pakistan Army said in a statement. ■ PTI

Poland's abortion ruling focus of EU's Parl debate

WARSAW 9 FEBRUARY

Most European Parliament lawmakers on Tuesday lashed out at Poland's near-total abortion ban Tuesday, with several lawmakers arguing it was a fundamental violation of women's rights.

Even though some praised authorities in Warsaw for what they called a defense of Christian values and human life, many in the major political groups were critical of the measure in the staunchly Roman Catholic nation. EU equality Commissioner Helena Dalli acknowledged that the EU has no legal control over how member states regulate abortion, but she said she viewed the abortion ruling as a sign of the deterioration of sexual and reproductive rights of women in the central European nation.

The debate follows a constitutional court ruling in Poland that resulted in an almost total ban on abortion that took effect in late January. Poland already had one of Europe's most restrictive laws, allowing abortion only in the case of crime rape or incest; a threat to the woman's life or health; and fetal abnormalities.

The court ruled that abortion due to fetal abnormalities even in the case of fetuses so badly damaged they would die at birth is not constitutional.

Members of Poland's ruling Law and Justice party, which is aligned with the Roman Catholic Church, had sought the new restriction. They argued that it was partly a way to prevent the abortion of fetuses with Down syndrome, which had made up a significant share of the legal abortions in Poland until then. Most European lawmakers criticized the ruling, saying it marked a human rights setback. ■ AP

Trump 2nd impeachment trial begins

Former President was charged with incitement of insurrection for his role in agitating a violent mob of his supporters that laid to Capitol siege

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 9 FEBRUARY

Donald Trump's historic second impeachment trial, on a charge of inciting last month's deadly storming of the U.S. Capitol, opens on Tuesday with a debate over the constitutionality of trying a president after he has left office.

Trump's lawyers insist as the Senate trial opens on Tuesday that he is not guilty on the sole charge of "incitement of insurrection," his fiery words just a figure of speech, even as he encouraged a rally crowd to "fight like hell" for his presidency. The Capitol siege on 6 January stunned the world as rioters stormed the building to try to stop the certification of President-elect Joe Biden's victory. Five people died.

No witnesses are expected to be called, in part because the senators sworn as jurors, forced to flee for safety, will be presented with graphic videos recorded that day. Holed up at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, Trump has declined a request to testify.

The first president to face charges after leaving office and the first to be twice impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors while in office, Trump continues to challenge the nation's civic norms and traditions even in defeat. Security remains extremely tight at the Capitol. While acquittal is likely, the trial will test the nation's attitude toward his brand of presidential power, the Democrats' resolve in pursuing him, and the loyalty of Trump's Republican allies defending him.

"In trying to make sense of a second Trump trial, the public should keep in mind that Donald Trump was the first president ever to refuse to accept his defeat," said Timothy Naftali, a clinical associate professor at New York University and an expert on Richard Nixon's impeachment saga, which ended with Nixon's resignation rather than his impeachment.

"This trial is one way of having that difficult national conversation about the difference between dissent and

WHAT TO WATCH AS THE TRIAL KICKS OFF

WASHINGTON, 9 FEBRUARY



» **Tuesday's proceedings will begin with a debate to dismiss the trial before it even begins. Trump's lawyers have argued the trial is moot now that Trump is out of office, and 45 Senate Republicans have already voted once to move forward with an effort to dismiss the trial on those grounds.**

» **The House managers will present their arguments first, beginning Wednesday. Each side will have up to 16 hours, running no more than eight hours per day.**

» **Defense arguments are likely to begin Friday. In their main filing with the Senate, Trump's lawyers made clear that they will not only argue against the trial on process grounds, but also present a full-throated defense of Trump's actions that day and why they believe he did not incite the riot.**

» **This trial will look a bit different than the last one due to Covid restrictions. To protect against the virus, senators don't have to be stuck at their desks for the entirety of the trial, and will be allowed to spread out in the upper galleries or watch a video feed in a room just off the chamber.**

» **Five Republican senators voted with Democrats two weeks ago not to dismiss the trial on constitutional grounds. Those senators so far appear the most likely to vote to convict Trump. Democrats are likely to focus, too, on senators who are retiring in 2022 and will have less to lose politically if they vote to convict.**

insurrection," Naftali said.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Monday that Biden will be busy with the business of the presidency and won't spend much time watching the televised proceedings.

"He'll leave it to his former colleagues in the Senate," she said. In filings, lawyers for the former president lobbed a wide-ranging attack against the House case, dismissing the trial as "political theater" on the same Senate floor invaded by the mob.

House impeachment managers, in their own filings, asserted that Trump had "betrayed the American people" and there is no valid excuse or defense.

Preparing to challenge both the constitutionality of the trial and any suggestion that he was to blame for the insurrection. They suggest that Trump was simply exercising his First Amendment rights when he encouraged his supporters to protest at the Capitol, and they argue the Senate is not entitled to try Trump now that he has left office.

House impeachment managers, in their own filings, asserted that Trump had "betrayed the American people" and there is no valid excuse or defense.

"His incitement of insurrection against the United States government—which disrupted the peaceful transfer of power—is the most grievous constitutional crime ever committed by a president," the Democrats said.

With senators gathered as the court of impeachment, the trial will begin Tuesday with a debate and vote on whether it's constitutionally permissible to prosecute the former president, an argument that could resonate with Republicans keen on voting to acquit Trump without being seen as condoning his behavior.

Under an agreement between Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Republican leader Mitch McConnell, the opening arguments would begin at noon Wednesday, with up to 16 hours per side for presentations.

After that there are hours for deliberations, witness and closing arguments. The trial was set to break Friday evening for the Jewish Sabbath, but Trump's defense team withdrew the request, concerned about the delay, and now the trial can continue into the weekend and next week.

A presidential impeachment trial has been conducted only three times before, leading to acquittals for Andrew Johnson, Bill Clinton and then Trump last year.

Typically senators sit at their desks for such occasions, but the Covid crisis has upended even this tradition. Instead, senators will be allowed to spread out, in the "marble room" just off the Senate floor, where proceedings will be shown on TV, and in the public galleries above the chamber, to accommodate social distancing, according to a person familiar with the discussions.

Trump's second impeachment trial is expected to diverge from the lengthy, complicated affair of a year ago. In that case, Trump was charged with having privately pressured Ukraine to dig up dirt on Biden, then a Democratic rival for the presidency. This time, Trump's "stop the steal" rally rhetoric and the storming of the Capitol played out for the world to see. The

trial could be over in half the time. The Democratic-led House impeached the president swiftly, one week after the most violent attack on Congress in more than 200 years. Five people died, including a woman shot by police inside the building and a police officer who died the next day of his injuries.

House prosecutors are expected to rely on videos from the siege, along with Trump's incendiary rhetoric refusing to concede the election, to make their case. His new defense team has said it plans to counter with its own cache of videos of Democratic politicians making fiery speeches.

Initially repulsed by the graphic images of the attack, a number of Republican senators have cooled their criticism as the intervening weeks have provided some distance.

Senators were sworn in as jurors late last month, shortly after Biden was inaugurated, but the trial was delayed as Democrats focused on confirming the new president's initial Cabinet picks and Republicans sought to stall.

At the time, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky forced a vote to set aside the trial as unconstitutional because Trump is no longer in office. The 45 Republican votes in favor of Paul's measure suggest the near impossibility of reaching a conviction in a Senate where Democrats hold 50 seats but a two-thirds vote—or 67 senators—would be needed to convict Trump.

Georgia election officials investigate Trump call: Georgia's secretary of state's office opened an investigation into a phone call between Donald Trump and the state's top elections official in which the then-president said he wanted to find enough votes to overturn his loss in the state, an official said.

Walter Jones, a spokesman for Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, confirmed the investigation. The Secretary of State's office investigates complaints it receives. The investigations are fact-finding and administrative in nature. Any further legal efforts will be left to the Attorney General, Jones wrote.

Man charged in Capitol riot worked for FBI: Lawyer

WASHINGTON, 9 FEBRUARY

A man who authorities say is a leader of the far-right Oath Keepers militia group and helped to organise a ring of other extremists and led them in the attack last month at the US Capitol has held a top-secret security clearance for decades and previously worked for the FBI, his attorney said Monday.

Thomas Caldwell, who authorities believe holds a leadership role in the extremist group, worked as section chief for the FBI from 2009 to 2010 after retiring from the Navy, his lawyer, Thomas Plotchan, wrote in a motion urging the judge to release him from jail while he awaits trial.

The defense said Caldwell, who has denied being part of the Oath Keepers, has held a top-secret security clearance since 1979, which required multiple special background investigations, according to Plotchan. Caldwell also ran a consulting firm that did classified work for the US government, the lawyer said.

He has been vetted and found numerous times as a person worthy of the trust and confidence of the United States government, as indicated by granting him top secret clearances, Plotchan wrote. The FBI did not immediately comment Monday evening.

Caldwell is one of three people authorities have described as Oath Keepers who were charged last month with conspiracy and accused of plotting the attack on the Capitol in advance. He has been locked up since his arrest at his home in Berryville, Virginia, on January 19. Caldwell's lawyer said he denies ever going into the Capitol and has physical limitations that would prevent the 66-year-old from forcing his way into any building.

US court seeks joint status report on H-4 visas

WASHINGTON, 9 FEBRUARY

A US court has asked for a joint status report by March 4 on the prospects of work authorisation for H-4 visas, in view of the decision of the Biden administration to withdraw a Trump-era move to rescind work authorisation to certain categories of spouses of foreign professionals on H-1B visas. Spouses of Indian professionals on H-1B visas, mostly women, are the biggest beneficiaries of the Obama-era rule that gave employment authorisation cards.

Judge Tanya S Chutkan, in the US Court of Appeals for District of Columbia Circuit, said that the report, to be submitted by March 4, shall be accompanied by a proposed order as appropriate.

An H-4 visa is issued by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to immediate family members (spouse and children under 21 years of age) of the H-1B visa holders, most of whom are Indian IT professionals. It is normally issued to those who have already started the process of seeking employment-based lawful permanent resident status.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

In 2017, the Trump administration announced that it would rescind the Obama-era rule that gave employment authorisation cards to spouses of foreign professionals on H-1B visas. However, the Republican Party-led Trump administration was not able to complete the process in the four years of its rule. During the presidential election, the Biden campaign had promised to withdraw the Trump administration's move.

Last month, US President Joe Biden withdrew the Trump administration's rule rescinding work authorisation for H-4 visa holders. ■ AP

WHITE-WASHED



Walkers with dog pass by the German parliament, the Reichstag building, during snowfall in Berlin on Tuesday. ■ AP

Kobe Bryant crash pilot disoriented in clouds, agencysays

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES, 9 FEBRUARY

Bryant's widow blamed the pilot. She and relatives of the other victims also faulted the companies that owned and operated the helicopter.

of the crash followed plenty of finger-pointing.

Bryant's widow blamed the pilot. She and relatives of the other victims also faulted the companies that owned and operated the helicopter.

The brother of the pilot

didn't blame Bryant but said he knew about the risks of flying. The helicopter companies said foggy weather before the helicopter hit the ground was an act of God and blamed air traffic controllers. The federal hearing focused on the long-awaited probable cause

or causes of the tragedy that unleashed worldwide grief for the retired basketball star,

launched several lawsuits and prompted state and federal legislation.

I think the whole world

is watching because it's Kobe, said Ed Coleman, an Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University professor and aircraft safety science expert.

Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter, and six other passengers were flying from Orange County to a youth basketball tournament at his Mamba Sports Academy in Ventura County on Jan. 26, 2020, when the helicopter encountered thick fog in the San Fernando Valley north of Los Angeles.

Pilot Ara Zobayan climbed sharply and nearly broke through the clouds when the Sikorsky S-76 helicopter banked abruptly and plunged into the Calabasas hills below,

killing all nine aboard instantly

before flames engulfed the wreckage. There was no sign of mechanical failure and the crash was believed to be an accident.

The National Transportation Safety Board has said previously that the board on Tuesday is likely to make non-binding recommendations to prevent future crashes when it meets remotely and

announces its findings about the crash.

The NTSB is an independent federal agency that investigates transportation-related crashes but has no enforcement powers. It submits suggestions to agencies like the Federal Aviation Administration or the Coast Guard, which have repeatedly rejected some board safety recommendations after other disasters.

One possible recommendation following the investigation into the crash that killed Bryant could be for helicopters to have Terrain Awareness and Warning Systems, devices that signal when aircraft are in danger of crashing.

The helicopter Bryant was flying in did not have the system, which the NTSB has recommended as mandatory for helicopters.

The FAA requires it only for air ambulances.

Federal lawmakers have sponsored the Kobe Bryant and Gianna Bryant Helicopter Safety Act to mandate the devices on all helicopters carrying six or more passengers.

Mary Wilson, longest-reigning original Supreme, dies

LAS VEGAS, 9 FEBRUARY

Mary Wilson, the longest-reigning original Supreme, has died at 76 years old.

Wilson died Monday night at her home in Las Vegas and the cause was not immediately clear, said publicist Jay Schwartz.

Wilson, Diana Ross and Florence Ballard made up the first successful configuration of The Supremes. Ballard was replaced by Cindy Birdsong in 1967, and Wilson stayed with the group until it was officially disbanded by Motown in 1977.

The group's first No. 1, million-selling song, Where Did Our Love Go, was released June 1

S ARAVANTHARAYAN

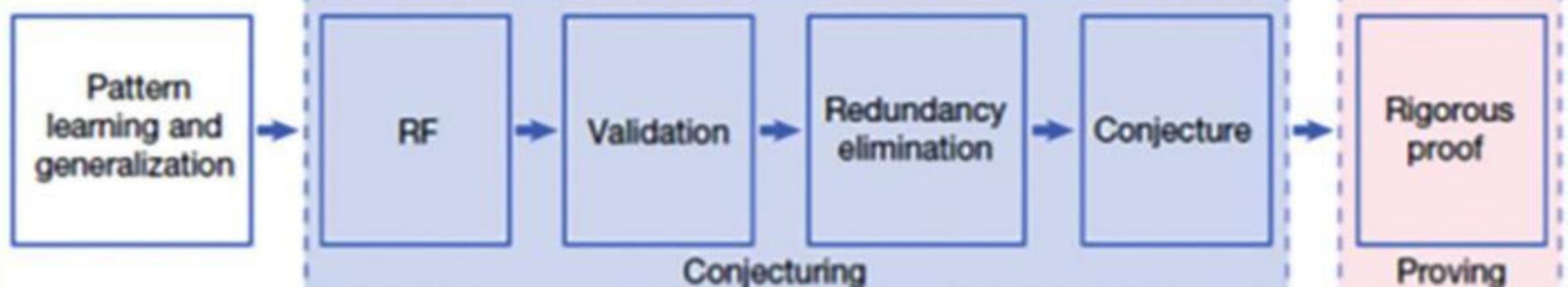
Computers and "big data" have transformed the nature of research in the sciences. Even in the arts, musicians, graphists and architects rely on computerised support. The mechanised input, however, is in the *nature of support*. The insight that is needed to sift data and see hidden patterns, or to add the creative touch to a composition, remains with the scientist or artist.

Gal Raayoni, Shahar Gottlieb, Yael Manor, George Pisha, Yoav Harris, Uri Mendlovic, Doron Haviv, Yaron Hadad and Ido Kaminer, from Technion – Israel Institute of Technology, and the Technion Harry and Lou Stern Family Science and Technology Youth Center, Haifa, in a paper in the journal, *Nature*, describe a possible way to automate even this genius, of the mathematician. They describe a method for computers to discover, from a mass of numbers, relationships that fit into formulae – to form the starting point of research into study of how these formulae arise and work.

Over the centuries, gifted mathematicians have identified cases of special numbers which have remarkable properties. And these properties, in turn, reveal more relationships and features, and then, could lead to applications. A well-known example is the number, pi, which is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. While this ratio is usually known as 22/7, or 3.14, this value is approximate. A better value is 3.14159, and even better is 3.141592653589793238. But the special feature of pi is that the ratio can never be exactly stated – not because of limitations of measurement, but for reasons of its very nature. Archimedes is credited with an early method, where many-sided straight-line figures (polygons) are drawn touching the inside and the outside of the circle. By increasing the number of sides, the shapes get closer to the circle itself, and the circumference can be approximated. And always improved by adding sides to the polygon!

Similar to the case of pi, we have another number, known as "e", which is related to things that grow like a deposit that bears compound interest. Now, if the interest on the deposit is applied not once a year, but every six months, the interest accumulates a little faster. We can keep reducing the intervals of interest, to once a month, every day, every second, and so on. When the interval is very nearly zero, we find that in the time the deposit would normally have doubled, it reaches 2.71 times its value. This number, again, is not exact, a better value is 2.718281, and so on, and the exact value can never be worked out.

The number "e" has found application in many areas of science and engineering. One such is how fast the



The Ramanujan robot

Can the spirit of mathematics be mechanised?

$$\pi = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2} \times \frac{\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2}}}{2} \times \frac{\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2}}}}{2} \dots$$

$$\pi = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2} \times \frac{\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2}}}{2} \times \frac{\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2}}}}{2} \dots$$

$$\pi = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{2} \times \frac{\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2}}}{2} \times \frac{\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2+\sqrt{2}}}}{2} \dots$$

Figure: a

$$e = 1 + \frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{1 \times 2 + \frac{1}{1 \times 2 \times 3 + \frac{1}{1 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 + \dots}}}$$

Figure: b

$$\varphi = 1 + \frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{1 + \frac{1}{1 + \dots}}}}$$

Figure: c

radioactivity of a sample would fall, while the number of atoms that are yet to decay keeps reducing. And in other areas, like working with waves, radio waves, light or lasers, atomic and nuclear science, biology and lately, epidemiology, the concept of "e" has become fundamental.

Yet another ratio, of the kind of "pi" or "e" is the "golden ratio", which is the ratio of successive numbers in a series where each number is the sum of the previous two numbers. As we can see in the picture, this ratio progresses to be nearly 1.61803..., but can never be exactly evaluated. This, again, is a ratio that is found in leaves, shells, and many other places in nature.

Mathematicians, who had understood the way of numbers, experimented to discover these and other numbers and their formulae and expressions for calculating them.

Pi, for instance, is given by Figure a, where the value of pi was expressed in terms of continued square roots of two, and no reference to circles. The value of e is given by Figure b. And then, the Golden Ratio was found to be given by the relation in Figure c.

Remarkable relations were even found to exist between some of these numbers. One of these, that connects

the numbers, pi, "e" and "i", the imaginary square root of "-1", a relation named after the mathematician, Leonhard Euler, is like this – $e^{ip} + 1 = 0$.

Many of the relations were, at first, just conjectures, later verified and finally proved. One such is the celebrated Fermat's theorem of 1637, which says that the Pythagoras relation, $a^2+b^2=c^2$, can never be true if a, b and c are integers and raised to a power more than two. The relation was laboriously verified, again lately with the help of computers, but it defied proof for nearly four centuries.

Ramanujan

It is by way of conjectures like these that many important advances in mathematics have come about. The mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan (1887–1919) was a prolific contributor – identifying a host of spectacular relations, theorems, mathematical results, even in his short working career. Ramanujan had not been trained in the formal proposition-axioms-proof-tradition of mathematics, but was a dropout, yet passionate about mathematics. Many of the results he put down are hence abruptly stated, without the context, discussion or proof. Deciphering his diaries, verifying the startling results that he records, and working out the

proofs has been fodder for generations of researchers and students.

The authors of the paper in *Nature* observe that the many fundamental constants, like pi or "e" have become ubiquitous in the sciences, but mathematical formulas that demonstrate links among them are hard to come by. There is regular progress in mathematics and refinement of existing knowledge, but startling discoveries that set off new courses of research arise sporadically, as results of ingenuity or profound insight of mathematical greats, like Carl Friedrich Gauss or Ramanujan.

The authors hence propose making use of algorithms and modern computing potential to scan the nature of different mathematical constants, like pi or "e", and try to fit the data into schemes or formulas – which could then be verified and lead to research of how and why they work. A mechanised programme where "computer algorithms use numerical data to unveil mathematical structures, thus trying to replace the mathematical intuition of great mathematicians," the paper says. As mathematical constants are common in different areas of science, discoveries in the field would have wide application, the paper says. Considering the approach as a rough equivalent of *Deep Blue*,

the chess playing computer, doing as well as Garry Kasparov, the grandmaster, the authors christen their approach "the Ramanujan machine."

The method used is akin to using artificial intelligence to fit data to a hypothesis, usually a mathematical expression that can predict the future course of the data. The hypothesis is tweaked at each run of the programme till it begins to fit the data. A similar approach, as shown in the diagram, is to propose, test and optimise a "regular formula", denoted by RF, to arrive at a mathematical conjecture.

The authors report that algorithms have found dozens of well-known formulas, as well as previously unknown ones. Some conjectures were simple to prove, some are yet to be proved, the paper says.

As huge computing resources are involved, the authors have followed the example of worldwide collaborative research programmes and launched a "Ramanujan machine" project, where "the general community can donate computational time to find RFs, propose mathematical proofs for conjectured RFs, or suggest new algorithms for finding them," the paper says.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

PLUS POINTS

Already endangered



Scientists have discovered a miniature chameleon that they believe could be the smallest reptile on Earth. Small enough to stand on a human fingertip, two of the lizards, a male and a female, were discovered in a patch of rainforest in northern Madagascar.

But the species might already be threatened with extinction, the journal *Scientific Reports* said.

Poverty and growing populations have led to the clearing of rainforests to make room for farmed animals in the country in the Indian Ocean. More than 90 per cent of Madagascar's forests have been razed, according to Nasa.

The pair, about the size of a sunflower seed, were found by a German-Madagascan team. The scientists recommended the species be assessed officially for the IUCN red list of threatened species as soon as possible.

Mark Scherz, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Potsdam and study co-author, told *National Geographic*, "It's all good and well to say, 'I really hope that people stop deforesting this forest', but until the economic future of Madagascar changes, there's no hope for any of its wildlife because the people have to eat."

However, Oliver Hawlitschek, a scientist at the Centre of Natural History in Hamburg, said, "The nano-chameleon's habitat has unfortunately been subject to deforestation, but the area was placed under protection recently, so the species will survive."

The male "Brookesia nana", or nano-chameleon, has a body that is only 13.5 mm (just over half an inch) long, making it the smallest of all the roughly 11,500 known species of reptiles, zoologists said. Its total length from nose to tail is nearly 22mm. The female is far bigger, at around 29mm long. The tiny reptile has a projectile tongue, which it uses to nab prey, mostly mites.

Frank Glaw, who was part of the international team of researchers that classified the new species, said the pair were spotted on a mountainside by a local guide. "You really have to get down on your knees to find them," he said. "They are obviously camouflaged, and they move very slowly."

He and his colleagues performed a CT scan of the female and discovered that it harboured two eggs, confirming that it was an adult.

—THE INDEPENDENT

Overfishing to blame



Global numbers of oceanic sharks and rays have plummeted 71 per cent over the last 50 years, a new study by an international research team has found. The decline since 1970 is primarily due to overfishing, say the researchers of their paper published in January in the scientific journal *Nature*.

One of the study's authors, Peter Kyne of the Charles Darwin University in Australia, said the biology of these species limit how fast they can reproduce and therefore sustain fishing pressure. "These large species mature at a late age, and typically have few young. Some species may reproduce only every second or third year," he said.

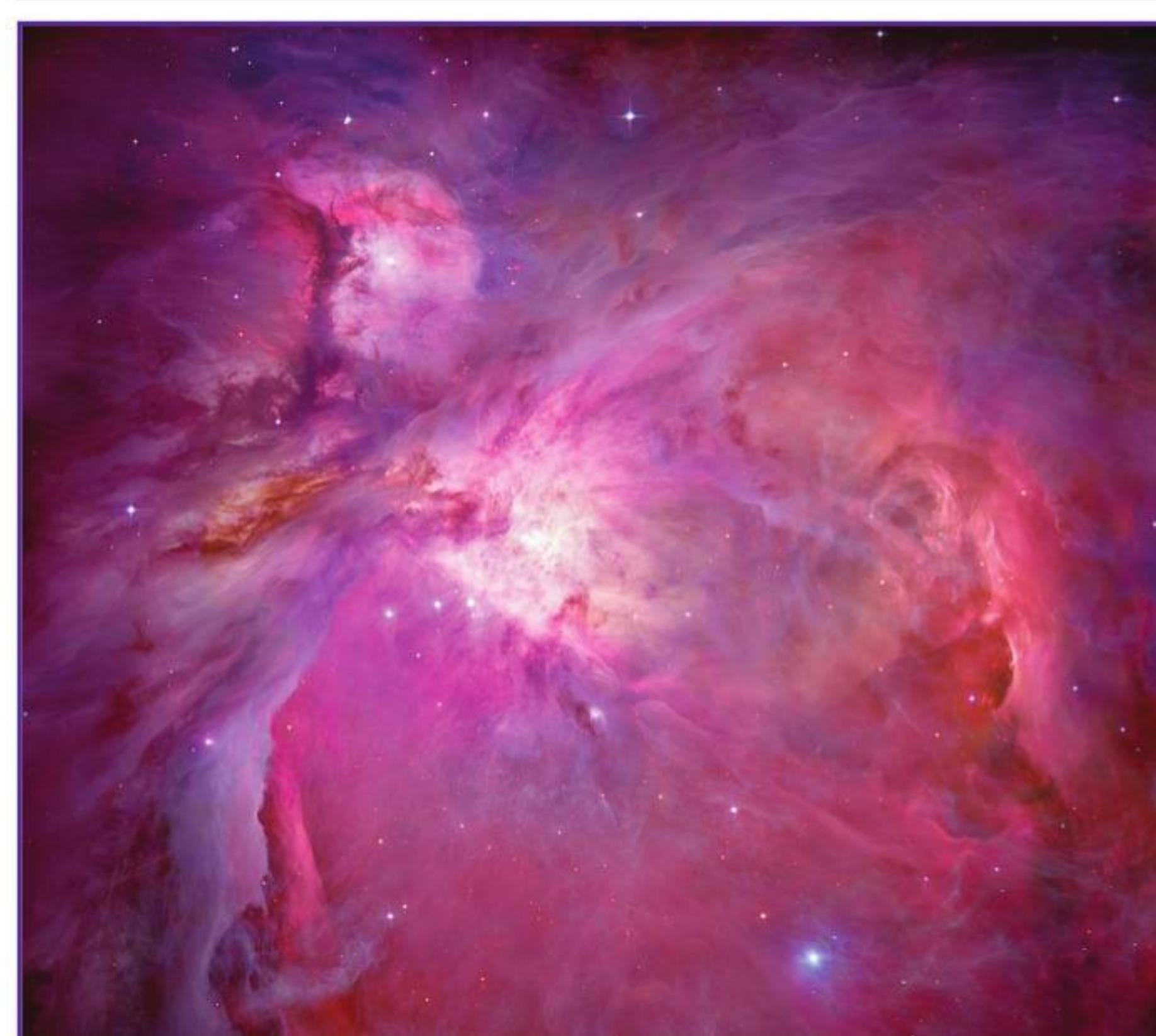
It is their strategy to produce fewer but larger offspring that will face fewer potential predators than smaller babies. "Their individual chance of survival is high in the absence of fishing," Kyne said. But humans and their appetite for meat, fins and gill plates are driving these species to extinction.

Commenting on a new Singapore study which had found that many processed and cooked fish products were of threatened elasmobranch species, Kyne said there was overlap between species in his pelagic paper and those detected in the Singapore study.

In 2017, a report by wildlife trade monitoring group Traffic and conservation group World Wide Fund for Nature found that Singapore was the third largest importer of shark fin after Hong Kong and Malaysia. "Using genetic barcoding to detect mislabelled and potentially illegally traded species is an important tool for monitoring, compliance, and enforcement," he added.

Consumers can also help by not eating products made from highly threatened species.

—THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN



SURVIVING DESTRUCTION

Young stars and their planet-forming discs can be ejected from their birth region, but not all of them just wander off into space

that were older than the ONC, so these stars must have been born somewhere else, but had flown through the ONC in the recent past. We wondered if these visitors still had a disc, potentially with planets, surrounding them as this would give us insight into the resilience of the discs to external destructive encounters with passing stars.

One of the main ways of finding protoplanetary discs around young stars is through emission of radiation in the Infrared or Ultraviolet band that is higher than one would expect from this type of star alone. Stars emit radiation across the full range of the electromagnetic spectrum, from high-energy gamma rays to low-energy radio waves. The higher excess emission is caused when the radiation from the star is intercepted by the gas and dust in the disc. Excess IR radiation is produced by the dust in the disc when it is heated by light from the young star. Excess UV radiation is produced when the light emitted from the star interacts with molecules in the gas of the disc, such as H2 (molecular hydrogen).

There are many astronomers and observatories searching for protoplanetary discs and this research allows us to better understand the formation of our own Solar System and determine whether there are more planetary systems like our own. We searched through their databases to see if any had observed our ejected stars in the past.

We found five stars with evidence of a disc that had been ejected from the regions where they were formed. Three of the stars had been ejected from the ONC itself, one has been ejected from an unknown

region but is heading towards the ONC and the last one has already interacted with and passed through most of the ONC. This showed us that it is possible for stars to be ejected from their birth region, approach a second region, and emerge from it with an intact protoplanetary disc.

Our research has only been made possible thanks to the exquisite precision of data from the Gaia space telescope, which enabled us to accurately determine where these stars had been, and where they were heading to. The Gaia telescope was launched in 2013 by the European Space Agency and measures the positions and motions of over a billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy.

Even though we have only found five stars with evidence of a disc intact after having been ejected from the ONC, we now know that young stars can run away with their planet-forming discs from their birth region and visit another region. Most of our past visitors to the ONC have never been targets in a search for the presence of a disc, as they are far outside star clusters or other regions where star formation takes place. Our findings motivate us to search for them more specifically to find out how rare these occasions really are.

The more we investigate the early stages of star and planet formation the more surprises are thrown up. Despite the rather hostile environment some stars are born in, we are finding that their planetary systems can survive a multitude of destructive encounters with other stars.

The writer is a PhD student at the department of physics and astronomy, University of Sheffield, UK

regions increases their chance of interacting with each other, often multiple times. These interactions can on occasion cause stars to be ejected from their birth region altogether and we previously thought that most of those stars just wander off into space and never encounter any other stars or star-forming regions again during their lifetime.

Almost at the same time as the stars are forming, discs of gas and dust also form around these stars. We call these structures protoplanetary discs as they are the locations where planets will or have already formed. The interactions that the stars have while they are in their birth region can also have an effect on these discs.

They can reduce the size of the discs, alter their orbits around their parent star or even destroy the discs. The interactions that cause a star to be ejected are often particularly intense/strong, as the star must reach the escape velocity to leave the gravitational pull of its birth region. This is similar to rockets to the Moon having to reach escape velocity to escape Earth's gravity.

We knew from previous research that the ONC had already ejected several of its stars during its lifetime. There have even been examples of these ejected stars retaining their planet-forming discs. In our previous research into this cluster we also found a surprising number of stars

that were older than the ONC, so these stars must have been born somewhere else, but had flown through the ONC in the recent past. We wondered if these visitors still had a disc, potentially with planets, surrounding them as this would give us insight into the resilience of the discs to external destructive encounters with passing stars.

That was the question that led to this research, and the answer is that some of these stars have survived the journey and are still with us today.

—CHRISTINA SCHOETTLER

When stars like the Sun form, they are born with tens to tens of thousands of stellar siblings in young star-forming regions. In the night sky, some examples of such regions can be seen even with a small telescope, such as the Orion Nebula Cluster (*in photo*), which is located in the Orion constellation and is around 1,350 light years away from us.

The young stars in these regions are much closer together than the distance from the Sun to its closest neighbour, Proxima Centauri, about four light years away from us. This closeness of stars in star-forming

regions increases their chance of interacting with each other, often multiple times. These interactions can on occasion cause stars to be ejected from their birth region altogether and we previously thought that most of those stars just wander off into space and never encounter any other stars or star-forming regions again during their lifetime.

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that were older than the ONC, so these stars must have been born somewhere else, but had flown through the ONC in the recent past. We wondered if these visitors still had a disc, potentially with planets, surrounding them as this would give us insight into the resilience of the discs to external destructive encounters with passing stars.

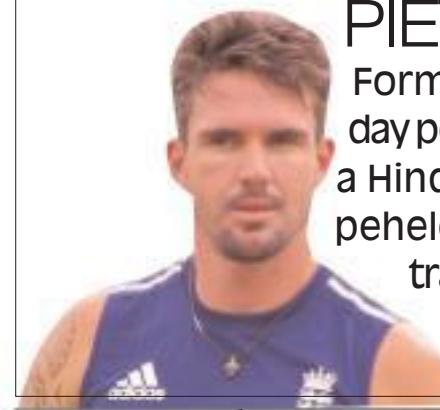
That was the question that led to this research, and the answer is that some of these stars have survived the journey and are still with us today.

—CHRISTINA SCHOETTLER

When stars like the Sun form, they are born with tens to tens of thousands of stellar siblings in young star-forming regions. In the night sky, some examples of such regions can be seen even with a small telescope, such as the Orion Nebula Cluster (*in photo*), which is located in the Orion constellation and is around 1,350 light years away from us.

The young stars in these regions are much closer together than the distance from the Sun to its closest neighbour, Proxima Centauri, about four light years away from us. This closeness of stars in star-forming

regions



PIETERSEN'S HINDI WARNING

Former England captain Kevin Pietersen (photo, left) on Tuesday pointed out a tongue-in-cheek warning he gave to India through a Hindi tweet before the England series. "India, yaad hai maine pehele hi chetawani di thi ke itna jasn na manaye jab aapne Australia ko unke ghar pe haraya tha (India, remember I had warned you earlier to not celebrate so much when you had beaten Australia at home)" Pietersen tweeted.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Leeds win: Leeds climbed into the English Premier League top 10 after beating Crystal Palace 2-0. Jack Harrison's deflected shot gave the home side a flying start, and Patrick Bamford tucked home a rebound for his 12th league goal and 100th of his career early in the second period on Monday.

Jaffer resigns: Former India opener Wasim Jaffer has resigned as Uttarakhand's head coach due to "interference in team selection", days before they were to compete in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, beginning on 20 February. Cricket Association of Uttarakhand (CAU) has accepted his resignation.

IPL sponsor: Chinese mobile manufacturing company Vivo, which had suspended its IPL title sponsorship rights for 2020 edition, is eyeing an exit from the Indian Premier League by transferring its rights to interested bidders, which may include fantasy gaming platform Dream11 and ed-tech start-up Unacademy.

Kirmani's view: Legendary former India wicketkeeper Syed Kirmani considers Rishabh Pant a "gifted bundle of talent" as a batsman but he feels the youngster is still in the "cradle" as far as his glove-work is concerned.

Anderson's reverse swing deflates India, England wins Test by 227 runs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 9 FEBRUARY

Veteran James Anderson's artistic spell of reverse swing trumped Virat Kohli's show of grit as England decimated India in the opening Test by a comprehensive 227-run margin here on Tuesday.

A target of 420, with 381 left on a fifth day worn out Chepauk track, was always a tough ask going by cricketing logic and Anderson's mid-morning burst blew away the Indian middle-order. In the end, the hosts could manage only 192 in 58.1 overs.

That spell ensured that there wasn't a Sydney-like heist or the magic of Brisbane final day which many had hoped for despite the world record target.

Kohli (72 off 104 balls) seemed like a lonely general standing on a burning deck as he showed his colleagues how to bat on a difficult track.

He covered the swing and shuffled towards the off-stump to counter Anderson, ran purposefully and scored his runs against spinners.

But there was that one ball that was always going to keep low and he got that from Ben Stokes.

"I don't think we put enough pressure on them with the ball

in the first half... credit to England, they got stuck in and put up a big total on the board," Kohli conceded in the post-match presentation.

"England were far more professional and consistent throughout the Test match than we were," he added.

Courtesy Anderson (11-4-17-3), the match became a mismatch within an hour and India now need to win two out of the next three Tests to qualify for the World Test Champi-

onship final in June. The player of the match honours went to England skipper Joe Root for his match-defining double hundred in the first innings.

It was left-arm spinner Jack Leach (26-4-76-4), who after his first innings humiliation at the hands of Rishabh Pant, finished with the best figures but the effort paled in comparison to the effect that Anderson had on the psyche of the Indian team.

Anderson sowed doubts among rank and file of the

home line-up, whether they had the technique to play the moving ball which swings the other way round. Kohli can but can his colleagues do it will be the big question going forward.

The man from Burnley, in his 19th Test match season, showed his artistry with a semi-new ball, on a fifth day track and sapping Chennai heat, far removed conditions from the grey skies and cool breeze that Old Trafford gives him.

Anderson is a

devotee and best practitioner of Test match ethos and does n't need to take refuge in conditions because of his supreme control over his craft.

Wasim Akram made reverse swing fashionable as a pro in Lancashire and Anderson spent his teenage years watching the 'Sultan of Swing' practice his craft.

But what he did on Tuesday would have certainly made Akram proud as the Indian batting line-up, save Kohli, didn't have an idea as to how they could stop Anderson.

At 38 years 194 days and in his 158th Test match, Anderson became an example of why one should never discount experience.

Ishant Sharma, on first two days, bowled a few spells of lively reverse swing. What Ishant did well, Anderson just did that better way.

Gill (50, 83 balls) once again looked dazzling till the time he was at the crease. The sinewy wrists were in play as he hit seven fours and six, dealing with spinners comfortably.

Even Cheteshwar Pujara's (15 off 38 balls) dismissal off Jack Leach's "peach" didn't unfaze the young man from Punjab as he along with Kohli calmly went about their business.

It was the 27th over when

Anderson first came into the attack and the second ball was a perfect reverse inswinger which had Gill in a daze as the off-stump went for a walk.

The way the shiny part on the inside tail in was a sight to behold.

Rahane (0), for all the appreciation coming his way, was in very poor form for the better part of the Australia series, save a hundred at MCG where he was dropped thrice.

The first ball he faced on Tuesday was another one that came back a shade and it was hitting the middle of the middle stump with the Umpires' Call saving the vice-captain of what looked like a plumb leg before.

The wily Anderson realised that an out-of-form Rahane's feet are not moving. The next time he just went a shade wide off the crease and

delivered another reverse inswinger. Rahane knew that there was no comeback.

Pant (11) has had three great knocks but he was facing a bowler with supreme game awareness and immaculate understanding of conditions.

Against a left-hander, he predictably came round the wicket and angled a few in with a busy Pant hitting a boundary.

By then, Anderson had gauged that Pant could be hurried on the drive.

So the master changed his tactic and bowled a slower one enticing Pant to go for a drive.

Pant tried his best to check it but the bowler had asked his skipper Joe Root to specifically stand at short cover for that particular shot.

From 92 for 2, it was 110 for five and Kohli cut a lonely figure at the other end.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND 1ST INNINGS 578				
INDIA 1ST INNINGS 337				
ENGLAND 2ND INNINGS 178				
INDIA 2ND INNINGS (TARGET: 420)				
R Sharma c Buttler b Leach 12				
S Gill b Anderson 50				
C Pujara c Stokes b Leach 15				
Virat Kohli b Stokes 72				
A Rahane b Anderson 0				
R Pant c Root b Anderson 11				
W Sundar c Buttler b Bass 0				
R Ashwin c Buttler b Leach 9				
S Nadeem c Burns b Leach 0				
I Sharma not out 5				
J Bumrah c Buttler b Archer 4				
Extras: (b 8, lb 5, nb 1) 14				
TOTAL: (58.1 Ov, RR: 3.30) 192				
BOWLING: J Archer 9.4, 42, 31				
J Leach 26.4, 76, 4 J Anderson 11.4, 17.3 D Bass 8.0, 50.1				
B Stokes 4, 1, 13, 1				

If rules change during lockdown, nothing is in your control: Kohli on India's slump in WTC table

AGENCIES
CHENNAI/DUBAI, 9 FEBRUARY



"If rules suddenly change during lockdown, nothing is in your control," an irate Virat Kohli said on Tuesday, taking a dig at the ICC after India slumped to fourth place in the World Test Championship table.

While India slipped after their 227-run defeat to England in the opening Test in Chennai, the visitors kept alive their hopes of making the final of the inaugural event.

The ICC Cricket Committee, led by former India captain Anil Kumble, decided during the coronavirus-forced lockdown last year that the WTC league standings would be determined by the percentage of points (PCT) earned by each team.

"Nothing changes for us. If suddenly the rules can change when you are in lockdown, nothing is in your control at all. The only thing that you are in control is what you do on the field," Kohli said when asked about India's slide in the points tally. "We are not bothered about the table or things that are going on in the outside. For some things, there's no logic," he said, his anger at the sudden change of rule palpable.

PCT is the percentage of points won out of the total number of points contested by each team.

As of now, India have the second highest points (430) in the table after England (442) but in terms of PCT, they (68.3) are fourth after England (70.2), New Zealand (70, already qualified) and Australia (69.2).

So does it change his team's approach with need to win at least two Test matches and draw the other after losing the series opener? Kohli said that a team cannot play Test cricket looking at some points

table.

"Before this Test match, we were not even thinking of England's chances and now suddenly we are talking about they are on top of the table.

"These things keep on changing, all the time. You play don't play for these things. Our focus is to do hard work and go through the hard grind and we are prepared to do that," the skipper said.

England have improved their chances of securing one of the three series results -- 3-1, 3-0 or 4-0 win -- and that could see them through to the final.

India grabbed the top spot after their incredible series

win Australia last month but now will have to win by a minimum 2-1 margin, if not 3-1, to qualify for the final against New Zealand at the Lord's from June 18. Australia will get to feature in a Trans-Tasman summit clash if the India-England series is drawn or if England win 1-0, 2-1 or 2-0, the ICC said in the release issued shortly after England's victory.

Pakistan's 2-0 home win over South Africa saw them finish the series in fifth position with 43.3 percentage points, while South Africa slipped to sixth position with 30.0 percentage points.

Kohli said that a team cannot play Test cricket looking at some points

We have set a benchmark now: Root after victory

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 9 FEBRUARY

have set a benchmark now, we've got something to work for to compare ourselves. Still there are areas we can improve on. We can still get better," Root said at the post-match press conference.

"We know that India are an extremely good team, especially in these conditions. And they're a very proud nation as well. They've got some exceptional players so they'll come back hard."

England inflicted on India a humiliating 227-run defeat to go 1-0 up in the four Test series but the visiting skipper has no doubt that the home team has the kind of players who can exact revenge.

"I'm very proud of the way we've played this week. We

had a similar kind of wicket, wasn't the same by any stretch, but the tempo of the cricket that you play in the sub-continent I think served us really well coming into this game."

"The pleasing thing for me was to set a big first-innings run, and we delivered it. We said we needed to be smart about how we're going to take 20 wickets, and we delivered it."

Root said the challenge before them now is to repeat the magnificent performance.

"Can we replicate that, can we go one better, can we keep looking to improve as a team and can we take it on individually that makes a difference?"

About not declaring and not accelerating the scoring during the second innings on day four which drew criticism from some quarters, Root said the idea was not to give the home team any chance of winning the game.

"I wanted to make sure that more than anything there were only two possible results. It would have been damaging had we lost this game."

"I knew that the way that it deteriorated the last three days in particular that coming into today it was gonna happen even quicker again. All we needed to do, is be relentless with the areas we were bowling."

Kobe Bryant crash pilot disoriented in clouds

LOS ANGELES, 9 FEBRUARY

Safety investigators say the pilot of Kobe Bryant's helicopter flew through the clouds in an apparent violation of federal standards, and likely became disoriented.

Robert Sumwalt, chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board, said Tuesday that pilot Ara Zobayan was flying under visual flight rules, which means he needed to be able to see where he was going.

In the year since the helicopter carrying Kobe Bryant crashed into a hillside on a foggy morning, killing all nine aboard, there has been

plenty of finger-pointing over the cause or causes of the tragedy.

Bryant's widow blamed the pilot. She and relatives of the other victims also faulted the companies that owned and operated the helicopter.

The brother of the pilot didn't blame Bryant but said he knew about the risks of flying. The helicopter companies said foggy weather before the helicopter hit the ground was an act of God and blamed air traffic controllers.

After her 44-minute opener on Rod Laver Arena, Barty said she'd missed tennis "every single day" during her time away from the sport.

"The competitor in me missed what this is all about," she said.

"Coming out here and really enjoying the thrill of the fight."

Garbie Muguruma, the Australian Open runner-up last year, defeated Marcela Gasparyan 6-4, 6-0.

Players who were forced into hard lockdown after landing in Australia last month have struggled in the opening round.

Victoria Azarenka, a two-time Australian Open champion and the runner-up at last year's US Open, appeared to have trouble breathing and received medical attention in the second set of a 7-5, 6-4 loss to Jessica Pegula of the United States.

Azarenka noted how difficult it was to prepare for a major tournament after being one of 72 players who were in a hard quarantine for two weeks not allowed to leave their hotel rooms for any reason after potentially being exposed to COVID-19 on her flight to Australia.

After her 44-minute opener on Rod Laver Arena, Barty said she'd missed tennis "every single day" during her time away from the sport.

ATK Mohun Bagan leave Bengaluru with no reply

GOA, 9 FEBRUARY

ATK Mohun Bagan sent out a statement of intent across the Hero Indian Super League, going a point within current league leaders Mumbai City FC with a solid 2-0 victory over a hapless Bengaluru FC at the JLN Nehru Stadium in Fatorda on Tuesday.

In a first for Bagan this season, two first-half goals signalled the downfall for a beleaguered Bengaluru FC who were punished for their defensive mistakes, gifting two mouth-watering setpieces for the Kolkata side to convert with glee. Roy Krishna (37' Pen.) beat Gurpreet Singh Sandhu from the spot before Marcelinho (44') put the game to rest with a free-kick of the highest order.