



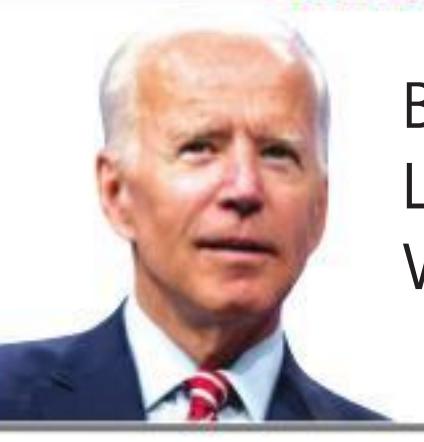
PAKISTAN RELENTS

P6



SUU KYI'S PARTY
URGES PEOPLE TO
OPPOSE 'COUP'

P9



BIDEN INVITES GOP
LAWMAKERS TO
VIRUS RELIEF TALKS

P10

P12

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



MESSI SHOWS
HIS WORTH

BUDGET 2021 PROPOSES AN EXPENDITURE OF ₹34.83 LAKH CRORE, TO BE FINANCED THROUGH BORROWINGS FROM MARKET & DISINVESTMENT

BUDGET '21: THRUST ON HEALTH, FARMERS

SIX PILLARS OF THE BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2021-22

DEEPAK RAZDAN
NEW DELHI, 1 FEBRUARY

The Union Budget for 2021-22, presented to Lok Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today, seeks to give the Covid-19 beaten economy a big push, proposing an expenditure of Rs 34.83 lakh crore, to be financed heavily through borrowings from the market and disinvestment.

The expenditure for the coming year includes Rs 5.54 lakh crore capital expenditure, signifying an increase of 34.5 per cent over the budget estimate (BE) figure of 2020-21.

As a result of the large Government expenditure, the fiscal deficit in the coming financial year is likely to be 6.8 per cent of GDP. The gross borrowing from the market for the next year would be around Rs 12 lakh crores, the Finance Minister said.

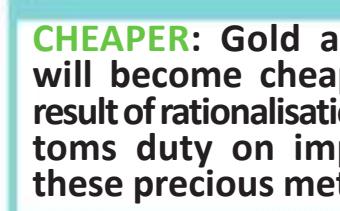
The fiscal deficit for the financial year now concluding (2020-21) was pegged at 9.5 per cent of GDP, the Finance Minister said. "We would need another Rs 80,000 crores for which we would be approaching the markets in these two months," she said. "We plan to continue with our path of fiscal consolidation, and intend to reach a fiscal deficit level below 4.5 per cent of GDP by 2025-2026 with a fairly steady decline over the period," the Finance Minister said.

The pandemic forced the Government to announce several packages, as a result of which the original budget estimated (BE) expenditure of Rs 30.42 lakh crores for 2020-21, shot up to Rs 34.50 lakh crore in the revised estimate (RE) of the expenditure for the year. Assuring the House that the additional money was well-spent, Sitharaman said "We have main-

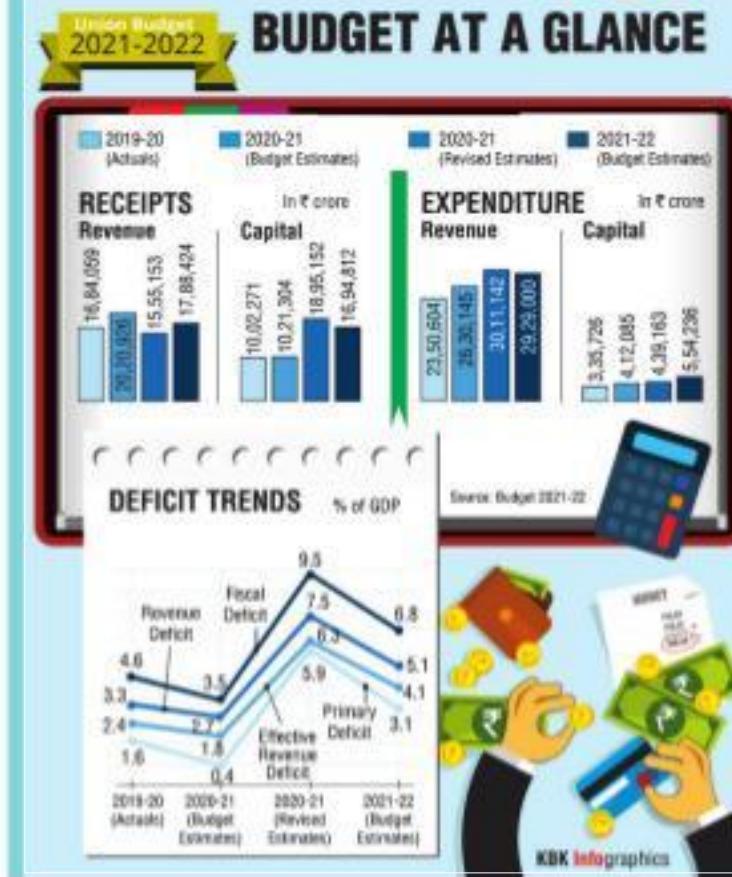
BOLD AND ATMANIRBHAR: BUDGET '21 AIDS TO RESET COVID-BATTERED ECONOMY



DEARER: A large number of commonly used items, including refrigerators, air conditioners, LED lights and mobile phones, raw silk and cotton, solar invertors and lanterns, automobile parts will become more expensive due to hike in customs duty on imported parts.



CHEAPER: Gold and silver will become cheaper as a result of rationalisation in customs duty on imports of these precious metals.



tained the quality of expenditure." The capital expenditure, estimated in RE at Rs 4.39 lakh crores during the financial year, now concluding, as against Rs 4.12 lakh crores in the budget estimates.

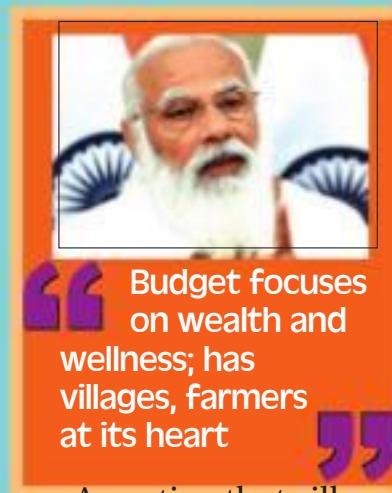
"We know that the FRBM Act mandates fiscal deficit of 3 per cent of GDP to be achieved by 31 March 2020-21," she said, and presented a statement explaining the deviation.

For migrant workers, she said the One Nation One Ration Card scheme was launched through which beneficiaries can claim their rations anywhere in the country.

The Budget proposals for 2021-22, she said, rest on six pillars—Health and Well-being, Physical & Financial



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman holds a folder case containing the Union Budget 2021-22, at Finance Ministry at North Block in the Capital on Monday. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA



Budget focuses on wealth and wellness; has villages, farmers at its heart

Asserting that villages and farmers are at the heart of the Union Budget, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said it has put a lot of emphasis on strengthening the farming sector and increasing farmers' income while making an allocation to further empower agriculture mandis.

Modi said it has many provisions for the agriculture sector, including for making loans easier for farmers.

Lauding the budget, Modi said one hardly comes across a budget that elicits so much positive response, and noted that this was tabled under extraordinary circumstances when many experts were of the view that the government will put more burden on the common man.

citizens who only have pension and interest income, I propose exemption from filing their income tax returns. The paying bank will deduct the necessary tax on their income," she said.

At present, an IT assessment can be re-opened up to six years and in serious tax fraud cases for up to 10 years. The Minister said the time-limit for re-opening of assessment will be reduced to three years from the present six years.

In serious tax evasion cases too, only where there is evidence of concealment of income of Rs 50 lakh or more in a year, can the assessment be re-opened up to 10 years. Even this reopening can be done only after the approval of the Principal Chief Commissioner, the highest level of the Income Tax Department.

"We shall establish a National Faceless Income Tax Appellate Tribunal Centre," she said.

In the housing sector, the additional deduction of interest amounting to Rs 1.5 lakh, for loan taken to purchase an affordable house was being extended by one more year. Further, to keep up the supply of affordable houses, the affordable housing projects can avail a tax holiday for one more year ~ till 31 March, 2022.

The capital gains exemption for investment in start-ups is extended by one more year till 31 March, 2022.

Measures to make the GST administration work better yielded results and there were record collections in the last few months, the Budget said.

For depositors, the Deposit Insurance cover was raised from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh last year. This will be amended to allow depositors to access their accounts to the extent of the insurance, if the bank has any temporary difficulty.

WINNERS & LOSERS

HEALTH: The Budget has provided substantial increase in investment in Health Infrastructure and the Budget outlay for Health and Wellbeing is Rs 2,23,846 crore in BE (budget estimate) 2021-22 as against this year's BE of Rs 94,452 crore, an increase of 137 percent. The Finance Minister said "I have provided Rs 35,000 crores for Covid-19 vaccine in BE 2021-22. I am committed to provide further funds if required."

INFRASTRUCTURE: Monetizing operating public infrastructure assets is a very important financing option for new infrastructure construction, the FM said. Indian Railways have prepared a National Rail Plan for India ~ 2030. The Plan is to create a 'future ready' Railway system by 2030.

DIVESTMENT: "In spite of Covid-19, we have kept working towards strategic disinvestment," the FM said. A number of transactions like BPCL, Air India, Shipping Corporation of India, Container Corporation of India, IDBI Bank, BEML, Pawan Hans, Neelachal Spat Nigam limited would be completed in 2021-22.

FOR TAXPAYERS: No IT filing for senior citizens above 75 years who get pension and earn interest from deposits. No change in income tax slabs

FOR INVESTORS: Proposal to increase foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the insurance sector to 74 per cent, a move aimed at attracting greater overseas capital inflows to help enhance insurance penetration in the country.

FOR CONSUMERS: In a relief for electricity consumers, the FM announced that the government will soon provide a framework to allow the consumers to choose between different service providers. The imposition of Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess of Rs 2.5 per litre on petrol and Rs 4 per litre on diesel will not result in any additional burden on consumers

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Shallow fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 26 and 04 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 35%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 26.4°C (+4) Min: 05.3°C (-3)
SUN RISES 07:08 hrs SUN SETS 18:01 hrs

MOON RISES 22:47 hrs MOON SETS 10:51 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Farmers sit on a protest against the new farm laws at the Ghazipur border. In the Capital on Monday. ■ SNS

VIJAY THAKUR

NEW DELHI, 1 FEBRUARY

Announcing a series of benefits to the Agriculture sector, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that the Union Government was committed to the welfare of farmers.

a query during her post Budget briefing.

Announcing a series of benefits to the Agriculture sector, she said Union Government was committed to the welfare of farmers.

"The MSP Regime has undergone a change to assure price that is at least 1.5 times the cost of production across all commodities," she said in her Budget speech.

Amidst the ongoing military tension with China in eastern Ladakh, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman today announced an increase of nearly 7.34 per cent in the Defence Budget which will enable the armed forces to undertake critical purchases to meet any threat on the country's borders.

The total outlay for Defence has been increased to Rs 4,78,195 crore from

She claimed that procurement of wheat and paddy has increased manifold during the past six years and more than 43.36 lakh farmers were benefited from these schemes.

Ignoring the disruption made by the opposition benches, the Finance Minister said, "The procurement has continued to increase at a steady pace. This has resulted in an increase in payment to farmers substantially," she said.

Giving details of the procurement, the Minister said the total amount paid to farmers in 2013-14 was Rs 33,874 crore for wheat procurement which has increased to Rs 62,802 crore in 2019-20. This year it was over Rs 75,000 crore, she added.

Rs 4,71,378 crore last year. Excluding the pension outgo, the allocation in the Union Budget for the armed forces stands at Rs 3.62 lakh crore.

The outlay for weapons and modernisation has been increased from Rs 1,13,734 lakh crore last year to Rs 1,35,060 crore, registering a rise of 18 per cent.

This will help the armed forces to go in for key purchases, including assault rifles, missiles and land systems, which have been

pending for years.

However, the Budget allocation is still not up to the expectations of the armed forces which were hopeful of a significant increase in the outlay in view of the prolonged military stand-off with China and the continued tension at the Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan.

But Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was quick to hail the Defence Budget proposals of the finance minister. "I thank PM and FM for increasing the

number of wheat growing farmers that were benefited has been increased to 43.36 lakh as compared to 35.57 lakh in 2019-20.

Similarly, for paddy the amount paid in 2013-14 was Rs 63,928 crore, which has been increased to 1,41,930 crore. And this year this is further estimated to increase to Rs 1,72,752 crore, the Minister said.

She also proposed nine measures for Agriculture and Allied Sectors, as part of inclusive development including 33% increase in Rural Infrastructure Development fund - from existing Rs 30,000 crore to Rs 40,000 crore, and doubling Micro Irrigation fund from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 10,000 crore.

defence budget to 4.78 lakh cr for FY21-22 which includes capital expenditure worth Rs 1.35 lakh crore.

It is nearly 19 per cent increase in Defence capital expenditure. This is highest ever increase in capital outlay for defence in 15 years," he tweeted.

The minister said he was happy the Budget proposed opening of 100 new Sainik Schools in the country.

The allocation on pensions for defence person-

nel is Rs 1.15 lakh crore as against the revised allocation of Rs 1.25 lakh crore last year.

It is less than even the revised budget allocation made last year.

Apart from that, the allocation for civil works under the Ministry of Defence is Rs 15,257 crore as against the revised allocation of Rs 15,914.06 crore in last year's Budget.

The civil allocation includes allocation for construction of roads, bridges, government-in-aid

to state governments and housing in Northeast regions and border areas.

The Defence Ministry has carried out extensive construction work on the borders after the border tension with China erupted in April last year. The estimated budget for the civil works was Rs 14,500 crore and in revised estimates it increased to Rs 15,914.06 crore.

The government spent Rs 1,414.06 crore extra in building infrastructure across the border.

Govt allots ₹35,000 cr to distribute Covid vaccine

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 FEBRUARY

crore in budget estimate 2021-22 as against this year's budget estimate of Rs 94,452 crore.

In the Union budget, Rs 71,268.77 crore has been allocated to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, as against Rs 65,011.8 crore allocated in 2020-21. However, later the budget was revised and increased to 78,866 crore because of Covid-19.

Delhi logs 121 cases, 3 deaths: Delhi today logged 121 fresh coronavirus infections (Covid-19) and 3 Covid-linked fatalities—the lowest in 10 months—even as its positivity rate stood at 0.28 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

(SEE P.2)

FACT FILE
TOTAL CASES
1,07,57,610
ACTIVE CASES
1,68,235
NEW CASES
11,427
NEW RECOVERIES
11,858
TOTAL DEATHS
1,54,392
UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.
MONDAY 01 FEBRUARY 2021

I would not have given them the ticket to fight the elections. Why should I give tickets to those who have done bad work! People will be happy if I give tickets to new people instead of to these people

MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

AAP govt slams Union Budget for giving 'raw deal' to Delhi

Kejriwal charges that some big companies are its only beneficiaries; Sisodia says the Budget 'bypasses' education, health sectors and has continued to give Delhi a grant of a measly ₹325 crore

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 1 FEBRUARY

The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government today accused the BJP-led Centre of meting out "step motherly treatment" to Delhi in the Union Budget 2021-22, charging that it was aimed at benefiting a few big companies.

"This Budget is aimed at benefiting few big companies. It will increase inflation and problems for the public," Delhi chief minister Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia alleged that Delhi continues to get "stepmotherly



treatment" from the central government.

"Union Budget is a vision document of any government and spells out its economic agenda for the next financial year. This year there was great anticipation around the Union Budget and people of Delhi had high hopes from the central gov-

ernment that justice would finally be done to them, particularly amid the Covid-19 pandemic which has devastated lives of many people," he said.

"Delhi continues to get stepmotherly treatment from the Government of India. The grant in lieu of share in central taxes provided in the Union Budget

2021-22 has been kept unchanged for two decades at Rs 325 crore. The total grants, loans and transfers from Government of India to Delhi has been reduced from Rs 1,116 crore to Rs 957 crore," Sisodia, who is also Delhi finance Minister, said.

He said Delhi has got only Rs 325 crore in the Budget even as Delhi's net pay Rs 1.5 lakh crore to the Centre in taxes.

"The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, which is constitutionally on similar footing with the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi, has been provided a grant of Rs 30,757 crore as against Rs 957 crore to Delhi. There are three Union ter-

ritories with legislature in India. Delhi gets the least amount of grant in absolute terms and ridiculously low amount in terms of per capita grant from the Government of India," he added.

Slamming the Union Bud-

get, presented in Parliament by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman today, Sisodia also charged that the Budget bypassed the education and health sectors and "spelled doom" for the poor, middle class and farmers. "While the Budget has made a beeline to sell all national assets one after the other, there is no plan for increasing expenditure on welfare schemes that directly tar-

geted the poor or increasing allo-

cation towards health and education sectors that will form the foundation for true self-reliance or 'Atmanirbhar Bharat,'" he said.

"One thing that was obvious

during the pandemic was the crumbling public healthcare system of the country. One

would have expected the govern-

ment to substantially increase the healthcare allocation. Instead,

the Union Budget has shockingly reduced the healthcare budget of India by 10 per cent – show-

ing that not a single lesson has

been learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic," he claimed.

Sisodia said, "The finance minister's announcement of

get by 6 per cent (Rs 6000 cr) – from Rs 99,312 cr in BE 2020-21 to Rs 93,224 cr in BE 2021-22."

Sisodia also said, "While the National Education Policy or NEP-2020 promises an allocation of 6 per cent of the GDP to education, the Union Budget has allocated only 0.6 per cent of the GDP to education. This shows the government's real commitment to education. History tells us that but if a family or a country, only those who invest in the education of their children become 'Atmanirbhar'. Reducing spending on education by Rs 6000 cr shows that the call for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' was a mere joke."

Delhi records three fresh Covid deaths, lowest in ten months

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 1 FEBRUARY

Delhi today logged 121 fresh coronavirus infections (Covid-19) and 3 Covid-linked fatalities — the lowest in 10

months — even as its positivity rate stood at 0.28 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

These fresh Covid cases were detected out of 43,712

tests. The national capital's coronavirus caseload climbed to 63,521, the health bulletin said.

The Covid patients who recovered during the past 24 hours numbered 214, with

the cumulative tally of such recoveries in the city going up to 6,23,096, the bulletin stated.

Delhi recorded 3 fresh Covid deaths, which took its toll to 10,856.

The number of active cases in the city dipped to 1,265 from yesterday's 1,361 and 504 patients were getting treatment under home isolation. The number of containment zones was 1,068.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain tweeted, "In last 10 months lowest 3 deaths, lowest 32 hospital admissions including 4 persons of outside Delhi."

Corona severity is going

down still we should be careful. Wear Mask and follow social distancing to keep yourself and your family safe."

Meanwhile, a total of 7,893 people — around 75 per cent

of the targeted beneficiaries today — were reportedly administered the Covid vaccine. Fifteen cases of adverse event following immunisation (AEFI) were reported during the day.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT

(Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Ms. Manjusha Wadhwa

Addl. District Judge-02

District Shaheed,

Room No. 101

Karkardooma Courts, New Delhi

Suit No. 471/2017

Anuj Kumar Singhal Versus Rohit & Anr.

To, Sh. Aurangzeb Khan, s/o Late Shri Mehmood Khan, r/o 9/349, Jharkhandi Road, Bholanagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110032.

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 3rd day of August, 2021, 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 14th day of December, 2020.

Addl. District Judge-02

District Shaheed,

Karkardooma 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 Sh. Sanjeev Jain

Disrict Judge

(Commercial Court)-01

Room No. 04 Main Building

Patiala House Courts New Delhi,

Case No. CS (Comm):

130/2019

State Bank of India Versus Mr. Shri Krishan

To, Mr. Shri Krishan, s/o Sh. Chetan Lal r/o CN-143, Village-Uttar, Delhi Cantt. New Delhi-110001.

Whereas abovenamed Plaintiff has instituted a suit against you. You are hereby summoned to appear before this court in person or by pleader on 05-02-2021 at 10:00 a.m. to answer the same.

Take notice that, in default of your appearance on that day before mentioned, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 19th day of January, 2020.

By Order of this Tribunal

For Registrar

IN THE COURT OF MR. SHRIHARSH AGGARWAL

Administrative Civil Judge

Debt Recovery Tribunal-I

4th Floor, Jeevan Tara

Building, Parliament Street,

New Delhi-110001

OA No. 684/2019

ICICI Bank Limited Versus Sanjeev Kumar.

— Respondent To,

1. Sanjeev Kumar, s/o Sh. Ram Lal H. No. 252, Sector-14, Escorts Nagar, Dev School Faridabad-121007.

Whereas the abovenamed applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 19,442,67/- (Rupees Nineteen Lacs Ninety Two Thousand Two Hundred Forty For and Paise Forty Four only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to appear before the Court on 04-02-2021 at 10:30 a.m. (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.tribunal.gov.in Phone Number : 011-23748473).

Take notice that, in case of your failure to appear on the above-mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 29th day of January, 2021.

By Order of this Tribunal

For Registrar

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI

Notice Under the Rule Relating to

20 Code of Civil Procedure

Case No. 4219/2020

Appeal against the order dated 12-07-2018

Passed by Mrs. Twinkle Wadhwa L.D. Additional District Judge-03

Patiala House Court, New Delhi District

In Civil Suit No. 57629/2016

For Plaintiff

FOR SUCCION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

To,

1. Rajender Nath Gupta

Versus

The State & Ors

IN THE COURT OF MR. SH. SUNIL RANA

Addl. District Judge-05

(Central)

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

Case No. 2021

SC-22/2021

Additional District Judge

Shahdara District, Delhi

Seal of the Court

COURT NOTICE

(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)

IN THE COURT OF MS. KOPAL

Civil Judge

(Junior Division), Gurugram

CNR No. HRGR02-000344-2021

Next Date: 23-02-2021

Divya Dhand Versus General Public.

Publication issued to:

General Public.

Defendants

3. Sameer, s/o Rahul, r/o House No. 28, Javed Colony, Sohna, District Gurugram,

4. Smt. Ayesha Chaudhary Gandhi, w/o Parkash Gandhi, r/o 138, Block G.H.-8, Paschim Vihar, Sector 10, West Delhi-110087.

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 23-02-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourtdelh.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&dis=dist=gurugram.

Dated, this day of 29-01-2021.

Civil Judge

(Junior Division), Gurugram

seal of the court

COURT NOTICE

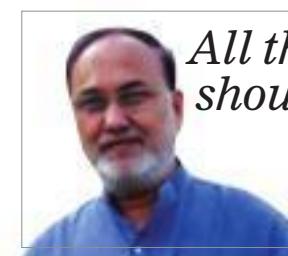
(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)

IN THE COURT OF SH. ALOK ANAND

Civil Judge

(Junior Division), Sohna

CNR No. HRGR00-000296-202



All the secular and democratic forces should join hands to fight against the BJP.

RJD'S PRINCIPAL GENERAL SECRETARY ABDUL BARI SIDDIQUE

AFTER A MEETING WITH TMC LEADER ABHISHEK BANERJEE

Capt announces helpline no. to trace 'missing' Pb farmers

Punjab CM's move comes a day after Samyukta Kisan Morcha stated that over 100 persons have been missing since farmers' tractor rally and ensuing violence in Delhi on Republic Day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 1 FEBRUARY

Amid growing concerns over more than 100 farmers from Punjab reportedly "missing" in the Delhi-Haryana region since the agitating farmers' Republic Day Tractor Rally, Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh today announced a helpline number "112" for people to report all such cases.

Assuring all possible help by his government to trace these missing persons, the CM said his cabinet colleagues had met Union home minister Amit Shah on the issue and he would personally take up the cases of such missing persons with the Union ministry



of home affairs.

"Our hearts are with those fighting for their rights at the Delhi borders," Capt Amarinder said, appealing to the people of Punjab to imme-

diately dial 112 to report any case of a person missing during the Tractor Rally, even if no cases had been filed with respect to such persons so far.

"We will do everything

possible to locate those who are missing. We are trying to get details and will ensure that they return to their homes," said the CM during a virtual event, attended by sarpanches of various villages, who expressed concern over the issue.

Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar urged the CM to help out the farmers facing legal cases in the national capital, in response to which the latter said he had already directed Advocate General Atul Nanda to arrange for legal aid for them.

Nanda later disclosed that he had arranged for as many as 70 lawyers to extend all help to the farmers against whom cases had been filed by Delhi Police in the wake of the

Republic Day violence in the national capital.

It is learnt that Delhi Police has arrested around 89 persons, hailing from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab, and registered 38 FIRs in connection with the 26 January violence in Delhi.

The Punjab CM's directives and appeal followed a statement issued yesterday by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) — the umbrella body of many farmer organisations protesting against the Narendra Modi-led Centre's controversial farm laws for months — claiming that more than 100 persons have been missing since the agitating farmers' tractor rally and ensuing violence in Delhi on the Republic Day.

'Union Budget apathetic to common people, middle class, farmers'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 1 FEBRUARY

Rejecting the Union Budget for 2021-22 as reflective of the BJP-led Central government's "total apathy" towards the common man, the middle class and the farmers, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Monday said even the vital sector of defence had not been adequately addressed despite the growing border threat from China and Pakistan, while health allocation was actually down amid the Covid crisis.

Trashing the Centre's claim that the health sector allotment had been increased by 35 per cent, the CM said the fact was that numbers had been effective-

ly fudged to project a hike by including the Rs 35000 Crore Covid vaccine allotment and the amount set aside for sanitation and cleanliness under the health head. Actually, the budget for health was down 10 per cent, he added.

The CM also slammed the Centre for the stepmotherly treatment meted out to Punjab and other northern states in the budget, which was designed to cater to the poll-bound state of West Bengal, as well as south India, with a massive infrastructure development allocation for these regions. "The budget also manifests the central government's persistent efforts to sideline non-BJP states like ours, as well as its anti-federal

mindset," said Amarinder, pointing to the gap between the Fiscal Deficit targets fixed for the Union and States for short and medium term. Aimed at promoting the interests of a few corporates at the cost of the needs and aspirations of the remaining over 1.3 billion population, the budget presented in Parliament today by the Union government failed to address the growing problem of unemployment, which the Covid pandemic had exacerbated, said the CM. "And did the finance minister not find it necessary to even mention constitutional guarantee for MSP, one of the key demands of the farmers battling cold and lathis at the doorstep of New

Delhi for over two months now?" asked Amarinder, lamenting the measly two per cent hike for the agriculture sector, which had been the only well performing sector for the country amid the lockdown.

The CM also flayed the Centre's minimal focus on education, which has seen a massive setback for lakhs of children hit by the digital divide amid the pandemic. "It seems that this government has no care or concern for our soldiers fighting to protect us at the borders, or our front-line healthcare workers and also the teachers who have been pushed to the limits to ensure seamless service in the midst of Covid," he added.

With no tax relief, the beleaguered middle class has also got nothing in this budget, he pointed out, adding that as against 25 per cent for the corporate sector, the middle class will have to pay 35 per cent plus cess, along with 100 per cent indirect tax on petrol and diesel.

The CM expressed shock over the Centre's decision to go in for a virtual wholesale divestment of PSUs and government assets at a time when the economy was in the dumps. This was inexplicable, considering that the RSS had always vehemently opposed such divestment, and also given the Centre's self-proclaimed thrust on 'Atmanirbhav Bharat', he added.

Thakur said a provision of Rs 2.32 lakh crore had been made in the health sector with 137 per cent increase as compared to Rs 92,000 crore last year.

In the coming six years, Rs 64180 crore would be spent under PM Atma Nirbhav Swasthya Bharat Yojana which will strengthen the health infrastructure of the country and the state.

He expressed happiness on the 19 per cent increase in Defence budget and said that with this India would emerge as world power.

"Despite Covid pandemic the budget is a great effort, which also reflects from the sudden rise of two thousand points in Sensex immediately after the budget was announced."

Chief Minister lauded the announcement of Sitharaman for expenditure of more than Rs 5 lakh crore in capital expenditure which would be beneficial in constructing better infrastructure in the country.

He also appreciated the pro-

tunities. Special emphasis has been laid on ease of doing business in the budget," he added.

He further stated that the steps taken for economic upliftment of farmers and horticulturists in the budget is also appreciable.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi led Centre government has also taken decisions on minimum support price from time to time in favour of the farmers."

Under the minimum support price (MSP) of wheat, Rs 33,874 crore has been spent in 2013-14 and Rs 75060 crore has been spent in the year 2020-21, benefitting 43 lakh farmers.

"Despite Covid pandemic the budget is a great effort, which also reflects from the sudden rise of two thousand points in Sensex immediately after the budget was announced. This budget shows India as a modern and independent country in which everyone would be provided with opportunities of development and growth. The youth will also get employment and self employment oppor-

AAP launches membership drive in Uttarakhand



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 1 FEBRUARY

The Aam Aadmi Party has started its preparation for the Uttarakhand assembly polls by launching a massive membership drive in the hill state from Monday.

The 45-campaign aims at expanding the active party workers in every nook and corner of Uttarakhand. State assembly election is slated early next year in Uttarakhand.

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia was

especially in Dehradun on Monday to launch the campaign, 'Uttarakhand Main Bhi Kejriwal.' Manish Sisodia said, "Under the campaign 70 video-vans will travel in different parts of Uttarakhand, for the next 45 days, and during this time 6500 public meetings will be organized."

AAP claims that present-

ly there are 10,000 active members of the party in Uttarakhand and under the drive the aim is to take the tally of active members to one lakh.

Union Budget to benefit farmers, rural people: Haryana minister



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 1 FEBRUARY

Welcoming the Union Budget, Haryana agriculture minister JP Dalal on Monday said that this Budget will prove beneficial for the farmers and people residing in rural areas.

Speaking to reporters, Dalal said that Prime Minister, Narendra Modi is making efforts to fulfill his resolution of doubling income of farmers. Dalal said that while presenting the budget, Union finance and corporate affairs

minister, Nirmala Sitharaman has clearly mentioned about the Minimum Support Price (MSP). He said that now the farmers will not be misled by saying that MSP is being abolished.

The agriculture minister said it has been announced to set up about 1000 new e-Mandis (Grain Markets) in the Union Budget. Opposition parties who were portraying themselves as farmers were spreading rumours about abolishing Mandis.

He said that by comparing

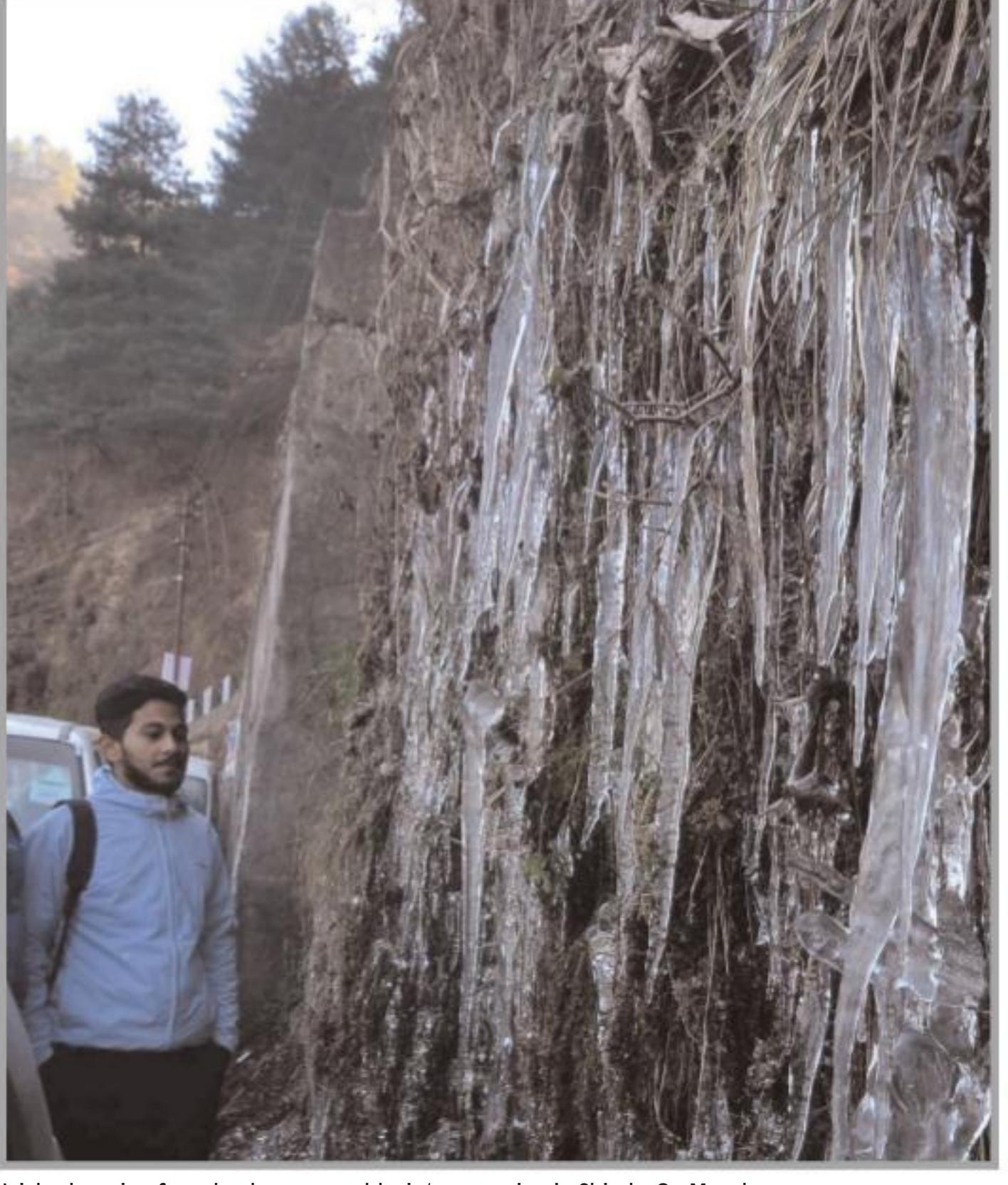
The budget's allocation for the Rural Development and Health Department proves that the Government is concerned about the development and enhancement of income of the farmers and people residing in rural areas'

and presenting the data of wheat, paddy, pulses and cotton procurement during the previous Governments, Union Finance Minister, Sitharaman has shown the right picture to the people who were spreading rumors and misleading the farmers.

Dalal said that the budget allocated for the Rural Development and Health Department in the Union Budget proves that the Government is concerned about the development and enhancement of income of the farmers and people residing in rural areas. Many schemes have been developed in the interest of farmers.

The announcement of opening around 100 new Sainik Schools will also prove beneficial for the youngsters hailing from rural areas.

ICY SCREEN



Icicles hanging from bushes on a cold winter morning in Shimla. On Monday.

LALIT KUMAR

'Budget's enhanced urban development allocation will help Himachal'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 1 FEBRUARY

Himachal Pradesh Urban Development Minister Suresh Bhardwaj on Monday hailed the Union Budget and described it as a Budget of 'Atmanirbhav Bharat' that will strengthen the economy.

The minister said that in the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi the budget presented is optimistic and pro-people, especially after COVID19 has affected the entire year.

The Modi government has stressed upon health, rural India, especially for infrastructure building.

Talking about urban

development, the minister said the union finance minister has announced the launch of Jal Jeevan Mission Urban. It will be implemented over five years with an outlay of Rs 2.87 lakh crores.

He said, "Himachal Pradesh is excelling in the field of urban development and overall enhancement in the outlay will benefit the state."

The minister added that Rs 54,581 crore has been allocated for the Department of Housing and Urban affairs, which is over Rs 4,000 crore more than that allocated in the previous budget.

"This will increase the

flow of funds to the states," he added.

Underlining the need for rebooting Swachh Bharat Mission, the minister said 4,378 urban local bodies would be benefited and liquid waste management would be carried out across 500 AMRUT cities including those of Himachal's.

Urban Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 will be launched with the budgetary allocation of Rs 1,41,687 crores, added the minister. "We in the state have launched the Ghar Ghar Sarvashan campaign focusing on waste segregation at the source. The fresh allocations will help us to achieve the targets," he added.

HP Opp criticises Union Budget for focusing only on poll-bound states

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 1 FEBRUARY

Himachal Pradesh's Opposition parties, the Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist), on Monday criticised the Union Budget 2021-22 and said the interests of the state have been ignored as it focused only on poll-bound states of the country.

HP Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore said the Union Budget presented by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had focused only on poll-bound states to gain political mileage in the upcoming assembly elections.

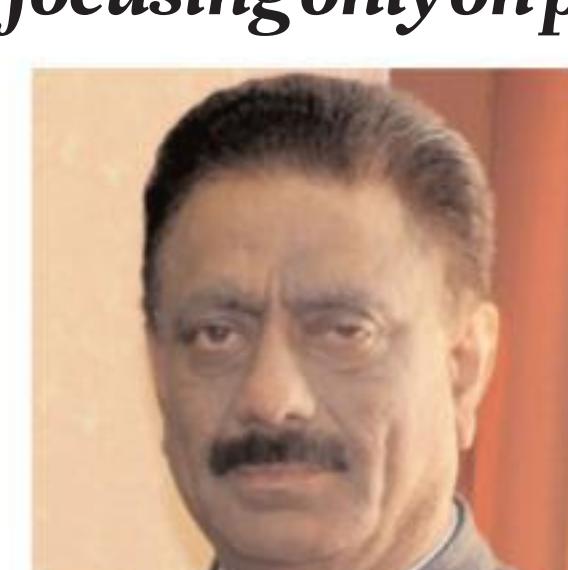
"BJP national chief J P Nadda and Union Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur belong to Himachal Pradesh but the budget doesn't have any newscheme for the state which is quite unfortunate.

In the previous budget, there was men-

tion of expansion of rail network and national highways in the state but there is no mention of any such scheme in the state.

this year's budget," he added.

Rathore added the state had been burdened with increased debt and almost all sectors as tourism and small industries had been badly affected but no financial package or relief had been affected by the Union government to the state.



Kuldeep Singh Rathore

"Union government has only come up with a web of statistics to hide its failures and the budget would only lead to price rise and unemployment in the country," he added.

CPM State Secretariat member Sanjay Chauhan said this budget was a big push to neo-liberal policies of the BJP-

led Central government.

"GDP growth is still negative 7.5 percent and there is no possibility of recovery. Due to neo-liberal economic policies being implemented by the BJP government since 2014, there has been an increase in unemployment, agricultural crisis and fall in growth rate.

In the present budget, disinvestment of PSUs like GAIL, ONGC, NHAI, railway, insurance, banking sectors means the government is trying to meet the economic crisis by selling the public sector to meet its day to day expenses," he added.

He said there was no reference of MNREGA in the budget and even the agriculture sector was totally ignored.

"Farmers are asking to make MSP legal but the government is totally ignoring it. Further, Agriculture cess on petrol and diesel will increase inflation more and put additional burden on people. This budget will make rich richer and poor poorer," he added.



Crores of poor, farmers and working people of the country are tired of attractive promises, hollow claims...

BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY SUPREMO MAYAWATI
REACTING TO THE UNION BUDGET

India

CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH,
GOVT. MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL, CHANDIGARH

E-TENDER NOTICE

The e-tender (Online Tenders) are invited for Licensing out following Chemist Shops as per detail given below:

Sr. No.	Shop No.	Location	Ernest Money	Last date & time for uploading e-tenders	Last date & time for depositing EMD in physical shape	Date and Time for opening of tenders in Procurement Department, Level-I, Block 'D' GMCH, Chandigarh
1.	Chemist Shop No.1	Block D - GMCH-32, Chandigarh	16.00.00/-	22/02/2021 upto 5.00 PM	23/02/2021 upto 12.00 Noon	23/02/2021 at 03.00 PM
2.	Chemist Shop No.4	Block D - GMCH-32, Chandigarh	16.00.00/-	22/02/2021 upto 5.00 PM	23/02/2021 upto 12.00 Noon	23/02/2021 at 03.00 PM
3.	Chemist Shop	South Campus, Sector 48, Chandigarh	5.00.00/-	23/02/2021 upto 5.00 PM	24/02/2021 upto 12.00 Noon	24/02/2021 at 03.00 PM

Note: For more details please see Tender Document which should be downloaded from the Website of GMCH <http://www.gmch.gov.in>.

Director Principal

HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
"SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER"

Sealed item rate tenders on forms 6 & 8 are invited by the Executive Engineer H.P.PWD., Baijnath for the below mentioned work from the approved and eligible contractors/Firms as per enlistment rule rule - 2015 in H.P.PWD., so as to reach in his office on or before **26.02.2021** up to 10.30 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender forms can be had from his office against cash payment (Non refundable) up to 11.30 A.M. on **25.02.2021**. The application for issue of tender forms shall be received up to 12.00 Noon on **23.02.2021**. The Contractor enlisted in appropriate class can tender for his own class as well as one step below as per rule 8.1 of enlistment contract Rule 2015. The earnest money in the shape of National Saving certificate/Time Deposit accounts/Saving Accounts in any Post Office/Bank in H.P. duly pledged in favour of the XEN H.P.PWD., Baijnath must be accompanied with the tender documents. Conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money as mentioned above will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days. The XEN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders or to drop the proposal of the tender without assigning any reasons.

Work No.1. Construction of Shilla Nallah to Karnathu Bus Stand road Km. 0/0 to 1/500 (SH: Construction of 1.00 mtr.span RCC slab culvert at RD 1/480). Estimated Cost Rs.1,19,149 /-Earnest Money Rs.2,400/- Time limit :- Three Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.2. Link road from Harizan Basti Balkhan Km. 0/0 to 1/500 (SH: P/L Cement Concrete pavement and WBM G-II (63,mm to 45mm) for profile correction at Km. 0/0 to 0/105, 0/210 to 0/370) Estimated Cost Rs.4,98,304 /-Earnest Money Rs.10,000/- Time limit :- Three Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.3. Construction of link road from Chobin to Lower Chobin in Tehsil Baijnath (SH: P/L Cement Concrete pavement and WBM G-II (63,mm to 45mm) for profile correction at Km. 0/200 to 0/210 and 0/260 to 0/350) Estimated Cost Rs.1,87,030 /-Earnest Money Rs.3,800/- Time limit :- Three Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.4. Construction of link road from Bheri to Balh via Sunka Ram House ward No.4 Km. 0/0 to 6/0 (SH: C/O R/Wall at Km. 0/023 to 0/070, 0/050 to 0/072 and P/L Cement Concrete pavement and WBM G-II for profile correction at Km. 0/048 to 0/105) Estimated Cost Rs.2,42,885 /-Earnest Money Rs.4,900/- Time limit :- Two Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.5. Special Repair to HP,PWD Rest house at Chadhar Sub-Division Baijnath (SH: Dismantling of CGI Sheet Roofing ,Doors, Windows, P/L Prepared steel sheet roofing ,P/F Door, windows, shutters, cup Board, Distempering painting and WS & SI etc.) Estimated Cost Rs.4,85,860/- Earnest Money Rs.9,800/- Time limit :- Three Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.6. Improvement and widening of Simble Mehta road Km. 0/0 to 1/660 (SH: Construction of R/Wall at Km. 0/190 to 0/200 and 0/350 to 0/360 for impovement of curves)Estimated Cost Rs.2,08,564/-Earnest Money Rs.4,200/- Time limit :- Two Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.7. Construction of Health Centre building at Dhandhol in Tehsil Baijnath (SH: C/O edge Wall , Boundary Wall Gate and callapsable shutter etc.) Estimated Cost Rs.2,64,341 /-Earnest Money Rs.5,300/- Time limit :- Two Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.8. Construction of I.T.I Building at Baijnath (Sakri) in Tehsil Baijnath (SH: C/O administrative Block and left out work for stone masonry) Estimated Cost Rs.4,72,703 /-Earnest Money Rs.9,500/- Time limit :- Three Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.9. Construction of I.T.I Building at Baijnath (Sakri) in Tehsil Baijnath (SH: C/O administrative Block and left out work for earth filling above ground level) Estimated Cost Rs.3,52,078 /-Earnest Money Rs.7,100/- Time limit :- Three Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

Work No.10. Construction of Harer to Kandral road Km. 0/0 to 4/0 (SH: C/O V-Shape drain at RD. 0/400 to 0/800, 1/200 to 1/400, 2/700 to 2/900, 3/300 to 3/700, 3/900 to 4/00) Estimated Cost Rs.2,44,638 /-Earnest Money Rs.4,900/- Time limit :- Two Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- The contractor should be registered as dealer under H.P. GST Tax Act. 2018 and also produce the Tin number, H.P. sales Tax clearance certificate from the Excise and Taxation Department.
- The Pan Number , latest Income Tax clearance certificate and EPF No(Where applicable) duly attached with the application.
- The contractor will have to produce the attested copy of his/her enlistment/renewal at the time of submitting application for issue of tender form failing which their application will not be entertained.
- In case of holiday on the day of opening of tenders, the same will be opened on the next working day on the same time and venue.
- The application form should accompany the earnest money in shape of FDR/NSC duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, PWD Baijnath otherwise no forms will be issued .
- The contractor will also have to attach the labour employer license from the labour office with the application.
- Tender not received on prescribed form and manner shall not be considered and will be liable for rejection straightway.
- The contractor shall be responsible for rectifying defects noticed within One year from the date of completion of the work and the portion of security deposit relating to as phaltic Work shall be refunded after the expiry of this period.
- The contractor shall have all required machinery such as Truck/ Tipper , Mixture, water tanker Vibrator etc or should submit the undertaking/affidavit regarding providing to him such machinery of owner's having such machinery.
- The Contractor shall not have more than Two works in hand and in this regard alongwith application shall submit an under taking viz he will get complete the works in hand before award of work with in schedule time.
- All kind of material Shall be arranged by the contractor by itself from the authorized firms/dealers as per clause No-10A.
- The material shall be procured by the contractor at his own from the nearby godowns of Civil Supply against the approved/ permit.

Executive Engineer
Baijnath Division
H.P.PWD., Baijnath

5477/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

BJP seeks West Bengal govt's nod for rath yatra: The West Bengal BJP has sought permission from the state government for its month-long 'rath yatra' across the state ahead of the assembly polls. BJP state vice-president Pratap Banerjee, in a letter to Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay, said the saffron camp, beginning February, intends to take out five rallies, as part of the 'rath yatra', crisscrossing the entire state. "West Bengal State Bharatiya Janata Party has decided to carry out a peaceful political programme throughout West Bengal in the form of 'yatra' in the months of February and March 2021. There will be five segments - covering all the assembly constituencies of West Bengal. Each yatra will include a 'rath' and will run simultaneously in different segments/territories of the state," the letter said.

SNS

TENDER

Himachal Pradesh

Jal Shakti Vibhag

CORRIGENDUM

In Partial modification of this office Press Note (Advertisement) dated 27/01/2021 & 28/01/2021 regarding filling up post of Drivers on Contract Basis under Jal Shakti Vibhag now the candidates can submit their applications on Prescribed form in the office of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Baggi as is under:

APPLICATION FORM FOR THE POST OF DRIVERS ON CONTRACT BASIS IN JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG

Last Date of receipt of applications:
The last date of receipt of application is 15/03/2021 and in case of Tribal Areas the application should reach upto 01/03/2021

- Applicant's Name (in Capital Letters)
- Father's/Husband's Name (in Capital Letters)
- Gender (Male / Female)
- Date of Birth
- Age as on 01/01/2021
- Name of the Employment Exchange with Registration No.
- Category to which belong i.e. SC/ST/BC/WS/WFF/BPL/ST (Proof of the same be attached)
- Nationality
- Religion
- Himachali Bonafide
- Mobile No.
- Aadhar No.
- Have you ever been debarred or disqualified by any Public Service Commission / Recruitment Board from any of the Examination Selection ? : _____ (Yes/No).
- Have you ever been convicted by any court for any offence? : _____ (Yes/No).
- Detail of Educational Qualification:-

Name of Examination	Roll No.	Year of passing	Name of Board/ University	Max Marks	Marks obtained	% age

16. Essential Document :-

Driving License No. : Light/Heavy Valid Up to

17. Permanent Home address (with Pin code)

18. Correspondence address (with Pin code)

Note: Attested/self attested copies of all the certificates i.e. academic qualification certificates/Driving License/ bonafide himachali certificate/SC/OCB/EWS/WFF/BPL/ST Certificates etc. must be attached by the candidate with this application.

DECLARATION

Ithe above named candidate solemnly affirm and declare that all the details given by me in the application form are true and correct and nothing has been concealed there in. If any discrepancy found in my application forms of false at any stage then I shall be liable for all the consequential actions including cancellation of my candidature.

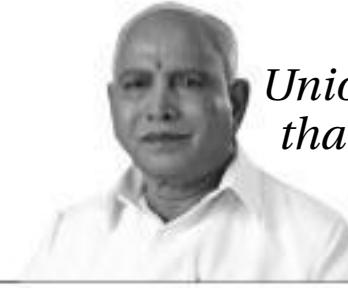
Place:- Date:- Signature of the candidate

Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti Division Baggi

H.P.PWD TENDERS

Sealed item rate tenders on form No.6&8 are invited by the Executive Engineer, Jubbal Division, HPPWD for the following works from the approved and eligible contractors enlisted in HP: PWD, so as to reach in his office on or before 16-02-2016 up to 10.30 A.M and will be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M in the presence of the intending contractor or their authorized representatives. The tender forms can be had from his office against cash payment (Non-refundable up to 4.00 PM on dated 15-02-2020). The earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Time deposit account/FDR in any of the Post office in Himachal Pradesh duly pledged in favour of the XEN must accompany with each tenders. Conditional tender or tender received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The XEN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders or to drop the proposal of the tenders without assigning any reasons. The offer of the tenders shall be kept open for 120 days. All the contractors will have to bring with them the attested copy of registration/renewal of their enlistment failing which their application shall not be entertained. The contractor must be registered under H.P. General Sales Tax Act 1968 and its proof must be submitted with application for tender, failing which tender will not be issued. If any date mentioned above happens to be a holiday, the same will be processed on the next day. The Firms/Contractors must quote the rate of each item in words as well as in figures, failing which their tenders are likely to be rejected.

Job No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Ernest Money	Cost of Tender Form
Job No 1	CIO Link Road to H.B.Bholar Km 0/0 to 0/570 under SCSP/SH-/FC 5/7 mtr wide in Km 0/90 to 0/500)	Rs.401238-	Rs.8000/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 2	Restoration of rain damages on Mandhole Manguta Road Km 0/0 to 8/645 (SH-/C/O Retaining wall at RD 5/780.50 to 5/809)	Rs.490099-	Rs.10000/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 3	Restoration of rain damages on Chamaru Jachali Road Km 0/0 to 4/0 (SH-/C/O 3.00 Mtr span RCC Slab culvert at RD 0/430) (Missing CD)	Rs.408237-	Rs.82000/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 4	Construction Link Road from Madhak Nalla to Baina via Shanshahat Km 0/0 to 2/0 (SH-/Formation Cutting 5/7 mtr wide in Km 0/900 to 1/400)	Rs.402222-	Rs.8000/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 5	C/O Mela Maidan Rampuri link Road Km 0/0 to 2/0 (SH-/C/O 5/7 mtr wide in Km 0/900 to 1/060)	Rs.440484-	Rs.8800/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 6	Construction Ambedkar Bhawan at Jubbal District Shimla H.Under Deposit (SH-/C/O Balance work)	Rs.497439/-	Rs.10000/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 7	Restoration of rain damages on Sawra Mandal Jhagtan Jharsihai Road Km 0/0 to 25/25 (SH-/C/O Retaining wall at RD 8/965 to 8/979)	Rs.182301/-	Rs.3700/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 8	C/O Link Road to Sanaba Basti from T.K.H.Road Km 0/0 to 1/500 (SH-/C/O Hume pipe culvert at RD 0/200 and Breast wall at RD 0/770 to 0/790 and Kharana Soling at various slushu reaches)	Rs.485880/-	Rs.9700/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 9	C/O Link Road Jakhiala Dogri to Madhak Km 0/0 to 1/05 (SH-/C/O Retaining wall in wire crate at RD 0/090 to 0/110 and Kharana Soling at various slushu reaches)	Rs.490200/-	Rs.9800/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 10	Restoration of rain damages on Sawra Mandal Jhagtan Jharsihai Road Km 0/0 to 25/25 (SH-/C/O Retaining wall at RD 0/23/156 to 23/171 and 23/186 to 23/189)	Rs.380255/-	Rs.7600/-	Rs.350/-
Job No 11	C/O Link Road from Gutugad to Rammagri Km 0/0 1/05 (SH-/C/O Retaining wall			



*Union Budget is a catalyst, a speed booster
that can revive sluggish economy...*

KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER B S YEDIYURAPPA
COMMENTING ON THE UNION BUDGET FOR 2021-22

THUMBNAILS



Cold and foggy weather in the Capital on Monday.
SUBRATA DUTTA

Dumping homeless people:
Taking cognisance of officials dumping homeless people outside Indore amid the biting cold, the Madhya Pradesh Human Rights Commission (MPHRC) has sought a report from the state's chief secretary and senior officers of Indore, an official said on Monday. PTI

SC accepts resignation: The Supreme Court Monday accepted the resignation of Nagaland Lokayukta Justice (retd) Uma Nath Singh, days after he said he was willing to step down as suggested by the apex court provided the state government or others are restrained from initiating any kind of action or defaming him in media based on the pending plea. PTI

Threat messages: Uttar Pradesh's BJP legislator Sadar Sarita Bhaduria has received multiple messages on WhatsApp from a Pakistani number threatening to kill her, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and senior BJP and RSS leaders, police said on Monday. PTI

Big spending on infrastructure will help economy: Sitharaman

Announces various projects that would boost infrasector like NIP to cover 7,400 projects by 2025



Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman addressing the post-Budget Press conference on Monday. SNS

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 FEBRUARY

The government has decided to spend big on infrastructure across a wide variety of sectors to give a greater impetus to the economy, said finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her post-Budget Press conference today.

The minister, who was addressing the conference along with her team, said the big spending on infrastructure would help give the much-needed demand push to the economy, which is recovering from the impact of Covid-19.

"Budget 2021 comes at a time when all of us desire to give greater impetus to the economy, we thought this impetus would be qualitatively spent well and would give the needed demand push if we spend big on infrastructure," said the finance minister.

The minister also talked about the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess (AIDC), she said, it was introduced in order to improve agricultural infrastructure.

"We have a dedicated

amount coming out of the budget rather than that going to the consolidated fund. It might still go but we know what is going to be used for agriculture infrastructure," said Sitharaman.

Sitharaman also mentioned that the government has made government accounts more transparent, and is absolutely upfront with the fiscal deficit.

"We ensured repeated review of capital expenditure and ensured that spending was encouraged and not delayed. Our fiscal deficit which started at 3.5 per cent during February 2020 has increased to 9.5 per cent of GDP so we have spent, we have spent and we have spent. At the same time,

we have given a clear glide path for deficit management. We have made brave decisions to keep government accounts open and transparent," she said. The finance minister also took a potshot on Wayanad MP, Rahul Gandhi, who alleged the central government to handover India's assets to crony capitalists earlier on the day.

Sitharaman said Rahul Gandhi "should understand that either he knows nothing about what he is talking about, or that he is ill-advised."

"Under Congress, they gave away one sea port development on an invitation to one of the crony capitalists he is talking about. Can he explain how for developing Vizhinjam port, a 'crony capitalist' per-

son, I would not call him that, he (Rahul) uses that word, the Congress party invited him during the then government in Kerala," said the minister.

On being asked on farmers protest, Sitharaman said the government is and has always been open to dialogue with farmers. The agriculture minister has been ready to have a clause-by-clause discussion with farmers on the farm laws. "Hence we believe that dialogue is the way forward," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The Minister emphasized that budget has introduced various reforms in the financial sector including IPO of LIC and increase in FDI in the insurance sector.

Cong: Union Budget let down like never before, will unravel soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 FEBRUARY

Asserting that the Union Budget was a "let down like never before", the Congress on Monday claimed that it will unravel soon, and described the imposition of cess on petrol and diesel in the budget as a "vengeful act" against the thousands of farmers who took out the tractor rally.

The opposition party said it was a case of "wrong diagnosis and prescription", and that finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman could have been "brave" by extending help to the poor, but chose to be "timid".

Congress leader P Chidambaram said Sitharaman "deceived" those who were

listening to her speech, especially the MPs, had no clue that she has imposed cesses on a large number of products including petroleum and diesel-Rs 2.50 on petrol per litre and Rs 4.00 on diesel per litre.

"It was a vengeful act against the thousands of farmers who took out the longest tractor rally in history. It was also a cruel blow to federalism because the states do not get a share of the revenue from cesses," the former finance minister said while addressing a press conference. He said this was a "cruel blow" to the average citizen, including farmers.

"She deceived the people of India, especially the poor, the working class, the

migrants, the farmers, the industrial units that had been closed down permanently, and those who had lost their jobs, both regular and informal, and are still looking for jobs," he alleged.

Finance minister Sitharaman presented the budget for 2021-22 in Lok Sabha and read out the budget speech in the Lok Sabha from a tablet on Monday instead of a conventional paper document as the first paperless budget since independence was presented by the government due to the Covid situation.

Reading out a party statement, Chidambaram said Sitharaman did not mention defence at all, "as if the Chinese had vacated occupied Indian territory".

SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run the following Additional Special Trains as per the schedule given below:-

04646/04645 JAMMU TAWI - JAISALMER - JAMMU TAWI SPECIAL EXPRES TRAIN				(4 days in a week)
Train No.: 04646	STATIONS	Train No.: 04645	ARR. DEP.	
---	JAMMU TAWI	05:40	---	
05:45	JAISALMER	---	22:45	

DAYS OF RUN: 04646 from Jammu Tawi on every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday from 08.02.2021 till further advice & 04645 from Jaisalmer on every Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday & Monday from 10.02.2021 till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Kathua, Pathankot Cantt, Mukerian, Jalandhar Cantt, Phagwara Jn, Ludhiana Jn, Khanna, Sirhind Jn, Rajpura Jn, Ambala City, Ambala Cantt, Jagadhri Workshop, Yamunanagar Jagadhari, Saharanpur, Deoband, Muzaffarnagar, Khatauli, Sakhori Tanda, Meerut Cantt, Meerut City Jn, Modinagar, Muradnagar, Naya Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, Delhi Jn., Delhi Sarah Rohilla, Delhi Cantt, Palam, Gurgaon, Garhi Harsara Jn, Pataudi Road, Khalilpur, Rewari, Bawali, Harsauli, Kharial, Alwar Jn., Malakhera, Raigarh, Bhopal, Bandikui Jn, Dausa, Bassi, Khatipura, Geot Jagatpura, Gandhinagar Jaipur, Jaipur, Phulera Jn, Nawia City, Makrana Jn, Merta Road Jn, Raika Bagh, Jodhpur Jn, Raika Bagh, Phalodi Jn, Ramdevra & Pokran Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

04662/04661 JAMMU TAWI - BARMER - JAMMU TAWI SPECIAL EXPRES TRAIN				(Tri-weekly)
Train No.: 04662	STATIONS	Train No.: 04661	ARR. DEP.	
---	JAMMU TAWI	05:40	---	
04:00	BARMER	---	23:55	

DAYS OF RUN: 04662 from Jammu Tawi on every Wednesday, Friday, & Sunday from 10.02.2021 till further advice & 04661 from Barmer on every Friday, Sunday & Tuesday from 12.02.2021 till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Kathua, Pathankot Cantt, Mukerian, Jalandhar Cantt, Phagwara Jn, Ludhiana Jn, Khanna, Sirhind Jn, Rajpura Jn, Ambala City, Ambala Cantt, Jagadhri Workshop, Yamunanagar Jagadhari, Saharanpur, Deoband, Muzaffarnagar, Khatauli, Sakhori Tanda, Meerut Cantt, Meerut City Jn, Modinagar, Muradnagar, Naya Ghaziabad, Ghaziabad, Delhi Jn., Delhi Sarah Rohilla, Delhi Cantt, Palam, Gurgaon, Garhi Harsara Jn, Pataudi Road, Khalilpur, Rewari, Bawali, Harsauli, Kharial, Alwar Jn., Malakhera, Raigarh, Bhopal, Bandikui Jn, Dausa, Bassi, Khatipura, Geot Jagatpura, Gandhinagar Jaipur, Jaipur, Phulera Jn, Makrana Jn, Merta Road Jn, Raika Bagh, Jodhpur Jn, Basni, Luni Jn, Dundara, Samdani Jn, Balotra Jn, Bayti & Utarlai Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: 1st AC, AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

03509/03510 ASANSOL MAIN - GONDA JN. - ASANSOL MAIN SPECIAL TRAIN				(Weekly)
Train No.: 03509	STATIONS	Train No.: 03510	ARR. DEP.	
---	ASANSOL MAIN	11:25	---	
13:00	GONDA JN.	---	15:00	

DAYS OF RUN: 03509 from Asansol Main on every Tuesday from 02.02.2021 till further advice & 03510 from Gonda Jn. on every Wednesday from 03.02.2021 till further advice.

STOPPAGE: Chittaranjan, Madhupur Jn, Jasidih Jn., Jhajha, Kiul Jn, Barauni Jn., Samastipur Jn., Muzaffarpur Jn, Hajipur Jn, Chharpur, Ballia, Mau Jn, Azamgarh, Shahganj Jn, Akbarpur, Goshainganj, Ayodhya & Mankapur Jn Stations.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

Note : The above Special Trains will have the reserved accommodation only.

For any other information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE DARJEELING, 1 FEBRUARY

Union finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman in her third Budget speech on Monday made some important announcements regarding the education sector and on the training and upskilling front. The Finance Minister announced a total of 93,224.31 crore for the Ministry of Education this year, in comparison to last Budget's allocation of Rs 99,311.52 crore.

The government's intent on implementation of the New Education Policy (NEP) that was introduced last year which

Record ₹1.10 lakh cr for Rlys in Budget: FM

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 FEBRUARY

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Monday a record sum of Rs 1.10 lakh crore for the Railways, out of which Rs 1.07 lakh crore is for capital expenditure, and said the national transporter would monetise the dedicated freight corridors after its commissioning.

Presenting the Union Budget 2021-22, Sitharaman also applauded the services provided by the Railways to transport essential goods across the country during the coronavirus lockdown.

"I am announcing a record sum of Rs 1,10,055 crore for railways of which Rs 1,07,100 crore is for capital expenditure only," she said.

Indian Railways have prepared a National Rail Plan for India 2030. The plan is to create a future-ready railway system by 2030 bringing down the logistic cost for industry at the core of the strategy to enable Make In India," Sitharaman said.

Based on specific information from a reliable source, joint operation was undertaken by Indian Army and J&K Police led to swift and timely recovery of a large cache of weapons and ammunition from dense forest area of Gadyog in Khawas region of Jharkhand.

As envisaged in the NEP, the '10+2' structure will be replaced with '5+3+3+4' model. It proposes a 4-year multi-disciplinary bachelor's degree in an undergraduate programme with multiple exit options. These will include professional and vocational areas.

Sitharaman announced over 15,000 schools shall be qualitatively strengthened under NEP. Presenting her third Union

She said it was expected that the eastern and western dedicated freight corridors (EDFC and WDFC) would be completed by June 2022.

The following additional initiatives are also proposed. The Sonenagar-Gomoh section of 263 km on EDFC will be taken up in PPP mode this year itself. Gomoh-Dankuni section of 274.3 km will also be taken up shortly in short succession," she said.

The finance minister said the Railways would take up the future dedicated freight corridor projects - East Coast Corridor from Kharagpur to Vijaywada, East-West Corridor from Bhusawal to Kharagpur.

She said broad gauge route electrification was expected to reach 46,000 route kilometres, which is 72 per cent by the end of 2021 from 41,548 km from October 1, 2020, adding that 100 per cent electrification of such routes would be completed by December 2023.

Stressing on the passenger convenience and safety, she said the Railways would introduce the aesthetically-designed vistadome LHB coaches on tourist routes for better travel experience to passengers.

"The safety measures taken in last few years have borne results. To further strengthen this effort high density network and highly utilised network routes will be provided with indigenously designed automatic train collision system that eliminates train collision due to human error," she said.

The finance minister said the Railways would take up the future dedicated freight corridor projects - East Coast Corridor from Kharagpur to Vijaywada, East-West Corridor from Bhusawal to Kharagpur.

Among the major announcements from the education sector in the Budget for 2021-22, she also stressed on the need to increase collaboration with foreign institutions.

On the skill development front and to enhance opportunities for youth

Sharp turn right

In his often-gripping book "A Promised Land" former President Barack Obama describes the economic challenges confronting America in his initial days in office, in the wake of the global crisis of 2008. He was presented by his advisers with three options to bail out the banking system. The first was to set up a "bad bank" that would buy up the toxic assets of all banks; the second was to nationalise significant financial institutions on the verge of bankruptcy and thus bail them out, and the third was to sift genuine insolvency from temporary illiquidity through a rigorous process of audit by the central bank to be followed by infusion of capital by the government to the required extent. While the second option is a non-starter in India because stressed banks are mostly nationalised, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman appears to have opted for a blend of the first and third options in her Budget for the current year (Mr Obama had opted for the third). Unlike in the US, India's Finance Minister does not, to the same extent, have to grapple with the optics – or the fallout – of using taxpayer funds to bail out profligate bankers and recalcitrant borrowers. Not surprisingly, therefore, this announcement had by mid-afternoon seen bank indices jump and lead the large gains recorded overall by the stock market. From an immediate perspective, therefore, announcements of an Asset Reconstruction Company and an Asset Management Company – a "bad bank" is crisper but sounds worse – is quite the most significant aspect of this year's Budget. The process, though, will require rigorous oversight by the Reserve Bank of India because banks that ran up the debts cannot, on their own, be trusted to accomplish prudent asset classification. From a longer-term perspective though, it is the government's decision to unshackle itself from the confines of the Fiscal Reforms and Budget Management Act and project a fiscal deficit this year of 9.5 per cent that will have a greater impact. While this was widely expected after the coronavirus pandemic had ravaged the economy and forced the government to look at extraordinary measures to provide stimuli, this is a gamble whose efficacy will be determined by how well the government implements its roadmap for growth in key sectors such as infrastructure and healthcare and its ambitious disinvestment programme. Certainly, these plans look promising and could even prove to be path-breaking, but as has been seen in the past, disinvestment, for instance, is easier planned than accomplished.

While the attention of the salaried citizen is, disproportionately we may say, focused on personal income-tax rates and rebates, which have been left untouched this year, the state of the economy will be determined by the Budget's ability to create more jobs, and place more disposable income in the hands of the largest numbers of people. The push to infrastructure must be viewed against this backdrop and therefore welcomed. If anything, considering the welter of data highlighting growing income disparities, it is the affluent rather than the middle-class who will be chuffed at Mrs Sitharaman not touching income tax rates. A final point. This Budget signals a sharper turn to the right than any Mrs Sitharaman – or indeed the late Arun Jaitley – have ever attempted. Little wonder the markets are so pleased.

Pakistan relents

The government of Pakistan has arguably taken a bow in the direction of the White House with the petition to the Supreme Court. After a bout of indecision, even prevarication, Islamabad has appealed against the almost incredible acquittal in the Daniel Pearl murder case. It thus comes about that the Supreme Court has been urged to review the decision to free the British-born Pakistani, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh, and his three accomplices who had been convicted for kidnapping and beheading the American journalist, Daniel Pearl. This has turned out to be an almost exceptional tussle between the executive and the judiciary, the two primary players in the power-games in Pakistan. (The military of course remains the overwhelming participant.) The petition was filed by the provincial government of Sindh on Friday, a day after the court acquitted Sheikh and others convicted for the *Wall Street Journal* reporter's murder in 2002. "The petition was filed to seek a review and request the court to recall the order of acquittal," said the Sindh governments' prosecutor-general. The American involvement ought not to be discounted, however. In the immediate aftermath of the Supreme Court's verdict, the Biden administration had made it pretty obvious that the acquittal was a "complete travesty of justice". Indeed, it had expressed its outrage. The White House press secretary, Jen Psaki, had even underlined the new US administration's commitment to secure justice for Pearl's family, which was astonished by the acquittal. "This decision to exonerate and release Sheikh and other suspects is an affront to terrorism victims everywhere, including in Pakistan," she said in a sniper attack on the judiciary to the west of the Radcliffe line. She urged the Pakistan government to "expeditiously review its legal options, including allowing the US to prosecute Sheikh for the murder of an American citizen". Washington was explicit on the point that it "stands ready to take custody of Omar Sheikl". Carried to its logical conclusion, it would have been tantamount to an international disgrace for Pakistan and a contentious issue of interference in the legal affairs of another country. Pakistan's laws do not allow another country to undertake such an intervention. And this has been America's red herring across the subcontinental trail. It shall not be easy for its government to shore up its image. Ms Psaki's remarkably forthright presentation must have caused a flutter in the Pakistani roost. Both the government and Supreme Court have now relented with their backs to the wall.

The village bank

Most development programmes are a grim reminder of how mechanically trying to meet targets can completely undermine the integrity of a veritable economic and social revolution to such an extent that a counter-revolution can be set into motion. But we refuse to learn lessons

Rural banking has come a long way from the days when bankers had their first brush with rural culture. Bankers are now financial anthropologists, and many of them are playing a missionary role in transforming rural societies. However, challenges persist. When rural banking took its baby steps, villagers were shy of loans because they always related them with moneylenders and carried bitter memories of those who had suffered at their hands. The situation today is quite the opposite. People have a savage appetite for loans, but unlike their forebears, they have lost that pristine morality which equated default of loans with the guilt of shame. Banks are piling up mountains of sour loans and governments are brushing them off with buckets of precious public money.

While the positive social and economic impacts of nationalisation were quite evident, the experiment was also an eye-opening lesson in the disaster that mindless bureaucratic programmes can become. Rural banking in India has suffered severely on account of populist measures of the State. What populist leaders wanted was that the cash spigots be turned on permanently. The most fundamental canons and nostrums of banking were thrown to the wind by vote-hungry politicians. Banks were saddled with mountains of sour loans whose stink leached the entire rural credit system.

The assumptions and suppositions on which nationalisation of banks was premised didn't hold much water. Delivering development is essentially a government's job. Bankers were just expected to be financial midwives but were finally entrusted with the task of birthing development. Instead of writing off loans, the government should funnel that money into infrastructural development and allow banks to do their job with professionalism. The new paradigm must recognise the boundaries that separate banking and the government.

The original banking concept, based on security-oriented lending, was broadened after the nationalisation of banks to a social banking concept based on purpose-oriented credit for development. This called for a shift from urban to rural-oriented lending. Social banking was conceptualised as "better the village, better the nation." However, opening new branches in rural areas without proper planning and supervision of end use of credit or creation of basic infrastructure facilities meant that branches remained mere flag-posts. It was a make-believe revolution that was to lead to a serious financial crisis in the years to come.

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) is a grim reminder of how mechanically trying to meet targets can undermine the integrity of a social revolution to such an extent that a counter-revolution can be set into motion. Arguably, India's worst-ever development scheme, IRDP was intended to provide income-generating assets to the rural poor through the provision of cheap bank credit. Little support was provided for skill-



formation, access to inputs, markets and necessary infrastructure.

In the case of cattle loans, for example, a majority of cattle owners reported that either they had sold off the animals bought with the loan or that those animals were dead. Cattle loans were financed without adequate attention to other details involved in cattle care: fodder availability, veterinary infrastructure and marketing linkages for milk among others.

Working for the poor does not mean indiscriminately thrusting money down their throats. Unfortunately, IRDP did precisely that. The programme did not attempt to ascertain whether the loan provided would lead to the creation of a viable long-term asset. Nor did it attempt to create the necessary forward and backward linkages to supply raw material or establish marketing linkages for the produce. Little information was collected on the intended beneficiary. IRDP was principally an instrument for powerful local bosses to opportunistically distribute political largesse. The abiding legacy of the programme for India's poor has been that millions have become bank defaulters through no fault of their own.

People erroneously came to believe that the State had all the answers to their problems. Governments, international financial institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) threw vast amounts of money at credit-based solutions to rural poverty, particularly in the wake of the World Bank's 1990 initiative to put poverty reduction at the head of its development priorities. Yet, those responsible for such transfers, had – and in many cases continue to have – only the haziest grasp of the unique demands and difficulties of rural life.

An even more serious problem is the possible chilling effect of subsidies on the commercial provision of competing and offering potentially better services to the poor. Subsidising finance has severely undermined the motivation and incentive for market-driven financial firms to innovate and deliver. As in other areas of development, the use of public funds is easy to justify in the

interest of improving access and thereby promoting pro-poor growth. Such subsidies, of course, need to be evaluated against the many alternative uses of the donor or scarce public funds involved, not least of which are alternative subsidies to meet education, health and other priority needs for the poor themselves. In practice, such a cost-benefit calculation is rarely made. Indeed, the scale of subsidy is often unmeasured.

Most development programmes are a grim reminder of how mechanically trying to meet targets can completely undermine

the integrity of a veritable economic and social revolution to such an extent that a counter-revolution can be set into motion. But we refuse to learn lessons, particularly because populist politicians consider it a sure way to burnish their electoral fortunes.

All these highlight how an unenlightened politician can play havoc with the financial systems. The execution of most development programmes lacked the soul of a genuine economic revolution because it was not conceived by grassroots agents but was assembled by starry-eyed mandarins, who had picked up bits and pieces about financial inclusion from pompous new-fangled and half-baked ideas generated at seminars and conferences. Cheap loans, followed with periodical waivers and write-offs, have been the hobby horse of armchair experts and lazy policymakers.

This is however not to obscure the cutting-edge role public banks have played in financial inclusion. These banks have been the backbone of the socio-economic agenda of the government. In any rural area, the role of a public bank is not confined to banking but encompasses a more holistic developmental agenda. They are the one-stop shop for all financial needs of the local rural populace, including insurance, financial literacy, remittance amongst others.

Similarly, we have to have a rural-centric bank model. The present urban-centric model has shown that it is a recipe for disaster when used in villages. Rural

finance programmes should have substantial inputs from rural sociology as part of the training kit for managers. Rural Banking requires greater insight into rural sociology than banking practices as far as finance is concerned. A basic knowledge is adequate to handle these simple credit proposals. It is only in case of high-tech agriculture that technical skills and expertise are required.

We must never ignore the time tested values of development. Development has to value people, their agency, skills and knowledge. We must put human dignity and agency at the centre of all development work. This need is especially pronounced in villages where the poor are usually conditioned to depend on outsiders to take decisions about their lives. We must motivate them to take these decisions.

This will then enable them to value not just their own natural resources but also their own wisdom. Dignity is a basic need of any human being, rich or poor. We must weave it in the development discourse.

areas have special characteristics and local needs. We need to hire local people, need to understand local needs. The whole model has to be driven by high-grade technology and a few simple products that can be tailored to local needs. Let us hope that the wisdom gleaned from our learning is harnessed towards the right destination.

A poverty eradication programme must mop up the surplus with the elite classes. These two pre-requisites call for strong political will to implement much-needed structural reforms. Besides, the Government must aim at a strategy for development of the social sector – the key component should be population control, universal primary education, family welfare and job creation, especially in rural areas. These and other aspects of poverty alleviation have not received much importance in our planning.

During the massive banking expansion phase in the 1980s, opening a bank branch was made to look as casual as punching a flag post. It was impossible to locate a proper structure to house the bank. The existence of a toilet or a medical centre, a police post or a primary school in a village, as a precondition for a bank branch, was simply overlooked.

In several cases when the expiry of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) licence for the opening of the bank branch approached without proper premises being identified, banks were housed in temple or a local community centre, marked by a small banner and a photograph shown as evidence of the launch of the bank's operations. Rural branch expansion during that period may have accounted for substantial poverty reduction, largely through an increase in non-agricultural activities, which experienced higher returns than agriculture, and especially through an increase in unregistered or informal manufacturing activities. But there was a significant downside; commercial banks incurred large losses on account of subsidised interest rates and high loan losses – indicating potential long-term damage to the credit culture.

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A MEMBER OF THE



ASIAN VOICES

Fined for breach of Covid-19 rules

More firms have been penalised for failing to adhere to workplace safe management measures despite repeated calls to make working from home the default and to ensure safe distancing at the office. Between Sept 28 last year – when the measures were last eased – and Jan 15, there were 42 employers fined for such lapses, the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) told *The Straits Times*. The most common violations were firms getting their employees to report to the office although they could work from home, and for failing to put clear safe distancing markers in common areas at the workplace. MOM fined the 42 companies after inspecting 5,380 workplaces.

This comes after the ministry imposed 52 fines of \$1,000 each on errant employers in June last year, and ordered seven workplaces to shut for lapses. In December, it had also launched an operation targeting the transport and storage sector in anticipation of increased activities due to the festive period.

While the vast majority of firms have been compliant, MOM said it will continue to step up inspections and highlight areas employers should pay attention to. Workplace safe management measures, which include caps on the number of workers allowed back in offices, were put in place at the end of the circuit breaker period in June last year.

They were last eased on Sept 28 when more employees were allowed to return to the workplace. Last month, the Singapore National Employers Federation, the National Trades Union Congress and MOM said working from home should remain the default arrangement to minimise the risk of Covid-19 transmission in offices. The

THE STRAITS TIMES

tripartite partners had reviewed workplace restrictions after Singapore moved to phase three of its reopening in December, but decided to hold off on any further adjustments. They cited the risk of new Covid-19 strains, which could be more transmissible, as well as the recent uptick in virus cases in the community. Of the four active clusters now, three have links to the workplace.

Companies in various sectors said they have got used to working remotely, although some differed on the extent to which such arrangements should continue post-pandemic. Most suggested a hybrid model where staff can enjoy some flexibility. For Wizlearn Technologies chief executive Victor Yuk, 45, the experience of having his entire workforce quarantined last year pushed him to fully adopt remote working.

The e-learning solutions firm was at the centre of a cluster of 14 cases in February last year, and all 90 employees have been telecommuting for the past 11 months. The switch was not without challenges, with Mr Yuk losing five employees who were unable to adapt. But productivity is higher now than before the pandemic, so most of his staff will continue telecommuting in the future, he said. "There is no reason for me to expose all of them to unnecessary risk if they can continue to work and be productive," Mr Yuk added.

IN MEMORIAM

RAY NIRANJAN — (Former Deputy Secretary, Home, W.B. Govt.) 50th death anniversary. — Passed away on February 2, 1971. Remembered with love, respect and gratitude by Ray family. May his soul Rest in Peace forever.

APPOINTMENT OF JUDGES

SIR, Stunned by the fallout of news of your esteemed daily 'Collegium's recommendations : SC upset at delay by centre, as much as 189 proposals on appointment of judges have been withheld by the Union Government even after one year. It is not only a matter of grave concern but also a total dismay for failure to honour such sensitive issues. How long the Ministry of Law would further take to clear the said appointments ? A pile of cases are pending in the different High Courts for dearth of judges despite this, it is most surprising and unfortunate that the said ministry is still sitting idle over this crucial issue for long.

It is most imperative that the PMO should intervene in the matter at the earliest opportunity otherwise a serious legal tangle would surface, as the SC Collegium is headed by the Chief Justice of India and Sr. judges inspite of that the Central Government has failed to comply the directive of the apex court which tantamounts to contempt of court by the Minister-In-Charge Law, Govt. of India.

Yours, etc., Baniprasanna Datta, Kolkata, 29 January.

Central and State Governments and the Supreme Court. More than 3 crore cases are pending in the district courts. Apart from the judges, low number of workers and lack of resources should also be given priority attention.

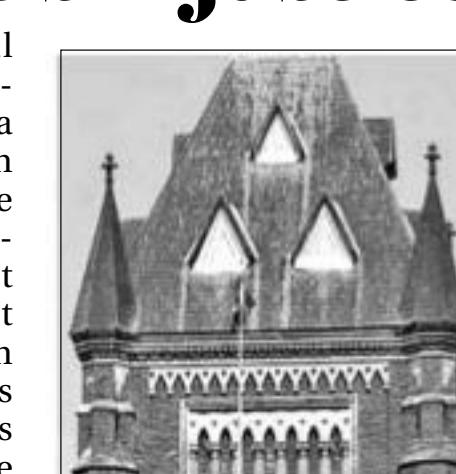
Yours, etc., Bhupendra Singh Ranga, Haryana, 29 January.

Delay in justice equals injustice

SIR, The Supreme Court has slammed the central government for delaying the appointment of judges in high courts. There should be 1,080 judges in the High Courts of the country, but 417 posts are still vacant. A bench of Supreme Court Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Sanjeev Khanna has expressed displeasure that the 103 names proposed by the High Court are under consideration with the Central Government. The court has also outlined the names sent to the government by the Supreme Court Collegium for one and a half years. The process of appointment of judges and conflict between the government and the courts has been arising. In October 2015, the Supreme Court struck down

the 2013 Constitutional Amendment as unconstitutional, which provided for a national commission in place of the collegium. The collegium of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and the four senior-most judges has also not been untouched by controversies and some appointments and transfers of judges have been questioned.

In recent years, the judiciary has repeatedly urged the government for more and quick appointment to solve the problem of pending large number of cases. As per the estimates, five crore cases are pending from district level Supreme courts. The number of cases under consideration in the High Courts is more than fifty lakhs, out of which 10 lakh cases have been pend-



ing for more than 10 years and two lakh cases have been pending for more than 20 years. About 45000 thousand cases have been waiting for decision for more than thirty years. High courts have increased to 10 lakh such cases in 2019. A source of the judicial system is also that if justice is delayed then it is not jus-

tice. Statistics indicate that the pace of the judicial system gradually slows down. The large population of our country is from the poor, deprived and low income group.

They also have to bear the biggest brunt of delays in the courts. The Supreme Court and the Central Government should try to

decide on the proposed names within the stipulated period of the appointment process. The names recommended for appointment also face uncertainty due to delay. To ensure proper number of judges in High Courts and Supreme Courts, the status of subordinate courts should also be taken into consideration by the

HARSHA KAKAR

The ninth round of Indo-China military talks have concluded with no progress. Simultaneously, reports mention Chinese attempts to ingress in Naku La, Sikkim being thwarted. In the South China Sea (SCS), incidents of Chinese aircraft breaching Taiwanese airspace are on the rise. China also threatened Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands, compelling the new US Secretary of Defence, Lloyd Austin, to reaffirm US commitment of defending them.

China, on 22 January, passed a bill giving powers to its Coast Guard to use weapons when foreign ships enter its claimed waters and refuse to adhere to commands to withdraw. This will enhance tensions between China and nations it is in dispute with over islands in the SCS. These actions indicate that Chinese aggressiveness remains unabated and it continues evaluating reactions from adversaries, seeking an opening to exploit. The US has moved the USS Theodore Roosevelt-led carrier group into the SCS to caution China.

China has, on the contrary, been claiming that it is not involved in any offensive actions. It accuses the US of being responsible for enhancing tensions by moving its naval power to support Taiwan. A US State Department communiqué stated that Washington will continue to deepen ties with Taiwan and ensure its defence from Chinese threats. In retaliation, China deployed its DF-26 missile launchers to Shandong province in the east and Korla in the Xinjiang region. The missiles can strike targets as far away as 5,000 kms and are termed 'aircraft carrier killers.'

On Indian claims of the Naku La clash, the Chinese spokesperson, Zhao Lijian, stated, "I don't have any information to offer. I would like to stress though the Chinese border troops are committed to upholding peace and tranquillity along the border with India." He added, "We urge the Indian side to work in the same direction with us and refrain from actions that might escalate or complicate the situation along the border. We hope both will take proper actions to manage the differences and take concrete actions to safeguard the peace and stability along the border."

The Naku La clash displayed that the Chinese would relentlessly pursue their actions of salami slicing, seeking areas where they could venture in. The construction of border villages by China conveys it is seeking to secure its current LAC. It also sends a message that their approach to any

actions that might escalate or complicate the situation along the border.

The ninth round of talks yielded nothing concrete. The joint statement issued post the talks was similar to

Other nations should join India in repulsing China

those issued earlier. The statement read, "The two sides had a candid, in-depth and constructive exchange of views on disengagement along the LAC in the Western Sector of China-India border areas. Both sides agreed to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries, ensure their frontline troops exercise restraint and avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation."

On the contrary, the Global Times seeks to present a picture of Chinese cooperation with India. It stated in an editorial of 26 January, "despite no significant breakthroughs, there was some positivity shown in the ninth-round meeting. Analysts said that China continues to send signs of goodwill to help cool things down." It fails to mention that it was the aggressor and hence the onus of restoring normalcy rests on it as also that India will hold its ground.

China has been impacted by the Indian government decision to honour those killed in the Galwan clash with war time gallantry awards. The Global Times stated, "India's ceaseless provocative moves would leave an impression to the world and also the Chinese people that they have no intention of resolving the border dispute and maintaining peace and stability along the border." China is aware that wartime gallantry awards imply India considered the Ladakh incursion as an act of war. Indian countermeasures will be on similar lines.

For China, Indian domination of the Kailash Ridge prevents it from taking any unilateral action. They are aware that retaliation from these locations would impinge on their plans and expose their bases to Indian counter strikes. Currently, China is in a stalemate, unable to either advance without large casualties, or withdraw, as it would lead to loss of face.

Losing the diplomatic war on the Covid vaccine has also hurt China. It assumed that South Asian nations would rush for its vaccines, but its rejection has displayed that Indian soft power still holds sway. A dejected Global Times commenced spreading disinformation on Indian vaccines. It



border resolution would only involve Indian side of the LAC. Hence, tensions along the LAC will remain for a prolonged duration, for which India must remain prepared.

In the SCS, China has begun conducting exercises focusing on combat training and beach landing. It has sought to display its intention of regaining Taiwan by force.

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even accused India of being responsible for the failure of its vaccine trials in Bangladesh. However, to no avail. Even nations deemed close to China have desired Indian vaccines.

To damage China in economic terms, India made permanent the ban on Chinese apps. The Chinese embassy spokesperson in Delhi, Ji Rong, stated, "These moves, in violation of WTO non-discriminatory principles and fair competition principles of market economy, severely damage the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese companies." The Editor of the Global Times, Hu Xijin, tweeted, "India is like a bandit in the world that advocates civilized trade.

These Chinese apps have been legally registered in India. Their market shares have now been barbarically robbed by New Delhi." There is no doubt that despite Chinese claims, the financial impact is hurting China. China is the last nation which can approach WTO due to its own restrictive trade practices.

This is the centenary of the Chinese communist party, hence would be a year of their aggressive designs. India has shown the world how the Chinese can be held at bay. It is time for major powers to join hands, follow suit and push China on the defensive.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

Global finance and the US dollar

ANDREW SHENG

Where is Wall Street going in the post-pandemic world? Finance is supposed to serve the real economy (Main Street), but the US and global economies are in the midst of a pandemic and recession, whilst Wall Street profits are higher than ever.

The pandemic has exposed many of the flaws of the current financial system. New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman called this "socialism for the rich and capitalism for the rest". How does this work?

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to tackle social inequality, climate change and living standards by 2030 demands major reforms to the global financial system. Financing for development is daunting for various systemic or structural reasons. But most of the barriers are political. The rise of neoliberal free market philosophy since the 1970s boosted globalization, which pushed for deregulation of finance, labour, production and service markets, alongside trade liberalization. Globalization has benefited many countries, but the benefits were unevenly distributed.

Financialization or globalization of Wall Street practices rose with global growth of American banking and finance. In the 1960s, the American corporate push to Europe and Japan created the Eurodollar market. American banks became global bankers, receiving deposits in dollars and lending with fat margins back to banks and corporations globally.

In the 1970s, American banks



innovated into investment and private banking. Unfortunately, their excess lending to Latin American governments led to the 1980s Latin American debt crisis. When competition arose from Japanese banks, American and European banks created the first Basel Accord on bank supervision, to ensure that all banks competed on equal terms. It was Japanese bank excess lending domestically and in Southeast Asia that fostered the Asian financial crisis of 1997/99. During this period of financial de-regulation, financing innovation came in the form of derivatives (what Warren Buffett called weapons of mass destruction) that turbo-charged leverage.

All this came down like a house of cards in the 2007/2009 global financial crisis. The leading central banks stepped in to rescue the system, but instead of punishing the bad guys, their monetary creation lifted all boats. With interest rates down to near zero, amidst huge liquidity, governments gave up austerity and fiscal

deficits rose.

The result was hyper-financialization, growing concentration, inequality, worsening climate change and fatter profits for Wall Street. Note that after 2007/9, Swiss, German, British and European banks all ceded investment banking to the top few American investment cum universal banks like Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley. The post GFC Basel 3 regulatory reforms covered the systemic banks, but completely missed out the non-bank financial institutions. The top American asset managers now manage more assets than even the largest Chinese banks.

The link between financialization and growing inequality is often under-appreciated. First, as Thomas Piketty famously revealed, inequality rises as long as r (the return on private capital) is larger than g (GDP growth rate). Financialization plays a critical role on r, because the return on equity can be turbocharged through leverage. Second, as UNC-

TAD data showed, between 1995-2018, developing countries earned 2 per cent less on their gross external assets, whilst paying 2 per cent more on their external debt, giving rich country lenders essentially a 4 per cent margin. This margin also happens at the retail level in almost all markets. Third, capitalism values capital more than labour, so the share of wage in total income has declined by 5 percentage points to 52 per cent between 1990 to 2017. The profits of the corporate and financial sector have increased proportionately, but they are largely concentrated today in the tech and services sectors in the rich economies.

In short, for the poor and most emerging economies (the rest), financial capital meant losing out in their wages, income and savings. Financialization has become a "head I lose, tails you win" for the poor, with central banks underwriting the rich with massive quantitative easing. No wonder populist protests have broken out in both poor and rich countries.

The current mess can be summed up as a situation where we have the highest global liquidity in history, and yet we cannot finance our long-term development needs nor solve our rising inequality. As central banks can print \$8 trillion in 2020 with no impact on inflation, money or liquidity is not an issue. Regulatory constraints and banker caution means they do not want to lend out long-term and take more risks. The poor everywhere is lamenting like the Ancient Mariner dying of thirst adrift in the sea: "water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink."

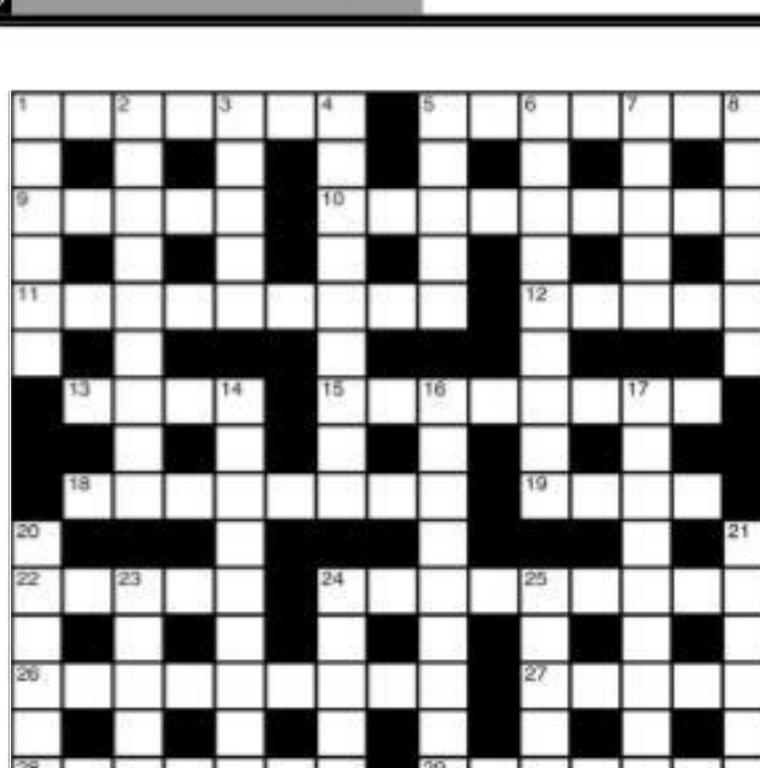
The US dollar plays a central role in the current global financial system. The US is the too-big-to-fail debtor to the rest of the world, with a net liability of \$14 trillion at the end of September 2020, thus providing important dollar liquidity for the world. This grew by \$3 trillion in the last 12 months alone. Since the dollar forms 65 per cent of total foreign exchange reserves and 80 per cent of developing country international securities issued, the future of the dollar is critical to both global economic recovery and financial stability. Volatility in the dollar, return of higher inflation, debt defaults or cyber-crashes all could throw the global financial system in jeopardy. The US depends mostly on printing US dollars to solve emerging problems. US public debt grew \$4.5 trillion in 2020 alone. The Fed can print, but will the rest of the world be willing to fund further debt growth without higher risk premia?

Simply put, the global financial system and real economy are entangled with the US dollar, which is both a US exorbitant privilege, but a global boon and bane. You cannot get global recovery without major reforms to the global financial system, but you cannot get the latter without US consent and co-operation. Thus, the ball is truly in the court of the Biden Administration. To restore US growth and leadership, and to secure the dollar's future to continue financing US structural debt, the US needs the rest of the world, as much as the world needs the US.

No one should envy US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in the coming days.

The writer is a former central banker and financial regulator. The views are entirely his own. Special to ANN.

NO 28813



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- Place to relax from Chinese disease (7)
- Sold apparel remains in flight (7)
- Ran club, possibly in Rutherford (5)
- 13 on which Tommy wanted to 1A (9)
- the 5A feeds rig I constructed (9)
- Armour written about in Malachi (5,4)
- It's prickly buying or selling trousers (4)
- Pound home point of fishing tackle (4)
- Strange bloke, Sam – like a pipe, perhaps (8)
- Gets near corrupt police officer (8)
- Expensive Dutch audio equipment (4)
- Yellow mineral companion found inside (5)
- Spooner telling child to cry a river, possibly (4,5)
- Gather hoodlum accepts rule for where to let sleeping dogs lie (9)
- Find out Rector Slope's around (5)
- Soldiers back around Germany? That's amazing! (3,4)
- Long, long ship deserted on river (7)

DOWN

- Possibly Rumpole's vehicle will turn up in garden (6)
- Explorer gutted with ancient stewed fruit (9)
- Ancient yellow head mislaid (5)
- A lot of water a must as man's eating sandwiches (6,3)
- I'm enjoying this left turn (5)
- Carefully protect Peter mixing a drug (9)
- Here in 21, I'm thinking, is much colder (5)
- Starts to go around Debenham's to buy a handy tool (6)
- Chopper for one British consumer (9)
- Exchanging parts when announcing exits is more important (9)
- Directions help with plate that is repaired very quickly, some say (5,4)
- Insect queen (6)
- Tours location of smell left by German artist (6)
- Sensed one hiding among cattle? (5)
- Corrupt police officer oddly ratty (5)
- Agreement to fulfil orders with the Italian firm (5)

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

OCCASIONAL NOTE

Serious railway accidents are rare occurrences in England nowadays as compared with the experiences of the last generation, and the improvement no doubt is attributable largely to the advances made in modern methods of signalling. Human ingenuity has been exercised to the utmost limits in the effort to make mishaps to running trains impossible, and it might have seemed inconceivable that such a disaster could have occurred at this time of day as the collision between the Aberystwyth-Manchester express and a local passenger train between Newtown and Abermule. Nothing worse could well have happened in the days when railways were first invented. The probable explanation is now said to have been discovered in the report that the tablet or metal disc authorising the driver of the local passenger train to proceed has been found among the wreckage, and that the driver would seem to have proceeded without the correct tablet for the section of the line on which the collision occurred. The "staff" system ordinarily employed on single lines at Home is supposed to be a safe one. It is impossible to eliminate the fallible human factor out of any system, but even on a local line a failure of this kind ought to have been out of the question. The official investigation may throw a clearer light on the cause of a breakdown for which the published reports have suggested no possible excuse.

NON-GAZETTED OFFICERS IN BIHAR

Patna, Feb 1
The Government of India has passed orders on the proposal of the Government of Bihar and Orissa for the revision of the pay of ministerial and non-gazetted officers, whose pay after revision will not exceed Rs 250 per months. The case of officers whose pay exceeds this amount has been referred to the Secretary of State. The new rates of pay will come into effect from March 1, 1921. An increase of approximately 33 and half per cent to the existing pay has been granted to those in receipt of Rs 50, and under 25 per cent for those drawing Rs 50 to Rs 200, and 20 per cent over Rs 200. The percentage is higher in case of the lower paid and more necessitous than in that of better paid officers.

INDIAN RAILWAY POLICE COMMITTEE

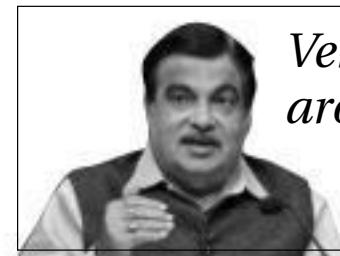
Madras, Feb 1
The Indian Railway Police Committee commenced its enquiry in Madras today at the old Engineering College Chepauk. Mr. Hannington, D.I.G. of the Railway and the C.I.D. was the first witness examined. Witness said that if the railway were prepared to make efficient arrangements it would be better for them to supervise their own police. The increase in the number of thefts on railways in recent years was chiefly due to the increase in traffic owing to want of shipping. Witness spoke of the want of cooperation between the railway subordinates and the railway police, which were suspicious of one another, and this hampered the investigation of cases. The witness before concluding said that the railway police should be recruited from a more intelligent class than the district police.

LIVELINESS ON FRONTIER

Delhi, Feb 1
Owing to no further deposits of rifles and of the fine due from the Wana Wazirs had been received for some little time it was decided, as an example, to destroy property of some of the recalcitrant members of the tribe who had hitherto made no attempt to comply with our terms. Accordingly the village of Hakim, about three miles south-west of Wana, the property of certain recalcitrants was destroyed on January 22. Evidently this lesson had a beneficial effect as thirty more tribal rifles and a small amount of fines have since been handed in. The total of rifles and fines received from various sections of the tribe up to January 23 is one hundred and twenty Government rifles, one hundred and fifty-six tribal rifles, and Rs 40,295.

MR. BELL'S MISSION TO LHASA

It is reported that Mr. C.A. Bell, who went to Lhasa at the invitation of the Dalai Lama, is indisposed and has not been able to leave Lhasa yet. It is also reported by the Tibetans from Lhasa that the object of the India Government in sending Mr. Bell was to demand payment of the money due by Tibet for arms and ammunition supplied to repel the Chinese some years ago, and for the loans contracted by the Dalai Lama during his residence in India in 1912-13. It is supposed that the Tibet Government is unable to repay their debts and that negotiations are proceeding for the mortgage or secession of two districts of Tibet, namely, the north of Assam and Chhona, lying to the north of Bhutan, to Britain.



Vehicle scrapping policy will lead to new investment of around Rs 10,000 crore and create as many as 50,000 jobs

NITIN GADKARI

ROAD TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND MSMEs MINISTER

THUMBNAILS

Securities markets code: The government on Monday proposed to introduce a unified securities markets code, a move that will help in boosting the ease of doing business in the country's financial markets. The proposed move would help in cutting down compliance costs and reducing the friction between rules enacted by capital markets watchdog Sebi, depositaries and government, experts said. Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech for 2021-22 proposed to consolidate the provisions of Sebi Act, Depositories Act, Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act and Government Securities Act into a rationalised single securities markets code. PTI

Fiscal deficit target: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday said the government estimates fiscal deficit of 6.8 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the next financial year beginning 1 April. However, the fiscal deficit in 2020-21 is estimated to soar up to 9.5 per cent due to rise in expenditure on account of the outbreak of Covid-19 and moderation in revenue during this fiscal year. The lockdown to check the spread of virus adversely impacted the economic activities resulting in contraction in the economy by an estimated 7.7 per cent. PTI

RInfra profit falls: Reliance Infrastructure (RInfra) on Monday reported 76.8 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit at Rs 80.08 crore for the quarter ended 31 December 2020. The company had posted consolidated net profit of Rs 345.51 crore in the year-ago period, RInfra said in a filing to BSE. The consolidated income from operations of the company during October-December period dropped to Rs 3,831.69 crore, from Rs 3,954.92 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year, it said. PTI

Saya Homes: Saya Homes, one of the leading real estate players in Delhi NCR, gave possession to over 100 flat owners last week at Indirapuram in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. The group also revealed its expansion plans at the event held at Saya Gold Avenue, according to a Press release statement. SNS

LIC MD: Siddhartha Mohanty, managing director and chief executive officer of LIC Housing Finance, on Monday took charge as one of the four managing directors of the parent LIC of India. He was appointed as a managing director by the government on 20 January. LIC subsidiary LICHL is the second-largest pure-play housing finance company. PTI

Stock markets give thumbs-up to Sitharaman's Union Budget

Equity markets roar back to life after six days of deep declines; both BSE & NSE benchmarks soar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 1 FEBRUARY

Stock markets roared back to life today after six days of deep declines as finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman presented an expansive Union Budget for financial year 2021-22 which sought to pull the economy out of the pandemic-induced slump through increased spending on infrastructure, healthcare and farm sectors without resorting to higher taxation.

The 30-share BSE Sensex zoomed 2,314.84 points or 5 per cent to finish at 48,600.61 points. This was its second-biggest single-day jump in absolute terms and the best day in almost 10 months.

SENSEX JUMPS 2,315 PTS

► The 30-share BSE Sensex zoomed 2,314.84 points or 5 per cent to finish at 48,600.61 points. This was its second-biggest single-day jump in absolute terms and the best day in almost 10 months.

► On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty

jumped 14.75 per cent, followed by ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finserv, SBI, L&T and HDFC.

Only three index components closed in the red - Dr Reddy's, Tech Mahindra and HUL, shedding up to 3.70 per cent.

On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty soared 646.60 points or 4.74 per cent to finish at 14,281.20 points.

The benchmarks were propelled by across-the-board buying, with banking and finance stocks leading the charge.

IndusInd Bank topped the Sensex gainers' chart with a

move and the primary reason for the rise in stock market," said Jaideep Hansraj, MD & CEO, Kotak Securities.

Krishna Kumar Karwa, managing director of Emkay Global Financial Services, added: "A Budget with no changes in direct taxes will certainly be remembered for years to come. Equity market will be enthused with no tinkering in capital gains taxes or STT or any form of Covid tax."

The proposals to privatise 2 state-run banks and one general insurance firm is noteworthy, as is increase in FDI limit in insurance to 74 percent.

The much-awaited proposal to set up a Development Finance Institution (DFI) should boost capex in the coming years, he added.

All sectoral indices ended with strong gains. BSE bankex, finance, realty, capital goods and metal indices rallied up to 8.33 per cent. Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices surged as much as 3.03 percent.

On the currency front, the rupee slipped 6 paise to settle at 73.02 against the US dollar.



But to reduce the burden on consumers, the customs or import duty on these items was cut.

A cess of Rs 2.5 per litre on petrol and Rs 4 per litre on diesel was also slapped but this was offset by a reduction of an equivalent amount in the excise duty - making it price neutral for consumers.

The government projected a fiscal deficit of 9.5 per cent of the GDP for the current fiscal, hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, and 6.8 per cent in 2021-22 as it sought to strike a balance between supporting growth and maintaining fiscal discipline.

"It has been a great Budget in the current pandemic. Market has given a clear thumbs-up. One couldn't have asked for more. Of the total borrowings of Rs 1,50,000 crore a whopping Rs 1,20,000 crore is going for investment. Clearly the government has sacrificed fiscal deficit for growth.

No tinkering on taxes, including personal tax and a giant leap of divesting two state-run banks and opening up of market by making way for the LIC IPO and foreign ownership in insurance companies has been a welcome

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I condemn the coup and unlawful imprisonment of civilians, including Aung San Suu Kyi, in Myanmar. The vote of the people must be respected and civilian leaders released

UK PRIME MINISTER BORIS JOHNSON
CONDAMNING THE MYANMAR COUP

The Statesman
NEW DELHI TUESDAY 02 FEBRUARY 2021

09

Suu Kyi's party urges Myanmar's people to oppose 'coup'

The National League for Democracy stated that the military's actions were unjustified and went against constitution

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NAYPYITAW, 1 FEBRUARY

Aung San Suu Kyi's political party is urging Myanmar's people to oppose Monday's coup and any return to military dictatorship.

The National League for Democracy released a statement on the Facebook page of its party head, Suu Kyi, saying the military's actions were unjustified and went against the constitution and the will of voters. It was not possible to confirm who posted the message as NLD members were not answering phone calls.

Myanmar military television said Monday that the military was taking control of the country for one year, while reports said many of the country's senior politicians including Aung San Suu Kyi had been detained.

A presenter on military-owned *Myawaddy* TV announced the takeover and cited a section of the military-drafted constitution that allows the military to take control in times of national emergency.

He said the reason for takeover was in part due to the government's failure to act on the military's claims of voter fraud in last November's election and its failure to postpone the election because of the coronavirus crisis.

The announcement and the declaration of a state of emergency follows days of concern about the threat of a military coup and military denials that it would stage one and came on the morning the country's new Parliament session was to begin.

begin.

The takeover is a sharp reversal of the partial yet significant progress toward democracy Myanmar made in recent years following five decades of military rule and international isolation that



China asks all parties in Myanmar to handle differences under Constitution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, 1 FEBRUARY

China on Monday reacted guardedly to the military coup in neighbouring Myanmar ousting de-facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi and members of her governing party, calling on all to properly handle their differences under the constitutional and legal framework and uphold political stability in the country.

began in 1962.

It would also be shocking fall from power for Suu Kyi, who led the democracy struggle despite years under house arrest and won a Nobel Peace Prize for her efforts.

The military's actions were

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here after being asked for China's reaction to the coup that "we have noted what happened in Myanmar, and we are learning more information."

China is a friendly neighbour of Myanmar. We hope that all parties in Myanmar will properly handle their differences under the constitutional and legal frame-

work and uphold political and social stability, he said, parrying questions over reports that the coup was a setback to Beijing, especially to the USD nine billion China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC), which provides access to China to the Indian Ocean. He also declined to answer the question whether China would join several other countries who have condemned the coup.

already receiving widespread international condemnation.

New US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken issued a statement expressing grave concern and alarm over the reported detentions.

We call on Burmese mili-

Pakistan SC rejects govt's request to suspend release of accused in Daniel Pearl murder case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 1 FEBRUARY

The Pakistan Supreme Court on Monday rejected the government's request to suspend the order to release British-born al-Qaeda terrorist Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and his three aides in the brutal murder of American journalist Daniel Pearl, days after it announced to formally join the review proceedings against the acquittal of the accused amid mounting international pressure.

The court, however, extended the interim detention order

of main accused Sheikh and his aides - Fahad Naseem, Sheikh Adil and Salman Saqib - by one day to hear the government's position on the case.

During the hearing on Monday, the Attorney General of Pakistan requested the Supreme Court to suspend the decision to release the accused so that he could argue the case in detail. The apex court rejected the request, according to a report in *The Express Tribune*.

The Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the release of the accused by dismissing appeals against their acquittal by the Sindh High Court. The

judgement was denounced by Pearl's family as "a complete travesty of justice".

The Sindh government on Friday filed a review petition in the apex court against the acquittal of Sheikh and his three accomplices.

Amid mounting pressure from the US and the UN, a spokesman of the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) on Saturday announced that the federal government will file an appropriate application before the apex court to be allowed to join as a party in the proceedings and further seek review and recall of the court's

January 28 judgement.

Pearl, the 38-year-old South Asia bureau chief for *The Wall Street Journal*, was abducted and beheaded while he was in Pakistan investigating a story in 2002 on the links between the country's powerful spy agency ISI and al-Qaeda. Let's hear the government's position till tomorrow, the court said, according to a report in *The Express Tribune*.

The government should tell the court how a citizen can be detained, it further said.

A three-judge bench of the apex court led by Justice Umar Ata Bandial heard the

government's petition where-in a notice to the Attorney General of Pakistan was also issued and records of the case were sought from the Sindh High Court (SHC), the report said.

During the hearing, the AGP said that the government has not been made a party in the SHC and the accused were acquitted without hearing pleas from the government, a necessary step in such cases, the report said.

A Pakistani citizen is in custody, the high court will not rule without looking at the order sheet, Justice Bandial said.

Libya's future in balance in UN-backed leadership vote

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GENEVA, 1 FEBRUARY

Delegates from Libya's opposing sides kick off a five-day meeting on Monday to choose an interim prime minister and a three-person presidency council, in a crucial bid to reunite the troubled oil-rich country before an election in December.

The Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, including envoys from around Libya, meets under U.N. mediation in an undisclosed site outside Geneva in hopes of stabilising a largely lawless country since Moammar Gadhafi's fall and

killing in 2011.

The gathering, which will draw from an agreed list of candidates, caps a process begun in Berlin in January 2020 for a North African country mired in international meddling and pockets of violence despite a long cease-fire.

The voting process takes place under the mediation of the U.N. secretary-general's acting special representative for Libya, Stephanie Williams.

The interim authority to be chosen will seek to rebuild state institutions and lead Libya to a national election on 24 December. The warring factions also

agreed that a national referendum would be held on constitutional arrangements, laying the legal groundwork for the December vote.

The 75-member forum represents the three main regions of old Libya, Tripolitania in the west, Cyrenaica in the east, and Fezzan in the southwestern part of Libya each to be represented on the three-member presidential council. The prime minister is to be chosen by garnering 70 per cent of votes.

Twenty-four candidates are running for the presidential council posts.

US watchdog: Taliban attacks increased in Afghan capital of Kabul

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, 1 FEBRUARY

Taliban attacks in the Afghan capital of Kabul are on the rise, with increasing targeted killings of government officials, civil-society leaders and journalists, a report by a US watchdog said Monday.

It comes as the Biden

administration plans to take a new look at the peace agreement between the US and the Taliban signed last February under President Donald Trump.

The report said Taliban-initiated attacks across Afghanistan during the last quarter of 2020 were slightly lower than in the previous

quarter, but exceeded those of the same period in 2019, according to numbers provided by US forces in Afghanistan.

Enemy attacks in Kabul were higher than during the previous quarter, the report said.

They were much higher than in the same quarter last year. The Special Inspector

General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, known as SIGAR, monitors the billions of dollars the US spends in war-ravaged Afghanistan.

The Taliban unleashed a wave of attacks in Afghanistan in December, including strikes in northern Baghlan and southern Uruzgan provinces over a two-day period that

killed at least 19 members of the Afghan security forces.

In Kabul, a roadside bomb struck a vehicle, wounding two, and a lawyer was shot in a targeted killing.

Resolute Support, the NATO-led mission in Afghanistan, reported 2,586 civilian casualties from October 1 to December 31 last

year, including 810 killed and 1,776 wounded, according to the SIGAR report. The report said the proportion of casualties caused by improvised explosive devices increased by nearly 17 per cent in this quarter, correlating with an increase in magnetically attached IEDs or sticky bomb attacks, the report said.

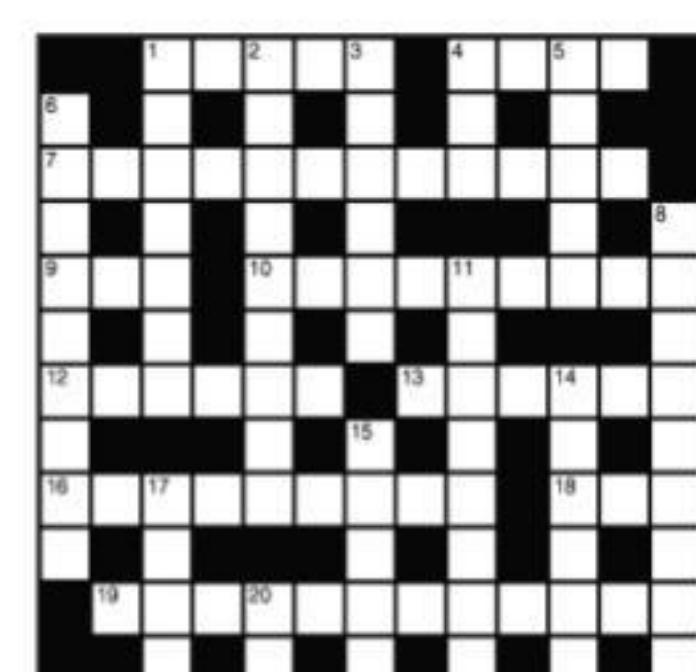
Despite the ongoing violence, casualties across Afghanistan in the last quarter of 2020 decreased by 14 per cent compared to the previous quarter. The quarter saw an exceptionally high number of casualties for the winter months, however, when fighting normally subsides.

The US has been the prime backer of the Afghan government since it invaded the country soon after the September 11, 2001, attacks and overthrew the Taliban, who were running the country and harboring al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

The US is still spending about USD 4 billion a year to assist Afghan security forces.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Card game (5)	1 Dismissals in cricket (7)
4 Replete (4)	2 Painkiller (9)
7 Extremely painful (12)	3 Pang (6)
9 Falsehood (3)	4 Corpulence (3)
10 Complicated procedure (9)	5 Jargon (5)
12 Dangerous (6)	6 Studly (4-5)
13 Over the hill (4,2)	8 Clerical robes (9)
16 Food fish (5,4)	11 Perception (9)
18 Beer (3)	14 Type of play (7)
19 Public statement (12)	15 Hat (6)
21 Hemispherical roof (4)	17 Fruit (5)
22 Full of flavour (5)	20 Lyric poem (3)

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

NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

U.P. Railways 23868709

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

INDIGO AIRLINES 234661262 City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383383, 180018038383, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 23354373

FLIGHT INQUIRY

AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 09001801407

INDIGO AIRLINES 234661262 City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383383, 180018038383, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 23354373

port 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 3373377

U.P. Railways 23864470

SCRABBLE BRAND

G R A M S I

Triple Word Score

E R I E A T T Double Word Score

Y I P N M O E Edit Letter Triple

E E E N N R S Triple Word Score

PAR SCORE 115-125 by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

SCRABBLE® AGONY MONSOON STATES EX-PAND JUDD'S TOTAL 183

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD

RACK 1 = 17

RACK 2 = 77

RACK 3 = 57

RACK 4 = 32

JUDD'S TOTAL 431

SCRABBLE® AGONY MONSOON STATES EX-PAND JUDD'S TOTAL 183



Blacks, Latinos receiving Covid vaccines at lower rate than others

NEW YORK CITY MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO

THUMBNAILS



A police officer receives the COVID-19 vaccination at a police hospital in Colombo, Sri Lanka on Monday.

IANS

Germany looks ahead, eyes vaccine doses for 2022: Germany's health minister wants to press ahead with securing coronavirus vaccine supplies for 2022, preferably at the European Union level but if necessary nationally. Jens Spahn said Monday that it's important to secure production capacity in Germany and Europe in advance. He said it's not yet clear whether or when booster vaccinations will be required, or whether vaccines will need to be adapted to new virus mutations.

AP

Fiji cyclone causes flooding kills 1, 5 more missing: A cyclone caused flooding as it crossed Fiji, requiring rescues of residents and sending thousands of people into shelters. At least one person died and five others are missing. Authorities said on Monday that more than 10,000 people were sheltering at 300 evacuation centers after Cyclone Ana made landfall Sunday on the main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. The cyclone created flooding across parts of both islands, including in the capital, Suva.

AP

Major storm hits Northeast US: Snowfall picked up Monday in the Northeast as the region braced for a whopper of a storm that could dump well over a foot of snow in many areas, create blizzard-like conditions and cause travel problems for the next few days. New Jersey recorded 7 inches (17.8 centimeters) already was reported as of Monday morning.

PTI

Uganda's Bobi Wine goes to court to dispute President's win

KAMPALA (UGANDA), 1 FEBRUARY

Ugandan presidential challenger Bobi Wine on Monday launched a court case seeking to overturn the re-election of President Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power for 35 years.

Wine, whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, had suggested he did not want to legitimise Museveni's victory in last month's polls by seeking justice with a court that has been reluctant to rule against the president in past elections. The Supreme Court ruled three times that electoral irregularities were not substantial enough to affect the outcome.

Museveni won the 14 January elections with 58 percent of the vote while Wine had 35 per cent, according to final results announced last week by the electoral commission after accounting for results from nearly all polling stations.

Wine has accused electoral authorities of declaring cooked-up results, "alleging irregularities such as soldiers stuffing ballot boxes, casting ballots for people and chasing voters away from polling stations across the East African country. He has urged his supporters to protest his loss through nonviolent means.

Despite the assertions of fraud, Wine's National Unity Platform party was not always sure that going to court was the right move. Some members said it was a total waste of time while others argued that it was necessary to expose Museveni and put the judiciary on trial, said Joel Ssenyonyi, a spokesman for Wine.

Anthony Wameli, a Ugandan attorney who is part of Wine's legal team, said they had amassed glaring evidence of malfeasance and would dissect the voter register in trying to prove Museveni's victory is invalid.

AP

Biden invites GOP lawmakers to White House virus relief talk

The invitation came after the lawmakers sent Biden a letter urging him to negotiate on Covid package

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 1 FEBRUARY

President Joe Biden has invited to the White House a group of 10 Republican senators who have proposed spending about one-third of what he is seeking in coronavirus aid.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Sunday that Biden had spoken with the leader of the group, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine.

The invitation to meet came hours after the lawmakers sent Biden a letter urging him to negotiate rather than try to ram through his USD 1.9 trillion package solely on Democratic votes.

Though Biden is wanting a full exchange of views, Psaki reiterated that he remains in favour of moving forward with a far-reaching relief package.

With the virus posing a grave threat to the country, and economic conditions grim for so many, the need for action is urgent, and the scale of what must be done is large, Psaki said.

The meeting would amount to the most public involvement for Biden in the negotiations for the next round of virus relief. Democrats and Republicans are far apart in their proposals for assistance.

The plea for Biden to give bipartisan negotiations more time comes as the president



has shown signs of impatience as the more liberal wing of his party considers passing the relief package through a process known as budget reconciliation. That would allow the bill to advance with only the backing of his Democratic majority.

The Republicans did not provide many details of their proposal. One of the signatories, Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, said that it would cost about \$600 billion.

If you can't find bipartisan compromise on Covid-19, I don't know where you can find it, said Ohio Sen. Rob Portman, who also signed the letter.

Our proposal reflects many of your stated priorities, and with your support, we believe that this plan could be approved quickly by Congress with bipartisan support,

As leading economists have said, the danger now is not in

doing too much: it is in doing too little," Psaki said.

Americans of both parties are looking to their leaders to meet the moment.

Biden also spoke on Sunday with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who are facing a growing push from the more liberal Democratic members to move forward with Biden's legislation with or without Republican support.

The other GOP senators invited to meet with Biden are Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Mitt Romney of Utah, Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia, Todd Young of Indiana, Jerry Moran of Kansas, Mike Rounds of South Dakota, and Thom Tillis of North Carolina.

Brian Deese, the top White House economic adviser who is leading the administration's outreach to Congress, said earlier Sunday that administration officials were reviewing

the letter.

He did not immediately commit to a Biden meeting with the lawmakers.

But Cedric Richmond, a senior Biden adviser, said the president is very willing to meet with anyone to advance the agenda."

When asked about the senators' plan, Richmond said, This is about seriousness of purpose. Deese indicated the White House could be open to negotiating on further limiting who would receive stimulus checks.

Portman suggested the checks should go to individuals who make no more than USD 50,000 per year and families capped at USD 100,000 per year. Under the Biden plan, families with incomes up to USD 300,000 could receive some stimulus money.

That is certainly a place that we're willing to sit down and think about, are there ways to make the entire package more effective? Deese said.

As a candidate, Biden predicted his decades in the Senate and his eight years as Barack Obama's vice president gave him credibility as a deal-maker and would help him bring Republicans and Democrats to consensus on the most important matters facing the country.

attorneys willing to represent him against charges that he incited the deadly riot at the US Capitol, which happened when a mob of loyalists stormed Congress as lawmakers met 6 January to certify Joe Biden's electoral victory.

That's a contrast from his first impeachment trial, when Trump's high-profile team of attorneys included Alan Dershowitz, one of the best-known criminal defense lawyers in the country, as well as White House counsel Pat Cipollone, and Jay Sekulow, who has argued cases before the Supreme Court.

Trump's team had initially announced that Butch Bowers, a South Carolina lawyer, would lead his legal team after an introduction from Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham.

But that team unraveled over the weekend due to differences over legal strategy.

One person familiar with their thinking said Bowers and another South Carolina lawyer, Deborah Barbier, left the team because Trump wanted them to use a defense that relied on allegations of election fraud, and the lawyers were not willing to do so.

The person was not authorised to speak publicly about the situation and requested anonymity. Republicans and aides to Trump, the first President to be impeached twice.

The announcement was intended to promote a sense of stability surrounding the Trump defense team as his impeachment trial nears.

The former President has struggled to hire and retain

Trump names two lawyers to impeachment defence team

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 1 FEBRUARY

Former US President Donald Trump announced a new impeachment legal defense team just one day after it was revealed that he had parted ways with an earlier set of attorneys with just over a week to go before his Senate trial.

The two representing Trump will be defense lawyer David Schoen, a frequent television legal commentator, and Bruce Castor, a former district attorney in Pennsylvania who has faced criticism for his decision to not charge actor Bill Cosby in a sex crimes case.

Both attorneys issued statements through Trump's office on Sunday saying that they were honored to take the job.

The strength of our Constitution is about to be tested like never before in our history. It is strong and resilient.

A document written for the ages, and it will triumph over partisanship yet again, and always, said Castor, who served as district attorney for Montgomery County, outside of Philadelphia, from 2000 to 2008.

The announcement was intended to promote a sense of stability surrounding the Trump defense team as his impeachment trial nears. The former President has struggled to hire and retain

Court fines Navalny's wife after protests in Moscow

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 1 FEBRUARY

His wife, Yulia Navalnaya, joined a protest in Moscow that took place despite unprecedented security measures.

She was quickly detained and charged with participating in an unauthorised rally. A court on Monday ordered Navalnaya to pay a fine, her lawyer Svetlana Davydova told the Interfax news agency.

Davydova said the defense plans to appeal the ruling.

In the largest outpouring of discontent Russia had seen in years, mass protests engulfed dozens of Russian cities for the second weekend in a row despite efforts by Russian authorities to stifle the

unrest triggered by the jailing of 44-year-old Navalny, the Kremlin's fiercest critic.

Navalny was arrested on 17 January upon his return from Germany, where he spent five months recovering from nerve-agent poisoning that he blames on the Kremlin. Russian authorities have rejected the accusations. He faces a prison term for alleged probation violations from a 2014 money-laundering conviction which has been widely seen as politically motivated.

Russian authorities cracked down hard on the demonstrators on Sunday, detaining over 5,400 people.

Lebanon's Hezbollah group says it shot down Israeli drone

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIRUT (LEBANON), 1 FEBRUARY



Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group said its fighters shot down an Israeli drone on Monday over a southern village near the border with Israel.

The Israeli military did not confirm the shootdown but said a drone had crashed on Lebanese territory.

Tensions in the region have been rising over the past months amid Israeli airstrikes on Iran-backed fighters in neighboring Syria. Hezbollah fighters now have the unmanned aircraft, the report said.

The Israeli military said the drone was on operational activity along the border before it crashed.

The Israeli military said the drone was on operational activity along the border before it crashed.

The frequency of low-flying warplanes over Beirut and other parts of Lebanon has intensified in the past weeks,

breach of information, the military added.

Israeli warplanes and drones violate Lebanon's air space almost daily, sometimes to carry out airstrike in neighboring Syria.

The frequency of low-flying warplanes over Beirut and other parts of Lebanon has intensified in the past weeks,

making residents jittery as tensions run high in the region. Israel and Hezbollah fought to a draw in a month-long war in Lebanon in 2006. Hezbollah has in the past claimed downing Israeli drones.

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The space station is now equipped with 24 lithium-ion batteries to store power collected by the solar panels. The big, boxy batteries, surpassing 400 pounds (180 kilograms) each, provide electricity for the orbiting lab when it's on the night side of Earth.

They're so powerful that only half as many are needed as the old nickel-hydrogen batteries they replaced.

The upgrade took longer than expected after one of the new batteries failed following its installation two years ago and had to be replaced.

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Rapid acceleration in technological developments has significantly altered the way we learn by connecting the gap and making the world smaller and more accessible. Recently the coronavirus pandemic has sparked the world's largest-ever remote learning test. At its peak in mid-April, the virus caused nationwide school closures in 190 countries, impacting 90 per cent of total registered learners, or nearly 1.6 billion people internationally.

That has been a significant learning curve for students, parents, and educators moving their teaching online. But it has also been a boon for one of the world's fastest growing industries: education technology.

It is remarkable how the world and people have changed so profoundly and so rapidly that we have made tremendous progress in sharing our connections, successes and ideas.

We now live in a digitally connected world of social media that is undergoing a radical transformation where one can settle down and share ideas with different technologies.

Continuous changes in technology over the past few years, and especially since Covid-19, have accelerated the learning process, affecting classrooms with a variety of digital learning tools, increasing student engagement and motivation.

Also, the internet has opened up a wealth of knowledge and information that has significantly helped students to gather information. The cloud-based learning puts the study material or resources in a virtual atmosphere and enables the students to retrieve information, anywhere, anytime, with an access to the internet.

As technology sweeps through the realms of education use of numerous high-tech tools such as the smart board, LCD projector, tablets, educational apps etc. has turned out to be a norm, rather than exclusion for conventional classroom courses.

Technology-enabled learning can not only transform the online learning experience, it can also enhance and complement regular classroom-based learning. It can provide more flexibility and learning support than conventional formats. Technology gives teachers the opportunity to be more collaborative and increase learning opportunities outside the classroom. Teachers can create learning communities with students, co-teachers and experts in different disciplines around the world.

The New Education Policy 2020 aims to replace the previous policy introduced 34 years ago, and major reforms in the education system are being considered. It focuses on the use and integration of technology.

NEP knows that India is a global leader in information and communication technology and other cutting edge fields such as space. The Digital India campaign helps transform the entire nation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

While education will play a significant role in this transformation, technology itself will play a vital role



Technology-enabled education acts as a catalyst for today's digital youth, who have grown up in an immersive computing environment

in educating the educational process and outcomes; therefore, the connection between technology and education is twofold.

The Covid-19 crisis has created a tectonic shift in our education system. Major universities and institutions of higher learning have partially or completely shifted to online teaching methods and are reporting considerable success in their endeavors. Furthermore, the availability of world-class technology platforms has enabled them to easily transfer to online delivery mode.

In a multilingual country like ours, language barriers create complexity. The purpose of cutting edge research in text translation and machine learning is to create a deep-learning system that can translate English lectures into a student's

mother tongue.

In keeping with the changing times, many institutes are promoting learning through virtual classrooms that provide affordable solutions and quality teaching, where students can articulate their doubts while sitting miles away. Technology, therefore, has transformed education and advanced learning.

Also, the subject of self-education has gained popularity in the last few years and most of the education is being introduced outside the conventional environment.

Digital classes are helping students actively engage and encourage greater accessibility. This makes their lessons interesting, reduces their workload and helps students better understand the subject so that they can learn at their own pace and convenience.

Moreover, free quality education is exploding around the world. People are achieving their goals in their own way through social communication, social education and the contacts that are made outside the formal education process. In addition, the proliferation of apps has supported the younger generation to such an extent that it is interesting to see how teenagers are developing apps today.

Technology, therefore, initiates self-education which has found extraordinary attraction among the tech-savvy generation.

Technology-enabled learning provides an interactive learning environment for students and provides a wide range of teaching methods and opportunities to measure progress and outcomes as a seamless part of learning.

It complements technical education and classroom learning, promoting more comprehensibility and ideas, especially for complex ones.

In other words, technology-based learning has become a rapidly evolving phenomenon that helps to enrich the teaching-learning process and as a result changes the way we learn.

It offers a wide range of learning modes and technology tools and services that enhances one's learning productivity. Technology-enabled education therefore acts as a catalyst for today's digital natives who have grown up in an immersive computing environment.

The writer is executive, ALLEN Career Institute

JASON MOBLEY

As we enter a new semester, and some parts of the world implement new restrictions in response to the pandemic, hybrid or blended learning environments have become a key part of providing educational continuity.

Globally, school leaders are expanding their planning for how they will continue to support hybrid classroom environments post-pandemic, too. When inclement weather, poor air quality days, illness, travel, or other issues prevent students from attending class in person, hybrid classroom setups allow learning to continue from virtually anywhere.

But teaching in a hybrid environment is a wholly different experience than in-person instruction. One tip educators suggest is having all students - even those in the physical classroom - join Zoom classes from their individual devices. With all students connected, one can use the following digital tools and features to create an engaging experience for everyone.

Breakout rooms

Breakout rooms facilitate group learning and collaboration between remote and in-person students. It gives students in class and online the opportunity to socialise, collaborate and work together, no matter where they're located. It allows one to pre-assign students to Breakout Rooms before class for recurring meetings so that one can save the same Breakout Rooms for class for the entire quarter or semester (useful for long group projects). Randomly assign students to Breakout Rooms. Let them choose which room they want to join and move between rooms (great for casual discussions about a topic of interest, reading groups, or study groups - you can label rooms according to the topic). Give co-hosts the same ability as meeting hosts in Breakout Rooms. Allow students to "ask for help" giving you a notification to jump into their room.

CREATING AN ENGAGING EXPERIENCE

Following certain hard and fast rules and guidelines for hybrid classroom can help set expectations on how students should act and interact in this environment



Chat

Chat enables students with different communication styles to be recognised, especially remote students and those who may not feel comfortable answering out loud. It can be used to ask a question and have everyone answer in chat instead of calling on one person; one can quickly scan messages in the chat and answer questions in a particular order, call out responses that may lead to further discussion, and encourage students to read each other's messages; one can assign a student to be a chat monitor and read questions in the chat out loud to the class.

Digital whiteboard and annotation

This feature allows students to contribute equally in real-time and provide valuable feedback on other students' work. To use this, one needs to ask a student to show their work on the board and have other students write questions or suggestions directly on the screen; showing

two different pictures on the screen and have students annotate next to the photo that best fits the lesson; writing a prompt in the middle of the whiteboard and give students a few minutes to write their thoughts or draw a related picture; playing a quick game of Pictionary (privately chat the student drawing with the word).

Setting ground rules for hybrid classroom

Hybrid learning is a new experience for many students. Creating rules and guidelines for hybrid classroom can help set expectations on how students should act and interact in this environment. Rules may include being mindful not to exclude remote students by speaking too quietly, staying muted, or blocking their view of the camera. It is necessary to address all students, not just those in the classroom; equal participation in all above mentioned online activities; turning cameras on during synchronous lessons and encouraging students to use reactions and non-verbal feedback as a way to communicate and stay engaged.

The writer is higher education solutions lead, zoom

PLUS POINTS

Empowering teachers



On the occasion of International Day of Education Nihar Shanti Pathshala Funwala announced that they empowered one lakh teachers in Madhya Pradesh, through its digital first initiative to help improve English literacy levels in government schools. The teacher empowerment programme, which helped teachers improve English proficiency of their students aims to uplift lives of many students, making them literate in the language of opportunities leading to better higher-education opportunities, improved life-long earning potential, and access to a wider world.

The programme used apps including YouTube and WhatsApp to provide content in a highly structured form to teachers in the state. As part of the training, teachers were provided with digital ready aids and self-learning materials through WhatsApp.

Ensuring better future



With the reopening of classes 10 and 12 nation-wide amidst the pandemic, SAI International Education Group (SIEG) is making learning accessible to those who are unable to go to school physically out of fear. The group understood that the new normal in education is Blended Learning - a blend of the physical face to face teaching along with robust online support.

Therefore, the group launched SAI Home School (SHS) recently. The school would bring learning not only at the doorstep but within homes. SHS is a complete package of learning consisting of the subject, teaching, content, practice and doubt clearing. Each module comprises mind maps, lesson notes, home assignments, video recordings of the lessons taught and doubt clearing sessions, which will allow the children to have their queries answered by the teachers to whom they have been addressed.

Honouring contribution



Prof Bishnu Pal, dean academics and professor of natural sciences at Mahindra University's Ecole Centrale School of Engineering, has been awarded "The 2021 SPIE Maria J Yzuel Educator Award" by The International Society for Optics and Photonics. The award recognises outstanding contributions to optics education by an educator in the field. Pal has been named for this award in recognition of four decades of sustained contributions in education, outreach, research, technical programme committees of global flagship conferences, and editing of four popular publications in guided wave optics and photonics. The award will be formally given to him at the annual award banquet during SPIE Optics+ Photonics conference scheduled at San Diego USA on 1-5 August 2021.

Admirable programme

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad University of Technology (MAKAUT), West Bengal organised an online lecture series-Episode V by eminent radio oncologist Dr Sankar Nath on "Iconic figures of Bengal renaissance and their relevance today" recently. The topic of the series was on "Teacher extraordinaire the unknown facet of Bharat Ratna Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy".

The series of programmes was under Mandatory Additional Requirements (MAR) for the students with each programme fetching one point. The maximum permissible points are 20 for attending 20 such motivational lectures. There was a quiz contest at the end of the programme. It was made obligatory for all newly admitted first year students to attend the programme. The webinar was live streamed in the YouTube channel.



IN ELITE LEAGUE

Graham Thorpe has hailed Joe Root (photo, left) as "a great student of the game" as he prepares to welcome the England captain into Test cricket's 100-cap club. Root will bring up his century when he leads his country out in the series-opener against India, becoming the 15th Englishman to reach the landmark.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Tigers whinper: Nicholas Pooran's power-packed 26-ball 89 helped Northern Warriors outplay Bangla Tigers by 30 runs in the Abu Dhabi T10 event. He hit 12 sixes and three fours to help his side post the second-highest score of 162 for 4 in the tournament.

Covid-19 protocols: The Barcelona and Real Madrid women's teams staged a protest before the clásico between the sides in the Spanish league to demand better Covid-19 protocols. They stood motionless for a few seconds after the initial whistle.

Match drawn: In Buenos Aires, the Indian women's hockey team put up a spirited performance to hold world No 2 Argentina to a 1-1 draw and end their tour of the country on a high. Skipper Rani struck for India in the 35th minute while Emilia Forcherio equalised.

Parisians slump: With more than half a billion euros of attacking talent, Paris Saint-Germain lost 2-3 at Lorient and Lille won to claim the top spot in the French league. PSG lined up with Neymar, Kylian Mbappé, Angel Di María and Mauro Icardi.

Spurs upset: Tottenham struggled without the creativity and cutting edge of injured striker Harry Kane in a 1-0 loss at Brighton, ending up six points off the Premier League's top four. Leandro Trossard scored the winner for fourth-from-last Brighton in the 17th minute.

Osaka's plan: Naomi Osaka on Sunday said she was committed to competing in the delayed Tokyo Olympics, but believed public approval was crucial for the Games to go ahead this year. Organisers are still adamant the Olympics can be held safely.

COVID-19 tests: Members of the Indian and England cricket teams have returned three negative tests for COVID-19 during their six-day quarantine, clearing the way for their first full strength net sessions three days before the opening Test here on Friday.

Sports budget: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was felt on the national sports budget as the central government on Monday allocated Rs 2596.14 crore for the financial year 2021-22 – a reduction of Rs 230.78 crore when compared to the amount earmarked initially for the previous year.

Messi shows his worth, leads Barcelona to win

AGENCIES
MADRID, 1 FEBRUARY

Lionel Messi showed his worth yet again, scoring on a beautiful free kick to lead Barcelona to a 2-1 win over Athletic Bilbao in the Spanish league.

The 650th goal in his Barcelona career came amid the noise prompted by Spanish newspaper El Mundo's report that his contract is worth 555 million euros (\$673 million). The Catalan club, mired in debt and political turmoil, had to quickly deny its involvement in the leak.

Antoine Griezmann also scored for Barcelona, which won its fifth in a row in the league and moved into second place for the first time this season. It has the same 40 points as Real Madrid but is ahead on goal difference.

Atletico earlier opened a 10-point lead after winning 4-2 at Cdiz with a pair of goals by Luis Suárez.

Messi, who had his request to leave Barcelona denied by the club last season, seemed unaffected by the leak Sunday of his contract details. He played well from the start and was decisive again at the Camp Nou Stadium. The Argentine great opened the scoring in the 20th minute with a free kick that curled over the wall and found the top corner for his 12th league goal.

Athletic equalized with an own-goal by Jordi Alba as the defender tried to clear a cross.



by Ral Garca in the 49th, and Griezmann put Barcelona ahead again, completing a cross by scar Mingueza in the 75th.

It was the third meeting between Barcelona and Athletic this month, with the Catalan club winning a postponed league game and losing the Spanish Super Cup.

RED-HOT SUREZ

Suárez continued his stellar form with Atletico, scoring twice in the win over Cdiz to help Diego Simeone's team open a huge lead at the top. Surez scored a goal in each half to reach 14 league goals this season, marking his best-ever league start in Spain and becoming the league's leading scorer. The Uruguayan striker, who was let go by

home match in 2021. It had played eight consecutive games away from the Camp Nou, including in the Copa del Rey and the Spanish Super Cup.

SIXTEEN

It was Barcelona's first

Barcelona at the end of last season, has scored nine goals in his last eight matches with Atletico.

When a striker is on a roll, you have to take advantage of it, Suárez said.

You have to enjoy it because it's hard to stay at this level the whole year. It was the eighth league win in a row for Atletico, which reaches the halfway mark of the season with the 10-point gap to Barcelona and Real Madrid despite having a game in hand.

Every match is an important step toward reaching our goal, Simeone said.

To continue like this we have to keep focused on match after match.

Simeone's team has 50 points from 19 matches, remaining on pace for a 100-point season for the first time.

These are important numbers that put us at the top, Suárez said. We have to stay on this path. Suárez opened the scoring with a well-placed curling free kick in the 28th and added his second from the penalty spot in the 50th.

Sal guez netted before halftime and Koke Resurreccin got on the board near the end of the match to complete the scoring for Atletico, which is seeking its first league title since 2014.

Cdiz, winless in its last three league matches and sitting 13th in the standings, got goals from Ivaro Negredo in the 35th and 71st minutes.

Salah ends EPL drought, Liverpool back as threat to Manchester City

AGENCIES
LIVERPOOL, 1 FEBRUARY

With a trademark left-footed curler into the top corner and the deftest of finishes from a clinical counterattack, Mohamed Salah ended one of his longest goal droughts in the Premier League for Liverpool in style.

The champions' chief scorer is back doing what he does best. And that should make them the biggest threat to relentless leader Manchester City in the title race.

Salah's sublime, second-half double set Liverpool on its way to a 3-1 win at West Ham on Sunday, which backed up a victory by the same scoreline at Tottenham on Thursday.

Jürgen Klopp's team hadn't won any of its previous five games and had dropped off the remorseless title pace being set by City, which has won eight straight league games.

Despite its lengthy injury list and Sadio Mane joined it this week because of a minor muscle problem Liverpool cannot be discounted, even if the third-place Reds are four points behind City having played one game more in their turbulent title defense.

They jumped above Leicestershire, which lost 3-1 at home to Leeds earlier Sunday.

If you want to win the league, you have to win every game, Salah said.

This year, City were struggling in the beginning. We were struggling three or four games ago. You just need to keep winning if you want to win the Premier League.



It was a really big week.

Salah scored twice in the FA Cup loss to Manchester United last weekend, but he hadn't netted in six league

matches, a barren run he had only experienced once in February-March 2019 since joining Liverpool in 2017.

The Egypt forward attributed some of that to technology I don't like VAR, Salah said after the West Ham game, it just kills the game, the joy of football. But there was no stopping him at the Olympic Stadium.

His opener in the 57th minute was classic Salah, twisting and turning as he came in from the right before bending a shot into the far corner beyond goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski.

His second goal in the 68th was even better as he controlled a high, hanging pass from Xherdan Shaqiri with his weaker right foot and poked it into the net.

The first touch was unbelievable, Klopp said, then the fine finishing touch.

Liverpool, though, is still very much in contention.

50 per cent crowd for 2nd India-England Test; media also allowed to cover from press box

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 1 FEBRUARY

and Test by following all safety protocols."

The M A Chidambaram stadium has a capacity of 50,000.

The first Test begins on Friday while the second match starts on February 13. Crowds have already been allowed for the third and fourth Test in Ahmedabad.

The official also said that media would be allowed to cover both the Tests from the press box at the stadium. However, media conferences would still be held virtually.

The BCCI and the TNCA had earlier decided that the first two matches would be held behind closed doors.

But the fresh home ministry guidelines on easing of restrictions on public movement have changed the scenario.

The official said there was little time to allow entry of spectators for the opening Test.

He said even though there was only a gap of three days between the first and second Tests, the TNCA was confident of making arrangements for the forthcoming Tests.

"It has been decided by the BCCI and TNCA to allow 50 percent spectators for the sec-

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"We are not going to comment on speculation. We are still waiting to hear from the BCCI in terms of their protocols for the forthcoming Tests," the spokesperson asserted.

'Don't necessarily have to be quick in air to be successful in India'

CHENNAI, 1 FEBRUARY

Bowling quicker in the air brought success to Monty Panesar in the 2012 tour of India but England left-arm spinner Jack Leach feels the same tactic may not work for him on his maiden series against the mighty hosts.

Panesar and Graeme Swann bowled quicker than their Indian counterparts in 2012, engineering a famous away Test series win for England.

However, Leach said he would like to stick to his strengths. "Monty and Swann are two bowlers I love to watch. I watch a lot of spin videos to try and take things from the spinners. Monty bowled at a quicker pace in India and that could be very tricky on a spinning wicket," said Leach in an online media interaction after the team completed its six-day quarantine here ahead of the first Test beginning on Friday.

"I am probably not going to be bowling the same speed. It is probably more about

how the ball gets to the batsman in terms of trajectory.

There have been other successful bowlers who didn't bowl as fast as Monty did.

"It is about sticking to my strengths and knowing what my optimum pace and then going up and down a little bit from there. Everyone has an optimum pace. It's important to stick to that as much as possible," said Leach who took 10 wickets in the recent series in Sri Lanka.

Bowling in India is as tough as it gets for a visiting spinner but Leach is looking forward to the "ultimate" challenge.

"They are obviously a quality side and have come back off a great win in Australia, but I think it is just a great opportunity for all of us to test ourselves against probably the best side in the world and to do here in India, my first time in India.

"This is what the dream you have, to come to places like these. Obviously, it is a fantastic opportunity, and I want to enjoy," said the 29-year-old from Somerset. PTI

East Bengal hope to keep playoff hopes alive against Bengaluru

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
VASCO, 1 FEBRUARY

it is mathematically impossible to get into the top four," Fowler said.

"At the minute, it is (possible), but the results may dictate that," Fowler added.

Similar to SC East Bengal, Bengaluru have also been on a lean patch. They have been winless in their last eight matches, having lost five of those.

Conceding goals has been a problem for BFC, who have now failed to keep a clean sheet in 11 matches. They have conceded 19 goals so far, with only Odisha and Kerala conceding more.

So far this season, the Blues have dropped nine points from winning positions. They were close to securing a win in the last game before throwing away a two-goal lead to Hyderabad in a 2-2 draw.

They will have their task cut out against SC East Bengal, with both Erik Paartalu and Juanan set to miss the game.

BFC interim coach Naushad Moosa acknowledged the mood in the camp has been uneasy, given the recent run of results.

Silverwood backs England's selection policy

VITHUSHAN EHANTHARAJAH

It is not often a comprehensive series win in Asia, which saw England notch a fifth successive away victory in Test matches for the first time in over a century, is followed by selection talk.

But when the England squad got ready to depart Sri Lanka for the next leg of their winter tour, there remained confusion regarding the starting XI over the coming weeks.

The majority of the squad was to make its way to India for a four-match series. They were join Ben Stokes, Jofra Archer and Rory Burns, who missed the Sri Lanka series.

Jonny Bairstow, Mark Wood and Sam Curran flew home and were to make their way back to India to rejoin the party for the third and fourth Tests, swapping in for three others who would return home.

First-choice wicketkeeper Jos Buttler was available for the first Test but would leave at its conclusion, missing the remaining three matches. He will then head back to India from the UK on 23 February and prepare for

the white-ball leg of three Twenty20s and three one-dayers which starts on 13 March.

The situation is relatively self-explanatory. With 15 Tests and a Twenty20 World Cup to come, selectors and coaches, in conjunction with the players, decided that multi-format cricketers needed to be managed more carefully. The toll of quarantine periods and living in general isolation due to the Covid-19 pandemic puts an extra strain on physical and mental welfare. Those featuring in red and white-ball squads feel this more than most.

With these extra considerations comes an acceptance that England will get through a winter without putting out their best Test side. For instance, Bairstow and Buttler will miss five Tests between them despite finishing the Sri Lanka series second and third in the run-scoring charts behind captain Joe Root and his 426 runs.

Bairstow's 139 at number three featured key hands of 35 not out and 29 in both chases. Buttler's exemplary wicket-keeping was underpinned by 131 runs including an unbeaten

Serena through easily in 1st Australian Open tuneup

AGENCIES

MELBOURNE, 1 FEBRUARY

Serena Williams (in photo) restarted her lengthy quest for a 24th Grand Slam singles title with a 6-1, 6-4 win over Daria Gavrilova in an Australian Open tuneup tournament at Melbourne Park on Monday.

Williams has been stalled on 23 major singles titles since the 2017 Australian Open, when she was two months pregnant with now-three-year-old daughter Olympia and when she beat her sister Venus in the final.

A 24th singles major would equal Margaret Court's Grand Slam record, but some of Court's wins came before the professional era.