



DEFENCE MINISTER
LAUDS INDIAN
ARMED FORCES



WAY FORWARD



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

NIGERIAN ECONOMIST
NAMED FIRST WOMAN
AFRICAN WTO HEAD



ASHWIN PUTS
INDIA ON TOP

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 29 and 09 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 46%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 29.5°C (+5) Min: 9.9°C (-1)

SUN RISES

06:58 hrs 18:12 hrs

MOON RISES

10:13 hrs 22:24 hrs

THUMBNAILS



A man buys idol of Goddess Saraswati on the eve of Basant Panchami, in the Capital on Monday.

About 18-19 Covid vaccine candidates on anvil: About 18-19 vaccine candidates against Covid-19 are in the pipeline and in different clinical trial stages, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Monday. Addressing the media, Vardhan said that in the next 2-3 weeks, vaccinations against Covid-19 will be started for people above 50 years of age. He further said that India will be supplying vaccines to 20-25 other countries. Dispelling rumours surrounding vaccines, Vardhan said the vaccines in the public domain are safe and effective.

15 killed in Maha road mishap: Fifteen people were killed and five others injured after a truck carrying labourers overturned and fell into a roadside pit in Maharashtra's Jalgaon district in the wee hours of Monday, police said. The accident took place near a temple in Kingaon village around 1 am when the papaya-laden truck was on its way to Yawal tehsil in Jalgaon from Dhule, an official from Yawal police station said.

Toolkit row: BJP, Opp spar over green activist's arrest

Opposition cries 'murder of democracy'; BJP says 'crime is a crime no matter the age'

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

The action taken by the Delhi Police on an FIR related to a toolkit shared by climate campaigner Greta Thunberg in support of the ongoing farmer protests has triggered a war of words between the Opposition and the BJP.

Accusing the government of "murdering democracy" by using force against a 21-year-old, the Opposition today said the voice of India cannot be silenced even as the BJP defended the action, saying a crime is a crime no matter at what age.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi led the Opposition offensive following the arrest of 21-year-old Disha Ravi (photo) in the case and said the country will not be silenced. "Your lips are free to speak. Say that the truth is still alive. They are scared, not the country," he said in a tweet in Hindi. "India will not be silenced," he added.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said, "Arrest of 21 year old Disha Ravi is an unprecedented attack on Democracy. Supporting our farmers is not a crime."

RJD leader Manoj Jha said democracy is under threat. "I am worried about democracy, as it is passing through the most difficult times," he said.

Union minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Gajendra Singh Shekhawat tweeted: "If age is the criteria then Param Veer Chakra Second



Lt Arun Khetarpal, martyred at 21 is who I am proud of. Not some toolkit propagandists."

BJP general secretary B L Santosh tweeted: "21 year old...environment activist...student...Are these credentials for becoming a part of breaking India forces? How does she get the access for editing tool kit?" Why she is part of anti-national WhatsApp groups...? Many questions...But only one answer...21 year old."

Bengaluru, Greta Thunberg, Vegan, sole bread winner, student, 21 year old, passionate activist...so many attempts to white wash a sin!!! Not one anarchist ready to answer the question...How 21 year old student got access to edit Toolkit," he said. Former Union ministers P Chidambaram and Jairam Ramesh have also come out strongly against the police action in the case, accusing the government of running an authoritarian regime as it was threat-

ened by a student.
"I strongly condemn the arrest of Disha Ravi and urge all students and youth to raise their voices to protest against the authoritarian regime," Chidambaram said.

"The Indian state must be standing on very shaky foundations if Disha Ravi, a 22 year old student of Mount Carmel college and a climate activist, has become a threat to the nation. A toolkit to support the farmers' protest is more dangerous than the intrusion by Chinese troops into Indian territory. India is becoming the theatre of the absurd and it is sad that the Delhi Police has become a tool of the oppressors," he said in a series of tweets.

Ramesh said, "Delhi Police on the rampage. After Disha Ravi, it is now the turn of another young woman, Nikita Jacob. More will no doubt follow..."

"This is Tanashaai in New India called Amit Shahi," he said.

"The arrest and the manner of arrest of green activist Disha Ravi shows clearly the intensifying Murder Of Democracy in India. But the young in India cannot be silenced. More power to them," the former environment minister added. In a tweet in Hindi, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said, "The ones with guns are afraid of an unarmed girl. The flames of courage from an unarmed girl have spread." She also used hashtags "ReleaseDishaRavi" and "IndiaBeingSilenced".

Congress leader Rajeev Gowda said an activist who stands up for farmers, fights for the planet is arrested on flimsy grounds.

"Has the government lost its balance? Will not such trumped-up charges, seeing conspiracy in regular social media mobilisation, do more damage to democracy?" he asked.

Reacting to the Opposition charges, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia said, "A criminal is a criminal, gender and age are immaterial if not a juvenile. Just for your knowledge, Kasab was 21 when he attacked Mumbai."

"Supporting farmers is not a crime but conspiring against India and inciting others surely is," he said.

BJP's IT cell in-charge Amit Malviya said, "The Left has been using young impressionable minds as cannon fodder for their deranged politics for a long time. From JNU to Jamia, AMU to Nadwa and now Disha Ravi, are all part of their sinister

Delhi police identifies toolkit creators

NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

Delhi Police on Monday identified the creators and editors of the toolkit document which was created to create attention on the social media for the farmers protest and has been linked to Republic Day's violence during tractor rally.

The 'toolkit' on farmers' protest, which was accidentally tweeted and subsequently deleted by global climate activist Greta Thunberg, was created by advocate-cum-activist Nikita Jacob and her associates Shantanu and Disha Ravi, police said.

Disha Ravi - the 22-year-old activist arrested in the Toolkit case- and two other wanted activists, held a Zoom meeting before the Republic Day to plan a social media rally on the tractor rally, Delhi Police said today.

SNS
plot...Unfortunately they are abandoned soon after they have served their purpose." The Delhi Police said non-bailable warrants have been issued against two people for allegedly sharing the "toolkit" related to farmers' protests on social media.

You may be two or three trillion companies but people value their privacy more than money. People have grave apprehensions that they will lose their privacy and it is our duty to protect them. It was proposed before us that a data protection law would be brought into force. Now under this policy you will share data of Indians

SUPREME COURT

comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, said that citizens have great apprehension about loss of their privacy and they think that their data and chats being shared with others and it has to be looked into. The Centre told the apex court that the social media apps cannot share data of users and data must be protected.

The petition challenged privacy policy alleging that there is huge metadata of users which is being shared for profit. The top court had in 2017 referred social media platform WhatsApp's privacy policy matter to a Constitution bench saying it concerns the larger issue of privacy and right to personal liberty.

The appeal filed in the apex court by Karmanya Singh Sareen and Shreya Sethi assailed the Delhi high court verdict on the ground that no relief was granted for data shared by users post-25 September, 2016, and it amounted to an infringement of fundamental rights under Article 19 and 21 of the Constitution.

India logs 11,649 new Covid cases, 90 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

been discharged so far. The recovery rate has increased to 97.29 per cent, while the fatality rate is down to 1.43 per cent. Meanwhile, more than 8 million (82,85,295) doses of Corona vaccine have been administered in India since the drive began on 16 January.

Rising Covid cases in Maharashtra: Describing as "alarming" the rise in fresh Covid-19 cases in some districts of Maharashtra, deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar on Monday warned of taking some "harsh decisions" and asked people to be prepared.

Some districts in Vidarbha region in east, especially Amravati and Nagpur, and Nashik in north have seen the number of new cases rising over the last few days.

Gujarat CM Covid positive

AHMEDABAD, 15 FEBRUARY

Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani tested positive for Covid-19 on Monday, a day after he collapsed on the stage, most probably due to blood pressure and sugar factors, during his speech at a BJP poll meeting at Tarsali in Vadodara.

Rupani's security personnel rushed to his rescue following which he was immediately flown here and admitted to a speciality hospital. The Covid-19 test report this morning confirmed him to be positive.

SNS



BOOTS ON THE GROUND



Tight security in place where farmers hold their protest against Centre's new farm laws.

At the Singhu border in the Capital on Monday.

SC grants 5-day bail to Kappan to visit ailing mother in Kerala



NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

The Supreme Court on Monday granted 5-day interim bail to journalist Siddique Kappan, arrested on his way to Hathras where a young Dalit woman had died after being allegedly gang-raped, to visit his ailing mother.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde, however, said that during his visit Kappan will not meet members of the public except his relatives and doctors concerned. It said he will be escorted by a team of UP police officers and police in Kerala will cooperate with them.

Advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ), stated that Kappan's mother could not talk on video conference and the doctors have said she might live only for two or three more days.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Uttar Pradesh government, said however that the condition of Kappan's mother was not as serious as was being projected and no medical certificates are provided. "There are posters in Kerala and the wife of Kappan is collecting money in his name as if he is a martyr... When he goes to Kerala to visit his mother political opinions would be formed," Mehta said. The bench said it was taking Sibal's statements on face value and "we will not allow Kappan to be paraded. He will go to his house under protection of armed guards."

Mamata launches scheme to provide meal at ₹ 5 to poor



KOLKATA, 15 FEBRUARY

Ahead of the Assembly election in the state, West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday virtually launched the 'Maa' scheme under which her government would provide a meal at a nominal cost of Rs 5 to poor people.

They will get a platter of rice, dal, a vegetable and egg curry for Rs 5 and the state government will bear a subsidy of Rs 15 per plate. Self-help groups will operate the kitchens from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. every day and such kitchens will be set up everywhere in the state gradually, Banerjee said.

Colleges reopen in Kashmir

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 15 FEBRUARY

Covid-19 lockdown.

Thereafter, the authorities announced winter vacations for colleges in Kashmir. The authorities at Abdul Azad Memorial Degree College, Bemina, in Srinagar had on Wednesday announced classes for different semesters on rotational basis.

The college has scheduled second semester classes on Monday and Tuesday, those of fourth semester on Wednesday and Thursday and sixth semester classes on Friday and Saturday. The Amar Singh College and SP College in Srinagar too have announced staggered attendance of students as a precautionary measure to contain Covid-19.

Educational institutions opened for a couple of days last year after a long-stretched curfew and restrictions that was followed by

India plans sustained human presence in space

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, 15 FEBRUARY

India plans to have a sustained human presence in space and is coming out with a policy framework and a long-term roadmap.

The Department of Space (DoS) has envisaged a national effort to meet the goal of successful demonstration of human spaceflight capability and to achieve the vision of sustained human presence in space.

India's maiden human spaceflight module *Gaganyaan* will be launched after the second unmanned mission planned in 2022-23, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said last week.

In her Budget speech, Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said the first unmanned launch is slated for December this year. The DoS has now put up for public consultation on the website of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), which comes under the former, the draft "Humans in Space Policy for India-2021" and guidelines and procedures for its implementation. DoS believes that given the collaborative nature

of human spaceflight due to its multi-disciplinary nature, it is essential to have a policy-framework, which not only fosters partnerships but also addresses proliferation concerns and compliance to existing policies, laws and treaties.

Human-spaceflight programme needs to be sustained over longer periods to deliver tangible benefits," according to the draft.

Hence, it is essential that the policy enables sustained presence in low earth orbit and beyond through reliable, robust, safe and affordable means by undertaking appropriate capacity building measures like collaborations, infrastructure development, facilities modernisation, technology development and human resource development.

This would also encourage new industries, create high technology jobs, enable socio-economic growth and further enhance India's stature and role in space, it was noted. "The Humans in Space Policy aims for sustained human presence in space as an instrument for development, innovation and foster collaborations in alignment with national interests", the draft said.

Technological elements such as development of human-rated launch vehicle, environmental control and life support system, crew escape system, deceleration system, crew selection and training and development of human-centric products shall be undertaken by the DoS, utilising ISRO expertise, national research institutions, academia and others.



Arresting anybody who is protesting against government policies is not acceptable. The BJP should first take action against its own IT Cell members who are spreading fake news. Why two sets of rules?

MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

Disha's arrest by Delhi Police 'extrajudicial abduction': AAP

The 21-year-old climate activist's arrest is an unprecedented attack on democracy, says CM Kejriwal, adding that supporting farmers could not be a crime; AAP demands her immediate release

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

The AAP today demanded immediate release of 21-year-old climate activist Disha Ravi, calling her arrest by Delhi Police an "extrajudicial abduction".

Addressing a press conference here, AAP spokesperson Raghav Chadha said the party condemns Ravi's arrest.

"The BJP government has imposed a state of emergency in the country. The youth have been speaking strongly, but the BJP does not like the youth, that's why the 21-year-old youth activist has been arrested," he said.

Chadha said the "huge" BJP government, with 300 MPs, is so afraid of the youth activist that they sent Delhi Police to arrest her from her home in Bengaluru.

"The BJP government is



allergic to the youth of the country. The arrest of Ravi shows this. Her arrest was an

extrajudicial abduction," Chadha charged. "The BJP has put the coun-

try under an undeclared emergency. We demand that Ravi must be immediately

released," Chadha said.

The young AAP leader called upon the youth of the country to unite and raise their voices against the "injustices" happening in the nation under the current BJP dispensation.

Ravi was arrested on Saturday from Bengaluru for allegedly sharing with the global climate activist Greta Thunberg a toolkit related to farmers' protracted protest against the Centre's controversial three new agriculture laws.

Delhi Police claimed that Ravi was an editor of this "toolkit Google doc" and "key conspirator" in the document's formulation and dissemination.

A graduate in Bachelor of Business Administration, Ravi is also one of the founding members of the group "Fridays For Future India".

Non-bailable warrants have also been issued against

advocate Nikita Jacob and activist Shantanu for their alleged involvement in preparing this toolkit document. They have also been alleged to be in touch with "pro-Khalistan elements".

Earlier in the day, Delhi chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal called the arrest of Disha Ravi an "unprecedented attack on democracy".

"Arrest of 21 yr old Disha Ravi is an unprecedented attack on Democracy. Supporting our farmers is not a crime," Kejriwal tweeted.

Delhi Police reports to the Union home ministry.

Ravi's arrest has sparked outrage among a large section of civil society, Opposition parties, and human rights and environmental activists groups, who have strongly condemned the Narendra Modi government and Delhi Police over it.

3 held for duping Kejriwal's daughter

PTI
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

Three men have been arrested for allegedly duping Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's daughter, police said on Monday.

Sajid (26), a resident of Nuh in Haryana, Kapil (18) and Manvinder Singh (25), hailing from Mathura -- were arrested from the Bharatpur-Mathura border with the help of technical surveillance, police said.

Subsequently, the man sent a QR code to the seller and asked her to scan it so that the amount fixed under the deal could be transferred to her account but instead, Rs 20,000 got deducted from her account when she followed the instructions of the buyer, a senior police officer said.

When she enquired about it, the man claimed that he had sent a wrong QR code by mistake and sent another link to her, asking her to follow the same procedure. But again an amount of Rs 14,000 got deducted from the seller's account when she scanned the QR code, the officer said.

An FIR under the relevant sections of the IPC was registered on February 7.

'DJB working actively to ensure adequate supply of clean water'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

He said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal directed to provide clean water to the people of Delhi as soon as possible by cleaning up the dirt in the Upper Ganga Canal.

The Bhagirathi water treatment plant was now working at 100 per cent and the plant at Sonia Vihar at 80 per cent capacity.

He said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal directed to provide clean water to the people of Delhi as soon as possible by cleaning up the dirt in the Upper Ganga Canal.

However, the DJB is working day and night to provide adequate clean water to the people.

North Corp okays factory licence on all floors in industrial areas

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

To create more employment opportunities and utilization of existing industrial infrastructure, the North Corporation has approved the factory licence on all floors in confirmed industrial areas in its jurisdiction, said North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash on Monday.

According to him the civic body has approved granting of factory licence on all floors for medium, light and service industries only where the building plan is already available for ground floor as pre-existing norms.

The Mayor said that any industrial unit holder can apply for the factory licence through an online application process on its official website

The Mayor said that any industrial unit holder can apply for the factory license through an online application process on its official website mcdonline.nic.in.

mcdonline.nic.in.

"This demand was being made since long time by the representatives of the industrial area, which has been fulfilled by the North Corporation today," said Mayor Jai Prakash.

He said that with the approval of the factory license on all floors, more employment opportunities will be created and the building of self-reliant India will get more strength.

Delhi University reopens 4 more libraries for research scholars, faculty members

PTI
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

As part of its phased reopening amid COVID-19 outbreak, the Delhi University will allow research scholars and faculty members to access four more libraries across its campuses.

After allowing access to the central library last week, the varsity reopened the Central Science Library, Ratan Tata Library, South Delhi Campus Library, and Faculty of Law Library for PhD/MPhil scholars and faculty members on Monday.

It announced that users will have to make prior registration to use the library facilities from 10 am to 4 pm on weekdays.

"Library facilities under Delhi University Library System (DULS) will be made operational in phases. In the first phase, only bona fide faculty members, PhD/MPhil scholars will be allowed to use library reading room facilities. The reading room facilities would be limited from 10 am to 4 pm during the week days i.e. Monday to Friday," the university said in a notice.

The library will also allow its members to borrow and return books and no 'late return fine' would be charged for the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the floors of the South Delhi Campus Library can be accessed by research scholars,

ars, the reading hall at the ground floor and first floor of the Faculty of Law Library will be available to visitors, the notice stated.

The library will also allow its members to borrow and return books and no 'late return fine' would be charged for the period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While it advised the staff handling books to wear gloves, visitors have also been instructed to carry gloves and hand sanitiser and maintain social distancing.

"The user/staff who does not adhere to the guidelines would face disciplinary action like cancellation of membership etc," it said.

The Delhi University (DU) had announced reopening its campus and colleges from February 1 for final-year students who require access to facilities for practical purposes.

Classified

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

General Public CCR No. HRGRC02-000608-2020
Next Date: 18-03-2021
Publication Issued to: General Public, Haryana.
In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or

through counsel on 18-03-2021 at 10-00 a.m.
For details logon to https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&dis-trict=gurugram.
Dated, this day of 12-02-2021.
Civil Judge (Senior Division), Gurugram
Seal of the Court

The Statesman

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Cabin No. 305, P. C. Chambers

Near Jodha Niwas

The Mall Shimla-171001, H.P.

AIR-SURCHARGE: Kathmandu - Rs. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1

All other stations in India - Re. 1

East Corp issues 8989 challans against pollution causing units

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

In view of the increasing air pollution level in Delhi, the East Corporation has issued 8989 challans against pollution causing units due to construction activities.

As per the official data till 17th October 2020 to 12th February 2021, the civic body issued 6237 challans for illegal dumping of C&D waste, 1098 challans for dust control violation on construction sites 535 challans for health activities.

Under Construction & Demolition (C & D) activi-

"East Corporation collected about 48 lakhs 80 thousand and 860 rupees through total 8989 challans," said official East Corporation.



DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL

ON THE 21-YEAR-OLD ACTIVIST'S ARREST FROM BENGALURU

THUMBNAILS



Delhi Mahila Congress activists protest against price hike of LPG gas cylinder at CP, in the Capital on Monday.

Mumbai junction named after Israeli leader Peres: A junction close to a synagogue near Kala Ghoda in Mumbai has been named after late Israeli leader and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Shimon Peres, with an aim to improve bilateral ties with that country, a civic official said on Monday. PTI

Girl raped in UP's Fatehpur: A 15-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a contractor in a village in UP's Fatehpur district, police said on Monday. When the girl's sister tried to save her, the accused attempted to rape her as well. PTI

Anupam's book: Anupam Kher today launched his book Your Best Day Is Today! At ITC Sonar Kolkata in the presence of Ms Ina Puri, writer, biographer, art curator and collector. The book is a compendium of experiences, lessons, and positive takeaways to help one deal with the dark times in your life. SNS

Petition against actor for anti-Modi tweet

Oviya tweeted with hashtag #GoBackModi just before PM visited Chennai

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI, 15 FEBRUARY

A day after climate activist Disha Ravi's arrest which created nationwide protests, a member of the legal wing of Tamil Nadu BJP submitted a petition to the cyber crime cell demanding action against actor Oviya who tweeted with the hashtag #GoBackModi just before Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Chennai on Sunday to launch a few projects and inaugurate a few more.

The petition was submitted to the superintendent of police, CyberCell, CB-CID by Alexis Sudhakar, a lawyer and member of the BJP's legal wing, seeking an inquiry against the tweet.

The party also demanded the police check if the actor's intention behind the tweet was to incite public disorder ahead of Modi's visit to the state's capital city and take appropriate action against her. The complaint even asked the police to impose sedition charge on her for a mere tweet.

The said tweet was posted from Oviyaasweetz, the official Twitter account of the actor, known from *Bigg Boss Tamil*, on Saturday.

Sudhakar alleged that Sri Lanka and China were working with the likes of Oviya to create law and order problems against India's sovereignty and some political parties are also indulging in activities that would lead to distortion of peace and order in and around Chennai. However, he did not present any proof to back his claims.



He claimed in his complaint, "Following her tweets, public in Tamil Nadu, including some petty political parties, indulged in activities that lead to distortion of peace and order in and around Chennai and I, along with my friends and relatives, were victimised. It is pertinent to note that even last time during the Prime Minister's visit such similar illegal activities distorting public order by inciting through words published in social media occurred and the same has been repeating distressfully. Hence this continuous criminal activities deserve a serious investigation to unearth the motive and the culprits behind offender Oviya as there remains a reasonable suspicion that activities against India's sovereignty is backed up by notorious

criminals."

He appealed in his complaint that investigation officers check her correspondence and communication with foreign countries and also inspect her passport to understand if she is of Indian nationality only given her violent acts."

But BJP state social media head CTR Nirmal Kumar denied that the party had given any official complaint.

Support for Disha:

Meanwhile, support has been pouring in from all quarters of Tamil Nadu for the Bengaluru-based activist Disha Ravi. Carnatic singer and activist TM Krishna questioned whether "we have descended into police state territory".

Actor Siddharth extended his "unconditional support" to

Disha on Twitter. Actor and politician Prakash Raj urged people to raise their voice against the activist's arrest and demanded her release. Playback singer Chinmayi also raised her voice against the arrest, adding she was "heartbroken".

Meanwhile, DMK president MK Stalin on Sunday dubbed Modi's visit to Chennai as a "show" ahead of elections. He pointed out that chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami claims that his party is not subservient to the BJP but whether he could ask Narendra Modi why there was no progress in the setup of AIIMS Hospital in Madurai or what happened to the demand to exempt Tamil Nadu from NEET, or what happened to the release of Rajiv Gandhi assassination case convicts or about Mekedatu dam project?

Govt insulted farmers, ministers called them traitors: Priyanka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW, 15 FEBRUARY

meaning of 'parijivi'. Your ministers called the farmers traitors, she said.

Priyanka criticised Haryana minister J P Dalal, who had stoked a controversy on Saturday saying the farmers who died during the course of the agitation would have passed away even if they had stayed back home.

Addressing a "kisan pancharat" in UP's Bijnore (*in photo*), the Congress leader said farmers were ridiculed in Parliament and dubbed as traitors by ministers. "The farmer who is standing on your door, his son is standing at the border of the country. The farmer whom you are insulting, his son is safeguarding the country's border, she said referring to the protest against the farm laws at the Delhi borders.

They were given a new name 'aandolanjivi' and 'parijivi'. All of you know the

the past 75 years have been sold and plans are afoot to sell the unsold ones. What will such a government do for you," Priyanka Gandhi Vadra asked.

Further lashing out at the PM, she said, "The Prime Minister can go to the US, hold a gathering for Trump (ex-US president), visit China and Pakistan, and there is no country which he has not visited. And you could not go two-three kilometres from your house and meet the farmers who are saying please come and talk to us."

"There are two types of leaders. There are some who have a lot of arrogance and they forget as to who gave them power. In the history of the country, whenever a leader has become arrogant, the people of the country have taught him a lesson, and he feels ashamed".

to regularise 1,850 contractual employees permanent. The state Cabinet, which met on Monday, decided to regularise the appointments of 221 temporary staff with over 10 years of experience in various government owned boards/corporations. The government also decided to regularise 90 temporary staff of the tourism department and 16 employees in Nirmith Kendra who have completed 10 years of service.

Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala said the state has seen close to 3 lakh illegal appointments by the LDF government and it appears to be a "Kumbhmela of backdoor appointments".

Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath along with other central ministers.

BJP's national president JP Nadda and other senior national leaders will also come to give the TMC a hard fight. The central party leadership wants Modi to open the Noapara-Dakshineswar Metro before announcement of poll schedule.

A senior leader of the state BJP said Modi may inaugurate the project on 22 February. Party sources said the project could be operational by February this year and it will help the BJP to highlight the success of the central government as commuting will be a lot easier from the north to the south end and that too in a few minutes.

TENDER

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI
PHE DIVISION CHADOORA
E-mail ID: xenphecd786@gmail.com

e-NIT No.36 dated : 02/2021

Subject: Engagement of consultant for Third Party Verification Agencies To Check the Quality Of Works Executed by the Agencies, Quality Of Materials Used For Construction And Quality Of Machinery Installed In Each Scheme under JJM.

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and Chief Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE Department), Kashmir, the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Chadoora invites the e-NIT from "Consultants/ Agencies/ Firms" for the above work under JJM in different Districts of Kashmir Province of the UT of J&K.

Issued on behalf of Chief Engineer Jal Shakti Department Kashmir Srinagar

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS (TIME LINES)

S.No. 1 Event :- Notice Inviting e-NIT, Date :- 13.02.2021, Time :- 12.00 Noon, Venue :-
S.No. 2 Event :- Start Date for downloading of e-NIT, Date :- 15.02.2021, Time :- 5.00 pm, Venue :-
S.No. 3 Event :- End Date for downloading of e-NIT, Date :- 28.02.2021, Time :- 10.00 am, Venue :-
S.No. 4 Event :- Start Date for uploading of e-NIT, Date :- 15.02.2021, Time :- 10.00 am, Venue :-
S.No. 5 Event :- Last Date of receiving pre-bid quarries, Date :- 20.02.2021, Time :- 04.00 pm, Venue :-
S.No. 6 Event :- Date of pre-bid meeting, Date :- 22.02.2021, Time :- 11.30 am, Venue :- In the office of Chief Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Chadoora on behalf of Chief Engineer.
S.No. 7 Event :- End Date of uploading of e-NIT, Date :- 01.03.2021, Time :- 4.00 pm, Venue :-
S.No. 8 Event :- Opening of Technical Proposal, Date :- 03.03.2021, Time :- 11.00 am, Venue :- Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Chadoora on behalf of Chief Engineer.
S.No. 9 Event :- Date of receipt of hard copy, Date :- 05.03.2021, Time :- 4.00 pm, Venue :- Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Division Chadoora on behalf of Chief Engineer.
S.No. 10 Event :- Date of opening of financial bid, Date :- To be intimated separately, Time :- Venue :-
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti (PHE) Division Chadoora

No. DIPK-13118/20 Dated: 15-02-2021

DELI WAQF BOARD(Govt. of NCT of Delhi)
5028, Daryaganj, New Delhi-110002**NOTICE INVITING TENDER (PRESS NOTICE)**

Online tenders are invited through Delhi Govt. e-procurement website <http://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in> on behalf of the Section Officer, Delhi Waqf Board, regarding **Engagement of security officer/guards with and without arms services agency to protect our premises, assets, and personnel. They will maintain a high visibility presence and prevent all illegal or inappropriate actions at Delhi Waqf Board.**

Estimated Cost	: Rs. 47,31,012/-
Earnest Money	: Rs. 94,620/-
Period of Contract	: One year and may be extended up to two years on the same terms and conditions if the overall work of the agency found satisfactory.
Date of release of tender through e-procurement solutions	: 17/02/2021
Last date and time for sale of tender form:	: 10/03/2021 at 03:00 P.M.
Last date/time for submission tender bid:	: 10/03/2021 at 3:00 P.M.
Date/time of opening of Technical Bids:	: 11/03/2021 at 3:30 P.M.
Date/time of opening of financial Bids	: after finalizing technical bid
Further details can be seen for Tender ID No:	: F.8 (10)Hiring of Security Guard/DWB/2021/01

Section Officer
Delhi Waqf Board

DIP/SHADBARTH/0635/20-21

PSC rank holders' protest gains momentum across Kerala

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

TPURAM, 15 FEBRUARY

Protests by the Public Service Commission (PSC) rank holders is gaining strength across Kerala. On Monday, PSC rank holders, who have been demonstrating before the secretariat for the past 20 days, crawled in the blazing sun from the south gate of the secretariat to the protest venue, urging the government to immediately turn its attention to their demands such as regular-

isation of temporary employees and extension of last grade servant rank for another six months.

The protesters said: "We are facing grave injustice from a government which promised the maximum number of employment opportunities in their election manifesto. We thought the government would be considerate towards our demands. But they have simply ignored us and branded it as politically motivated," said a protesting PSC rank holder.

Youth Congress workers and members of several outfits came to the protest venue and expressed their support for the agitation. Former chief minister Oom-

men Chandy on Monday visited the protesting PSC rank holders and heard their issues. Some of them fell on their knees crying and touched their feet. Chandy promised them that all the legal sides of the issue will be looked into.

Kerala PCC president Mullappally Ramachandran asked the government not to view the protest with vengeance and suggested their demands be considered.

The government, however, has made many tem-

porary appointments permanent. The state Cabinet, which met on Monday, decided to regularise the appointments of 221 temporary staff with over 10 years of experience in various government owned boards/corporations. The government also decided to regularise 90 temporary staff of the tourism department and 16 employees in Nirmith Kendra who have completed 10 years of service.

Meanwhile, Kerala HC on Monday stayed the move

Naidu calls stir over steel plant

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, 15 FEBRUARY

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) president N. Chandrababu Naidu has given a call for statewide agitation on 18 February to protest against privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant even as senior leaders of the BJP Andhra Pradesh unit on Monday held a meeting with Union minister for steel Dharmendra Pradhan and urged him to look into alternatives to privatisation since public sentiments were firmly against the move.

As the spat between ruling YSRCP and the TDP over the privatisa-

tion turned ugly the former chief minister has urged people to hold protests rallies in the villages and across the state.

He accused chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy of betraying the state by allowing the privatisation of the steel plant.

Describing the steel plant as pride of Telugu people he said: "Visakhapatnam steel industry which is the backbone of the industrial development of Andhra Pradesh, directly employs 40,000 people and indirectly employs another 50,000 workers. He added that the

YSRCP leaders have been pointing out that privatisation initiative in Vizag Steel Plant had begun in 2018 when Naidu was the chief minister of the state. YSRCP social media post also posted photographs of Naidu meeting a team from Posco which TDP dismissed as fake news clarifying that the former chief minister had met South Korean consul-general.

Reddy has already written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, opposing the move, but

the TDP has questioned his sincerity, pointing out that he had met representatives of Posco earlier and wondered whether this was tied with the privatisation move, an argument dismissed by the YSRCP.

Meanwhile, state BJP leaders urged him to reconsider the privatisation plan.

After the meeting state BJP president Somu Veeraju said they had explained the sentiments of the people of the state who are against privatisation. They are expected to meet other Union ministers and central leadership over the issue.

BJP biggies to descend in Bengal

RAJIB CHAKRABORTY

KOLKATA, 15 FEBRUARY

In its massive campaign plan for poll-bound West Bengal, the BJP's central leadership has decided to send heavyweight cabinet/portfolio holders and national leaders to the state to highlight the central government's projects and its benefits for common people.

At the same time it will also intensify campaign against chief minister Mamata Banerjee-led government's "lacuna" and "misrule".

In its next round of poll

preparations the BJP central

unit has prepared a list of heavyweights which include

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi, Union Home minister Amit Shah, Cabinet minister Smriti Zubin Irani, Uttar

Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath along with other central ministers.

BJP's national president JP Nadda and other senior national leaders will also come to give the TMC a hard fight. The central party leadership wants Modi to open the Noapara-Dakshineswar Metro before announcement of poll schedule.

A senior leader of the state BJP said Modi may inaugurate the project on 22 February. Party sources said the project could be operational by February this year and it will help the BJP to highlight the success of the central government as commuting will be a lot easier from the north to the south end and that too in a few minutes.

Meals for poor at ₹5 in Mamata's 'Maa' scheme



Badruddin Ajmal is not anti-Hindu, BJP is more communal...

ASSAM PRADESH CONGRESS COMMITTEE PRESIDENT RIPUN BORA
EXUDING CONFIDENCE THAT CONGRESS-LED ALLIANCE WILL OUST BJP

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2021

THUMBNAILS



Members of AISF demand release of Dalit activist of Mazdoor Adhikar Sangathan who was arrested on fabricated charges, at Haryana Bhawan, in the Capital on Monday.

Modi's vision: PM Modi is likely to reflect on his vision for a new Information Technology-driven world order in a post-Covid 19 new normal at the 29th NASSCOM Technology and Leadership Forum (NTLF) on 17 February. Modi will address the forum via video conferencing.

Honour killing: In a suspect case of honour killing, a woman was burnt alive by her family members over an inter-faith love affair, police said. The woman's father, brother, brother-in-law and another person have been arrested in this connection. Police said the family had hired a contract killer and paid him Rs 1.5 lakh to eliminate the woman over her relationship with a Muslim man.

Sachin Joshi arrested: ED has arrested Sachin Joshi, an actor-producer hailing from a family having gutka manufacturing business, in connection with a money laundering case against the city-based Omkar Realtors and Developers, officials said on Monday.

Chamoli flash flood toll rises to 56; 148 remain missing

U'khand police have preserved DNA samples of unidentified bodies, search operations continue

SNS & PTI
TAPOVAN/DEHRADUN,
15 FEBRUARY

Search and rescue operations continued for the eighth day at the flash flood hit areas in district Chamoli on Monday. With the recovery of four bodies on Monday the toll mounted to 56. The devastating flash flood created ripples on 7 February in a remote part of Chamoli. Still, 148 people remain missing.

Three bodies were recovered from the Tapovan tunnel and one from Maithana.

Extensive search operations have been going on at the Tapovan Tunnel since the last eight days.

After using earthmovers for about one week, trucks were used for ferrying debris from the tunnel. So far 30 bodies have been identified.

Uttarakhand police have preserved the DNA samples of unidentified bodies of the



State Disaster Relief Force jawans installing water level sensor and alarm system near Reni village in Chamoli on Monday.

Chamoli flash flood.

According to Chamoli police a total of 56 family members have submitted their DNA samples for matching with the samples of unidentified bodies. Water level sensor and alarm system was installed for monitoring the flow of Rishiganga. After an artificial lake formed in the upstream of Rishiganga, this monitoring gadget was stationed near Reni village. The

rescuers managed to clear debris till 135 Mts inside the Tapovan tunnel.

Garghwal Commissioner Ravinath Raman hosted a meeting of different agencies involved in the operation. In the meeting it was decided to use more machines for recovering bodies from Tapovan barrage site, intake tunnel, etc.

Meanwhile officials said the other approach at reaching the

trapped workers by widening a hole drilled into the tunnel system does not appear to be working. A camera or tube cannot be inserted as the hole is choked with sludge.

Rescuing the trapped people is now possible only with the help of excavators, said Chamoli District Magistrate Swati S Bhaduria.

They continue to dredge out the sludge from the tunnel, making slow progress.

Asked about the chances of survival of those missing or trapped, the district magistrate said, "We must always try to be hopeful when the circumstances are adverse."

Families of some of the missing people continue their vigil near the tunnel, plucking up the courage to take a look every time a body is brought out. But many are beginning now to return to their homes. The relatives of Jitendra, a resident of Jammu brought out dead from the tunnel on Sunday, are also

packing up to leave. His younger brother Pawan said seven of them had come from Jammu after hearing about the disaster. Jitendra's phone was switched off. "We had been scouring different areas of Tapovan and Joshimath for four days in search of Jitendra until his body was brought out of the tunnel on Sunday. It's tragic," he said.

Alam Singh Pundir's body, the first to be pulled out of the tunnel on Sunday, has also been handed over to his relatives who arrived in Tapovan just a day after the flash flood.

Those pulled out from the tunnel so far appear to be of workers who ran towards its mouth in an attempt to get out but got bogged down in the sludge that was gushing in, an NTPC officials said.

Electricity supply has been restored in all affected villages except Pang, where solar lanterns have been provided to residents for the time being, the district magistrate said.

Kanhaiya's meeting with Nitish aide triggers speculation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, 15 FEBRUARY



Kumar government.

At present, Kanhaiya finds himself completely isolated within the party although this could also be an attempt to exert pressure on his party.

Even as the matter grabbed media's attention, a Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) MP Chandan Singh met chief minister Nitish Kumar at latter residence today.

Although Singh said the purpose of the meeting was to thank the chief minister who had taken care of him while he was admitted to AIIMS-Delhi, the holding of the meeting amidst the prevailing bitterness between the JD-U and the LJP tells a different story. The LJP has six members in the Lok Sabha.

The entire JD-U leadership has straightway blamed Chirag Paswan for its poor performance in the recently held Bihar Assembly polls. In the elections, Paswan who heads the LJP had fielded candidates against the JD-U which split the NDA votes and caused much damage to the party. Paswan, however, didn't field candidates against the BJP which tally went spectacularly up. An angry JD-U leadership has now asked the BJP to throw out the LJP from the NDA.

FS to visit Moscow to discuss Putin's India trip

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is sending Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla to Moscow later this week to do the groundwork for Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to India later this year for the annual summit between the two countries.

The summit could not take place last year due to the situation arising from Covid-19.

Shringla's visit to Moscow on 17-18 February at the invitation of Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov is also aimed at sending a clear

message to the Joe Biden administration that India would continue to deepen its time-tested friendship with Russia, notwithstanding continuing American pressure.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) today announced that Shringla would hold the next round of India-Russia foreign office consultations with Morgulov during which the two sides would review the entire gamut of bilateral relations, including the forthcoming high-level exchanges.

Shringla would also meet Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov for an

exchange of views on topical issues of regional and international importance apart from delivering a speech on 'India-Russia relations' at the prestigious Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic situation, India and Russia have sustained the momentum of the special and privileged Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

"This year's first visit abroad by the Foreign Secretary to Moscow signifies the importance India attaches to its close and friendly relations

with the Russian Federation," the MEA said in a press release.

Last week, Indian Ambassador to Russia DVenkatesh Varma had made it clear that India would go ahead with the S-400 missile defence system deal with Russia despite pressure from Washington.

"India has an independent foreign policy. We take decisions based on our defence and security needs. The S-400 contract is presently being implemented according to the schedule indicated in the contract," he said in an interview to leading Russian online newspaper *Lenta.ru*.

Former SC judge PB Sawant passes away



PUNE, 15 FEBRUARY

Former Supreme Court judge PB Sawant died due to cardiac arrest at his residence here in Maharashtra on Monday morning, family sources said. He was 90.

Justice Sawant was one of the co-conveners of the Elgar Parishad conclave held on 31 December, 2017 in Pune. He was also part of a panel that conducted an investigation into the 2002 Gujarat riots. Justice Sawant had also served as chairman of the Press Council of India.

He died at his residence here around 9.30 a.m. on Monday following cardiac arrest, his daughter Sujata Mane said. His last rites will be performed on Tuesday.

Justice Sawant is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son. Justice Sawant (retd) was one of the members of the Indian People's Tribunal, a fact-finding team headed by Justice VR Krishnamoorthy, to investigate the 2002 communal riots in Gujarat.

The Communist Party of India (CPI) has deeply mourned the death of retired Justice of Supreme Court P B Sawant who expired in Pune today.

In a message, the party said Justice Sawant was a great friend and guide of all progressive movements and even after his retirement was very active in supporting them. "The progressive movement in general and CPI in particular has lost a true friend. The real tribute to him will be to continue our fight for a free democratic socialist and secular India," the party said.

The party has sent condolences to his family.

Sawant was framed against them under Sections 9, 39, 44, 48A, 49, 49A, 49B, 50, 51 (IA) 57 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, it is learnt.

"The accused persons have

6 held with jumbo tusk

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 15 FEBRUARY



The forest department arrested six poachers with an elephant tusk from Oodlabori in Jalpaiguri district in the wee hours today.

All the six men hail from neighbouring Sikkim, and one of them is said to be an Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) man.

Acting on intelligence inputs, foresters tracked their movement and found them bargaining for the tusk inside a car near a hotel, while they had another car nearby. Both the cars bear the number plates of Sikkim.

Forest department officials of the Sarugara Range under the Baikunthapur Forest Division nabbed the six, while two others managed to give them the slip. The tusk, which is 41 cm long and weighs 1.019 kg, was being carried in a travel bag.

The accused persons have been identified as Gandup Lepcha of Geyzing district, Dhan Bahadur Pradhan from East Sikkim, Rohit Timanag from Gangtok, Dawa Sherpa and Ganesh Chettri from Namchi district and Samson Lepcha, also from Geyzing district.

According to forest officials, Ganesh Chettri belonged to the IRB, as they found his official identity card. Primary investigations revealed that he was the mastermind and the kingpin of the racket and the elephant might have been killed in a forest in Assam.

Charges have been framed against them under Sections 9, 39, 44, 48A, 49, 49A, 49B, 50, 51 (IA) 57 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, it is learnt.

The accused persons have

Ballot papers in garbage, Cong files complaint

SHIMLA, 15 FEBRUARY

The Himachal Pradesh Congress on Monday filed a complaint with the State Election Commission (SEC) over dumping of ballot papers of Panchayat Raj institutions' elections (PRIs) in garbage and demanded action against erring government officials.

The complaint was submitted by state Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore in which he raised the issue of ballot papers of zila parishad polls which were recovered from garbage near Government Senior Secondary School (GSSS) Dharmpur in Solan district. GSSS Dharmpur was the counting centre for Dharmpur block of Solan district in the recently held PRIs elections.

Rathore said a bundle of 25 stamped ballot papers, two-sealed envelopes and an account sheet of ballot papers relating to the recent zila parishad polls were found dumped along with the garbage of a counting centre at GSSS Dharmpur on 13 February. He also demanded a prompt probe and necessary action against the guilty officials.

"I was also informed that the conversion of the old Railway Printing Press into a DHR Museum is nearing completion and will be opened for public very soon," Mr Bista said on social media.

Reacting to the MP's initiatives, the general secretary of the Himalayan Forest Village Organization (HFVO), Lila Gurung, said that the FRA, if implemented, must be done properly. "It should not be eye-wash only. Once the Act is implemented, other things like rehabilitation and compensation will automatically follow," said Mr Gurung.

The HFVO is a forum of forest dwellers, which is protesting the Sevoke-Rangpo rail link and is saying that the project would leave thousands of forest villagers atrisk.

The organization is claiming that the project is being undertaken without following the forest and environment laws and in violation of the FRA. According to Mr Gurung, the railway line will affect around 24 villages.

"Though work has started, no no objection certificate (NOC) was taken from any gram sabha, which should have actually been done according to rules. The paha-patta (land deeds) has also not been given of the land, jungle or water, where the forest villagers live," he said.

Addressing a public meeting at the Montivet Ground in Kurseong in Darjeeling today, Mr Gurung also alleged that the GTB had not followed the guidelines while conducting the test and that it was done without the consent of the state government's education

Rajnath lauds Indian armed forces for ensuring country's territorial integrity

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

The Indian defence forces strictly follow the 'mantra' that 'the more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war', defence minister Rajnath Singh said today while lauding their contribution in ensuring the territorial integrity of the nation.

He was speaking at a function after presenting the trophies of best marching contingents of the Republic Day Parade 2021, in New Delhi.

Jat Regimental Centre bagged the trophy of best marching contingent among the Tri-Services, while Delhi Police was adjudged as the best marching contingent among the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and other auxiliary services.

Brig Adarsh K Batal and Subedar Major (Honorary Captain) Virendra received the trophy on behalf of the Jat Regimental Centre and Special Commissioner of Police Robin Hibu and Assistant Commissioner of Police Vivek Bhagat, Commander received the trophy on behalf of Delhi Police. The two contingents were adjudged on the basis of assessment by two panels

of judges.

Rajnath congratulated Jat Regimental Centre and Delhi Police for winning the trophies, terming the honour as a symbol of respect for their hard work and dedication. He lauded the courage and valour of the Jat Regimental Centre while praising the Delhi Police for effectively carrying out additional responsibilities. "Delhi is the nerve centre of Republic of India, thereby on the target of our adversaries. It is commendable that in addition to ensuring safety and wellbeing of the National Capital from internal and external threats, the Delhi Police win the best marching contingent trophy regularly," he said.

He pointed out that despite the restrictions imposed due to the outbreak of Covid-19, the armed forces marched at the Rajpath with passion and enthusiasm, terming it as a matter of great pride for the nation.

The party has sent condolences to his family.

In a message, the party said Justice Sawant was a great friend and guide of all progressive movements and even after his retirement was very active in supporting them. "The progressive movement in general and CPI in particular has lost a true friend. The real tribute to him will be to continue our fight for a free democratic socialist and secular India," the party said.

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"The accused persons have

Gurung finds fault with GTA teacher test

MOHAN PRASAD
KURSEONG, 15 FEBRUARY

cation department.

"The examination was conducted just to play with the future of the hill students and to mislead the youths and people of Darjeeling hills," he said, adding the candidates appearing in the TET should now ask the GTA about their appointment and recruitment for the posts."

Mr Gurung further said that a team of his party had met state education minister Partha Chatterjee in Kolkata and inquired about the examination.

"As per Mr Partha Chatterjee, he has no knowledge of the said examination being conducted and the test was held without their knowledge," he claimed, demanding that the GTA make public the facts and details of the test.

While thousands of employees lost their jobs last year due to the pandemic, the prospects are not all bleak.

According to a survey conducted by Ministry of Skill

Origin of Covid

The controversy over the World Health Organisation team being barred from gaining access to regions in China it had wanted to visit in connection with the pandemic probe, has acquired a new dimension with the revelation on Monday that signs of the outbreak were much wider in Wuhan in December 2018 than previously thought. In terms of periodisation of the medical narrative, will the tag Covid-19 now be recast to Covid-18? The investigators of the UN entity, who represent the comity of nations, are urgently seeking access to thousands of blood samples from the city that China has not so far let them examine. According to the chief investigator for the WHO mission, Peter Ben Embarek, the team had found several signs of the "more wide-ranging 2019 spread", establishing for the first time there were over a dozen strains of the virus in Wuhan already in December. On the first anniversary, so to speak, of coronavirus, WHO has set the record straight; the "breaking news" is decidedly more critical than whether WHO is facing restrictions in the course of its survey into the why and wherefore of Covid. The team, which arrived in China in January and spent four weeks looking into the origins of the Covid-19 outbreak, also met the first patient, an office employee in his 40s with no major travel history. He was reportedly infected on December 8. The slow emergence of WHO's data may add to concerns voiced by other scientists studying the origins of the disease, specifically that it may have been spreading in China long before its first official emergence in mid-December. This can be contextualised with Embarek's statement in Switzerland on his return from Wuhan ~ "The virus was circulating widely in Wuhan in December, and this is a new finding." Indeed, WHO's findings predate the conventional theories on the origins of Covid. Mr Embarek has let it be known that the head of the WHO mission in Wuhan had stated four hypotheses on how the virus spread, but reiterated that the "laboratory incident hypothesis is extremely unlikely to explain the introduction of the virus into the human population." Nor for that matter has it been possible to identify any animal species as a "potential reservoir for this disease".

The fineprint of WHO's assessment must be that coronavirus is the fallout of a human-to-human affliction. Over the weekend, the United States has expressed concern over the possibility of the Chinese government's interference in the WHO's recent investigation into the origins of Covid-19 in Wuhan. It is fervently to be hoped that the investigation will be free from intervention and alteration by the People's Republic of China; certainly WHO must be aware it did its reputation considerable harm with its initial responses that seemed to have been scripted by Beijing.

Way forward

The latest bout of hand wringing in Western capitals over the coup in Myanmar is only to be expected. For, rather than trusting a leader with established liberal-democratic credentials such as Aung San Suu Kyi, they fell prey to the propaganda of rent-a-quote pressure groups seeking mutual bliss-points without a clue about the full picture in Rakhine state and the warp and woof of Rohingya politics which includes a viciously radical Islamist agenda just as it does excesses by security forces. Governments were successfully lobbied to undermine the fledgling democracy the former State Counsellor was trying her best in difficult circumstances to nurture in the troubled country. In fact, the democratically elected civilian leadership under Ms Suu Kyi had slowly but surely been getting the military establishment or Tatmadaw to loosen its vice-like grip on the institutions of power over the past decade, a complicated task at the best of times given the reality that the army, which wielded complete control over Myanmar between 1962 and 2010, is very much an entrenched player in the country's politics. The till recently ruling Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy had, it must not be forgotten, not only attempted to reduce the military's political authority but also outright denied the Tatmadaw's demand for an investigation into the November 2020 General Election which was the pretext used by the military dictatorship to assume all political power.

Also, unlike in the West, nationalism is not a bad word in these parts where a vast majority of the people, while fiercely pro-democracy, are equally resistant to any effort to impinge on their sovereignty whether it be on the Rohingya issue or any other. The vilification of Ms Suu Kyi, once the darling of the global left-liberal establishment, for taking an occasionally ambivalent view on the troubles in Rakhine has not helped the cause of democracy in tough conditions. Now the talk in world capitals is, once more, about punitive sanctions to get Myanmar back on the democratic path. That would be akin to rubbing salt on the wounds of the people. Not only did the West not extend support to the civilian leadership when it was attempting to curtail the powers of the junta, it is now hesitating to fight for the political rights of people in Myanmar by providing direct support for the NLD which best represents the democratic will of the people of Myanmar. The use of sanctions is unlikely to propel Myanmar's military dictators toward democracy; most analysts are agreed that it will be ordinary people who will, as usual, suffer their economic impact. Myanmar's neighbours in Asia are sure to continue prioritising economic engagement, regardless of the domestic political circumstances. As Cornell University's Van Tran puts it: "The West will likely fail to reverse the current political trends through sanctions and will only diminish its importance and create a vacuum to be filled by Myanmar's willing economic partners." Learning from what has and has not worked in the past would help.

Four-day week

In Indian climate conditions, thoughts of a four day, or even a five-day, week should be avoided. In fact, we get too many holidays as it is. The Centre has a list of 16 holidays annually; then the States have their differing choices. Saturdays and Sundays total up to 104 per year. With approximately one-third of the year thus taken up, the organized office sector of the country is largely on leave



A person I knew happened to visit Germany and one his business stops happened to be Hamburg. In that city he remembered that there worked a dear university friend of his. It was a Thursday when he phoned his friend who was pleasantly surprised and chatted for three or four minutes. In the course of the conversation, he invited the visitor for lunch on Saturday, certainly not on a working day. My acquaintance could not meet his dear friend because he was scheduled to leave Hamburg on Friday. The moral of this little incident was work is worship and leisure is for play and never shall the twain overlap.

This is unlikely to happen in India, where work and play are not so severely separate. Traditionally, Hindus have no weekly sabbath; unlike the Jews who have the Saturday, Christians the Sunday and Muslims the Friday. The Hindus have longish festivals, extended weddings and thirteen days for mourning the death for a family member. Historically, Hindus had no system of weekly holidays; one took one, two or three days off when necessary; otherwise work went on. The working day could be long or short according to convenience. If someone dropped in unexpectedly during work time one chatted with him for say half an hour, unlike in Hamburg.

More leisure for the worker was originally a demand that emanated from the communists. It was a reaction to the 19th century exploitation of the worker by compelling him or her to work for twelve hours or more every day. The wages were also low because the factories were few. What was there in life for the poor worker was a logical question on the lips of the socialist trade union leader. In his mind was the fact that the worker was not a partner, he gained nothing by working hard. The profit was mostly all the factory owner's ~ either the State or

private. If private, by working less, the worker would help in expediting the socialist revolution.

The need for increasing leisure spread from the communists to the social democrats to anyone who believed in a welfare state. For us in India, UK, after World War II and until Margaret Thatcher, is a ready reference for a welfare state.

Productivity became incidental to economic life nor was threatening the State a priority; what mattered most was more pay and less work. When I discussed with factory level trade union leaders, they were frank.

When I asked how our developing economy could afford the luxury of leisure, mostly the reply was that if industries fail, the people's revolution would come nearer.

Once Karl Marx theorized that an economy should produce just enough goods to meet the assessed demand in order to avoid recessions and slumps; the need for productivity was forgotten. So much so that hardly any steps were taken to save the Soviet economy from sinking into lower and lower productivity. The rulers in Moscow looked on while their State collapsed and scattered into 16 splinters.

In any case, in the Indian warm to hot climate conditions, thoughts of a four day, or even a five day, week should be avoided. In fact, we get too many holidays as it is. The Centre has a list of 16 holidays annually; then the States have their differing choices. Saturdays and Sundays total up to 104 per year. With approximately a gross number of 130 days off or well over one-third of the year, the organized office sector of the country is largely on leave. None of these off days apply to the

unorganized sector which is very much larger.

Unlike the West, our climate is generally warm, humid and does not lend itself to continuous work of eight or nine hours. The work has to go slow from time to time. A young CPM trade unionist at the National Tobacco factory at Agarpada, 16 kilometres from Calcutta, remarked during a discussion, "One cannot expect a worker in Calcutta to actually produce for more than three or four hours a day". A six-day week, therefore, should help offset this disadvantage.

Despite our efforts to become a big power, many areas of our economy are developing ones or quite frankly, underdeveloped. In other words, we have less assets and more people, which means we have to get more out of assets. We also have more and more people desirous of obtaining employment. The logical corollary of this problem is to keep 24x7 working hours as our goal. Without much notice, quite a number of vocations can shift to two shifts with a separate set of people working the second shift. Take our law courts for instance, which have huge backlog to catch up with. They could have a second shift.

The High Courts for example, could begin hearings at 8 am and work till 1 pm without interruptions. At 1.30 pm, the second set of judges could occupy the benches and carry on till 6.30 pm. As far as the advocates are concerned, they would be free to choose their briefs according to their convenience.

Working hours, days, rules and the entire ethos should be redesigned on the basis of Indian conditions and not adapted

from the West. So far labour laws have been dominated by ideas set by the Industrial Disputes Act of 1947, given to India by the British on the eve of their final departure from the country. The Labour Party had come to power in 1945 all ready to introduce socialism in Britain. Over seven decades later it is high time not only for reform but also for a complete rethink.

Firstly, socialism has cut no ice in the country as a whole. Most Indians believe in karma and do not expect equality unlike the Abrahamic religions which are embarrassed by inequality. In any case, communism perished thirty years ago except in a few spots on the globe.

What India requires broadly are systems of contracts at most levels of work, including for government officers. The conditions laid out would vary with the type and level of work.

But one rule should be absolutely sacred. When the pay packet is given, at the end of the month, an additional 25 per cent with the help of a public sector bank draft payable at the end of five years, must also be given to the employee. This would be her or his PF, gratuity etc, all in all, so that the employee is assured of post work dues. At present, many employees are in a precarious situation. Many employers have not deposited their Provident Fund money, some including cash deducted from the employee's salary. Crores upon crores, I am told, are waiting to be lost, not to speak of gratuity funding.

Essentially, so long as both parties agree, contracts should be valid but their enforcement must be strict, which is not always true in our country.

And the courts adjudicating disputes should be impartial. Until now, most labour court judges have been soft in the worker's favour; sometimes excessively so, which lead to appeals that often hurt the employee.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

A good idea for students

Helping students from weaker economic backgrounds was a good idea. The good idea, though, was sure to end up in dire straits. To begin with, there was the haste; consultations could have been more meaningful. That did not happen. There was the speed but not a long-term "national" dream. This, as the people warned from the beginning, is now coming true. There are a few institutions and development programmes that cannot be used for political or other gains. Education is one. The fact today is that there are 12,050 students identified as "needy students". What this means is that their future is uncertain because they could be denied the opportunity to continue their education. When close to 157,000 students in the country cannot continue their education because it is expensive for them, the problem is serious; more than 12,000 students are at the verge of giving up school education. What is coming out starkly here is that our data and development policies do not meet in a place where they should. Short-sightedness has been and is our problem, particularly among the development planners. The real danger today is that this could influence the way we plan, work, and roll out development activities ~ individually and nationally. This will be expensive in the long run. The students identified as deserving candidates must continue to receive the

KUENSEL
faring or the "freebies", as educationists and decision-makers in the ministry put it, unfeelingly all the worse. What we are doing or giving now is an investment, providing equal opportunities to the custodians of our nation's future. What could be more detrimental and a painful experience is when what we invest now in education does not serve its purpose in the future of this country and her people.

From the many interviews we have conducted and reports available to us, the main problem today is miscommunication between teachers, educationists and the officials sitting in the finance ministry. A lot more happens in between, we know. Bureaucracy, they say, is a mechanism run by pygmies. That's going a little too far but it sure is the beginning of death of any achievement. All these developments, or the lack of it, should be understood in the context of the Royal Kasho issued to the people of Bhutan in general and to the education ministry and RCSC in particular. Teachers and educationists have been pushing for support from the government to the students so that the system does not discount any Bhutanese for what their economic status is. The question is where and how did it all happen so that a large number of Bhutanese children today stand to lose the opportunity to fight and excel in their various dreams to do well personally and contribute meaningfully to the making of this nation.

Corrigendum

In para 5 of Monday's editorial page article, 'Mori' has appeared as 'Modi'. The error is regretted.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Disengagement on the border

SIR, This refers to your today's front page report 'Disengagement at Pandong lake has begun: China'.

Recently in an article, titled 'China and the World in the Year of the Ox', published on a website, The Policy Chronicle, China's ambassador to India, Sun Weidong, has written that the two countries should "put the boundary dispute in the appropriate place in bilateral relations, address differences in a rational and constructive manner, and not allow differences to become disputes". The core argument of the piece is that the cooperative element of the Sino-Indian relationship outweighs the areas of differences, common interests are greater than inconsistencies, and the two sides should respect each other, enhance mutual trust, and settle differences while meeting each other halfway.

As reasonable as this sounds, China is wrong. The appropriate place of the border dispute is at the centre of the relationship at this juncture. True, India has recognised ~ at least since 1988 ~ that there is no easy resolution of the border dispute. That is why both countries evolved a framework to keep

peace at the border, while maintaining their respective stated positions on it, and deepening other elements of the bilateral ties. The unilateral and unprovoked Chinese aggression at the border in eastern Ladakh, the clash at Galwan, and the prolonged military standoff, however, have changed things. If the border is not peaceful, if India's territorial integrity is at stake, and if Indian lives have been lost, then no Indian government can proceed with the relationship in business-as-usual mode.

If China is serious to repair overall ties, there is a simple solution. In the Year of the Ox, it can disengage, demobilise and restore status quo ante at the Line of Actual Control. Reports of disengagement from the Pangong Tso area on Wednesday evening are positive ~ India must carefully

monitor whether China translates words into meaningful action.

Yours etc., Khokan Das, Kolkata, 11 February.

NUCLEAR IRAN

SIR, This refers to the editorial, 'Iran & the N-deal' (11 February). US President Joe Biden has said he will not lift economic sanctions against Iran until it complies with the terms agreed under a 2015 nuclear deal.

However, Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Tehran would only return to compliance if the US first lifted all economic sanctions. Under the terms of the 2015 nuclear deal ~ an agreement reached between Iran, the US, China, France, Germany, Russia and the UK ~ Tehran agreed to limit its uranium enrichment and allow international inspectors to access sites and facilities. In return, sanctions

imposed on Tehran were lifted. But Trump withdrew the US from the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in an effort to force Iran to negotiate a new accord, and reinstated economic sanctions. The UN atomic agency said Wednesday that Iran has started to produce uranium metal, marking the latest breach of the 2015 nuclear agreement by Tehran. Inspectors for the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, verified on Feb. 8 that Iran had produced a small amount of uranium metal at a nuclear plant in Isfahan. The 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers expressly forbids producing uranium metal or researching and developing uranium metallurgy for 15 years. The production of uranium metal further complicates any potential diplomacy between Tehran and the new administration in Washington when each government has staked out

STATUS OF TAIWAN

SIR, Apropos your well-balanced leader 'Independence and War' (31 January), there is no denying that with the recent toughening of its stance towards Taiwan and increasing belligerent activities so much so warning the island that "independence means war", the situation should not gravitate towards further escalation and China ought to think carefully and not ignore the island's determination to defend its sovereignty and uphold freedom and democracy. Admittedly, China at the moment is an emerging superpower that wants to oust the current superpower, the USA, from the top position. The latter, in order to retain its global hegemony, appears to be anxious to arrest the emerging superpower's expansionist designs, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.

But, since the operation cannot be handled single-handedly, India, in the background of recent unsavoury incidents of China's belligerence at Galwan in Ladakh, ought to unite with another democracy and a formidable military power like the USA in challenging China's threat to Taiwan and other smaller states. Besides, China's expansionist designs in Arunachal Pradesh are not yet clear. There is, moreover, no gainsaying the fact that the oldest and largest democracies like India and the USA ought to wake up to the insidious and expansionist designs of the Dragon in thwarting the totalitarian regime's challenge for their own interests.

Yours etc., Arun Kumar Bhaduri, Kolkata, 1 February.

negotiating positions that put the onus on the other side to take the first conciliatory step. Iran has warned that it could impose restrictions on IAEA inspectors in the country on Feb. 21 if the U.S. does not lift sanctions, which would mark the most serious breach of the deal so far. The U.S. and European powers say access for the inspectors is a crucial ele-



ment of the agreement. Iran, which says its nuclear programme is peaceful, has been increasing its stockpile of enriched uranium which can be used to make reactor fuel, but also nuclear bombs. If Iran continues violating its treaty obligations, chances of reviving the deal seem to be bleak.

Yours etc., SS Paul, Nadia, 11 February.

HARSHA KAKAR

Nine months after the stand-off began and eight months after Galwan, disengagement has finally commenced. China had intruded into Indian territory in May last year. India's rapid counter deployment stalled them in their tracks. Galwan displayed a strong Indian intent of not backing down. The award of war decorations to the fighters of Galwan conveyed the message that India considered the Chinese intrusion as an act of war and was willing to escalate, if needed, to ensure defence of its territory.

Indian counter measures on both banks of the Pangong Tso, gave the government confidence that the army would hold on to its positions and any further Chinese ingress would be thwarted. Hence, the government never rushed into an agreement despite multiple rounds of talks and threats of escalation. It matched Chinese deployment in every form, whether troops, armour or artillery. The imposition of economic measures and growing security cooperation with the US and QUAD nations added to the strong message from India. The disengagement, when announced, was unexpected.

The Chinese government released information on the disengagement on the 10 February, while the defence minister, Rajnath Singh, announced it in the Lok Sabha the next day. There is no denial that arriving at an acceptable solution for disengagement was not easy. It took nine rounds of military talks, multiple meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs as also back-channel diplomacy. The accepted proposal must have been put forth in the last talks held on 24 January, discussed, war-gamed, possibly modified, approved and finally announced. Inputs of soldiers on the ground would have carried the most weight.

With high levels of trust deficit, especially after Galwan, every stage of the withdrawal process would be slow, monitored by multiple sources before the next stage can begin. India has had two experiences of Chinese accepting to withdraw and then not following through. Galwan was a verification process gone sour. Hence, India would doubt Chinese intentions. The initial withdrawal of heavy equipment including armour and artillery has begun, with troops holding defences being the last to pull back.

Once disengagement of both banks of Pangong Tso is complete, discussions on Gogra post and Hot Springs would commence. These are relatively easy to conclude and probably both forces would enhance the gap between themselves and there would be a patrolling block till norms for it are established. Finally, there would be Depsang, which precedes the current standoff. Disengagement would be followed by de-escalation and ultimately by de-induction, returning the region to the pre-April 2020 period.

Rumours were spread on social media highlighting that the agreement was not in India's favour and

One issue resolved but others remain



that it had lost territory. This perception was cleared by the MoD in a statement, which mentioned, "India has not conceded any territory as a result of this agreement. On the contrary, it has enforced observance and respect for the LAC and prevented any unilateral change in status quo."

The emphasis during the first disengagement agreement involved regions where troops are in close contact and an unintended incident could lead to a serious escalation.

Troops of both countries would move back to their permanent camps as on April 2020. The area between the camps would be considered as no man's land temporarily. Hence, both banks of the Pangong Tso including the Kailash Ridge are being dealt with in the first phase. The statement of the MoD added, "Other outstanding issues are to be taken up within 48 hours of the completion of the Pangong Tso disengagement."

The proposal and process of disengagement would have been

approved by troops on the ground, who being in contact with the enemy know what is best. Without their go-ahead, the government could never move forward. The army can never sacrifice Indian territory, nor would it give unwarranted advantage to an enemy. It would have war-gamed multiple scenarios including long term measures before recommending the process of disengagement.

Further, discussions are between two nations, both equally powerful. Hence, it is unlikely that one would give undue benefit to the other, including accepting loss of territory. Restoring the situation to pre-April 2020 levels implies restoration of status quo, an Indian demand, which has been achieved. Credit for this must go to the army for its stellar actions and the government for imposing faith on it.

How should India look towards the future? The current disengagement does not indicate resolution of the LAC issue nor does it signal per-

manent peace and tranquillity. It should be considered as a stopgap arrangement till the border issue is permanently resolved. The Indian government must continue seeking a border solution through dialogue without excessive rhetoric or chest thumping. Patience should remain the key.

How long would the current tranquillity last is a multimillion-dollar question? Would other friction points witness similar disengagement remains unknown? While Depsang pre-dates the current incident, the others are recent. Whether the Chinese would be sincere in seeking tranquillity across the entire LAC is unknown. In brief, there are more unknowns than knowns.

Incidents across the LAC signal that the Chinese would continue to attempt salami slicing wherever they get an opportunity. The forces need to be ready to thwart such attempts. Hence, the government must not slow down its modernization of the armed

forces only because a solution has been reached in Ladakh. Simultaneously, border infrastructure must continue to be built.

The armed forces must possess capabilities to meet growing Chinese challenges and be a deterrence to any future Chinese attempts to alter status quo. The armed forces are also in a state of transition from single service structures to joint forces. This must be pushed and completed at the earliest. Enhanced joint capabilities are essential in future conflicts.

China would have also learnt from this misadventure. They would have understood that not all nations would accept their hegemony and aggressive designs. India possesses soldiers with far more combat experience and professional competence and are willing to challenge them. Further, India would seek a resolution on equal terms, never from a position of weakness.

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

Symbols speak louder than words

ZARRAR KHUHRO

When medical workers in Myanmar marched out to protest against the coup they raised their hands in a salute with three fingers outstretched; their thumb and pinkie touching. This three-finger salute was adopted by other protesters and became a ubiquitous sight at subsequent protests. Previously, this same salute was used by protesters in Thailand in 2014 who were also rallying against a coup staged by their military. Since then, it has been used by protesters in Hong Kong, Taiwan and other Asian countries, with the latest real-world example of its use being in Myanmar.

I write 'real world' because this salute originates from a work of fiction: the Hunger Games novels and films. In this dystopian world, America has been replaced by an authoritarian police state called Panem ruled by an all-powerful president from the luxurious Capitol, while the rest of the nation is divided into impoverished

districts which are kept separate and suppressed with the help of brutal paramilitary forces.

To remind the masses of the cost of rebellion, an annual blood sport known as the Hunger Games, are held in which contestants are picked by lottery from the various districts and made to fight to the death in a nationally broadcast television event. The lucky winners are then guaranteed a cushy life in the Capitol. The system works until a contestant called Katniss Everdeen ignites the flame of revolt and while doing so, uses the same three-finger salute that we now see in Myanmar. While Myanmar's crackdown has yet to start, Thai authorities were concerned enough to ban the use of this salute in 2014.

This is by no means the first time we have seen a symbol from popular culture, and within that category from a work of fiction, used in real-life protests. Take the Guy Fawkes mask popularised in Alan Moore's V for Vendetta graphic novel that was later also turned into a movie: this symbol

was first adopted by the hacktivist collective known as Anonymous and the mask itself has been seen worn by protesters during the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Arab Spring, protests in Thailand, Turkey and Brazil and has even been seen in anti-vice and anti-lockdown protests.

What is it about this mask that appeals to such diverse, and sometimes antagonistic, groups? Alan Moore's protagonist, known only as 'V', fights against a fascist government using any means at his disposal and, like Katniss in The Hunger Games, succeeds in sparking a revolt. His true face is never revealed even in death and so on a symbolic level, he remains the 'Everyman', an anonymous and ubiquitous symbol of rebellion against authority.

As it did in the novel and film, the mask also serves a very practical purpose in shielding the identity of the wearer, something that is of great concern especially in countries where facial recognition software is used to identify and crack down on dis-

senters. No wonder then that in 2013 the Saudi government called it "a symbol of revenge and rebels" before banning its import and use, as did Bahrain.

Dystopian fiction is full of such easily adopted imagery and symbolism, and Margaret Atwood's novel The Handmaid's Tale, and the subsequent TV series based on it, is replete with it. In this world, America is ruled by a theocratic dictatorship where the few fertile women that exist are pressed into sexual slavery, serving as baby factories for the ruling class. The distinctive red robe with a white headdress, that these 'handmaids' are dressed in was adopted by women's rights protesters across the Western world.

While the Hunger Games salute and the Guy Fawkes masks are inherently political and the handmaid's outfit is a clear symbol of oppression, what explains the popularity of the Joker? The look and face paint of this iconic DC comics villain — in particular the Joaquin Phoenix version of the character — has also been adopted by

protesters in many countries.

The reason seems to be that this version of the Joker is less a psychopathic sadist in a clown get-up, but a vulnerable and damaged product of an even more damaged and cruel society. So it's no surprise that nowhere did this symbol resonate more than in Beirut, where residents compared the state of their bruised city to the fictional city of Gotham, while adopting the Joker as a symbol of the struggle between a rapacious elite and the downtrodden masses.

These symbols cross language and regional barriers with ease, thanks in part to the global nature of popular culture. By adopting them, protesters in Myanmar can feel a kinship with protesters in Chile, even if they may never actually meet or have anything else in common. And they serve as a warning to repressive states and out-of-control elites as well. In the words of Alan Moore: "Our masters have not heard the people's voice for generations and it is much, much louder than they care to remember." Especially when it speaks in symbols.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28827

OCCASIONAL NOTE

One of the provisions of the new Education Act which came into operation at Home on January 1 is the prohibition of all street trading by persons under the age of 17. If this means that there is to be no more selling of newspapers on the streets or delivery of newspapers, milk, or other articles, at private houses by boys and girls, it will mean a considerable change in social conditions for a large number of people. Already, however, difficulties in the interpretation of the provisions of the Act applying to street trading are being experienced. There is some doubt, for example, whether the term "street trading" is applicable to persons employed by others and not trading on their own account. In many cases where newspapers are sold on the streets the boys and girls who sell them are merely agents of adults who control the business, and it will be questioned whether a girl who delivering milk on behalf of her employer is "trading." The uncertainty regarding age is another difficulty. There is no requirement that can be forced upon street traders to produce evidence regarding their age. It will be for the police to estimate the age in the first instance, and of course anyone who makes a false statement regarding age is liable to prosecution. The provisions of the Act, however, have been anticipated to a large extent by other measures.

BIHAR MINISTER CONDEMNS SCHOOL BOYCOTT

At a meeting held in connection with Saraswati Puja at the Anglo-Sanskrit School, Bankipore, the Hon. Khan Bahadur Sayeed Fakhrudin, Minister of Education, Bihar and Orissa, who presided, referring to the non-cooperation campaign among students said there might be defects in the present system of education, but they should ask their leaders to remove them, and not allow them to strike at the very root of learning. "Let not the Pujaris of the Goddess come to blows in the temple and upset the Goddess herself" said the speaker. "That would be unspeakable irreverence and utter outrage." As Education Minister he continued he rejoiced that there was not much stir in Bihar about education. Bihar realised its importance and was prepared to undergo moral and pecuniary sacrifices for its sake.

PREVALENCE OF HOOKWORM AMONGST MINERS

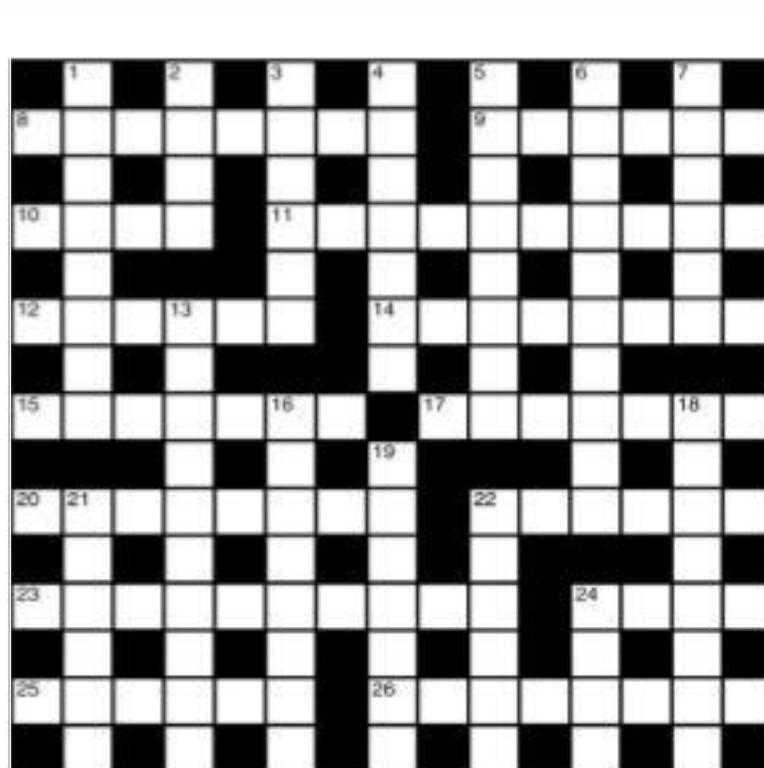
The Publicity Officer for Bihar and Orissa in a communiqué regarding the prevalence of hookworm among the labourers in the Jharia Mines' District alludes to Dr. G.W. Thompson's special investigation at the instance of the Jharia Mines Board of Health. In the course of his investigation, Dr. Thompson examined 6,045 persons, of these 3,189 or 53 per cent were found to be infected, thus it would seem that more than half the colliery employees were victims of this disease. One important result of the thymol treatment is that it appears to afford a rapid cure for night blindness. It appears that in Bihar there is a very high percentage of night blindness among ryots and investigation is required to determine to what extent this is due to infection with the hookworm disease.

SINN FEIN FIRE PLOT

Seven mysterious fires broke out in the Manchester area last night and are believed to be the work of Sinn Feiners. Four of these fires occurred at the same time in Manchester, where it was discovered that the windows of big chemical, rubber and oil factories had been smashed and paraffin emptied over the contents. The timely arrival of the fire-brigades prevented any extensive damage being done. Two outbreaks of fire took place simultaneously in Oldham and one in Rochdale, where fires were started in the cellars of cotton mills which were considerably damaged. Two suspects have been arrested in Oldham. In one of the Manchester cases the incendiaries intimidated the watchman, who eventually escaped amidst a shower of shots and gave the alarm.

COMMUNIST PLOTS IN FRANCE

The recent activity of the French police against the Communists is having sensational results. It is stated that investigations by the police have produced unmistakable evidence of a Communist movement which extends throughout the country, with its centre in Paris and secondary centres in Bordeaux, Marseilles, Lille, Brest and Toulouse. Branches are being organised everywhere, but hitherto many of them possess only a small number of members who are mostly youths. According to the Liberte papers which have been seized at the headquarters of the Federation of Young Communists revealed a plot for simultaneous revolutionary movements in France, Italy, and Spain to commence on May 1.



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 8 Single chap, barman, withdrawn ? character (8)
- 9 Origin of Bond villain's accent (6)
- 10 Old boozier regularly produces wind (4)
- 11 Band of copper with odd number stamped in boss (10)
- 12 Collar American nicking rare complete works (6)
- 14 Blanket for one remaining in coastguard stores (8)
- 15 Desire to secure success maybe beyond the pale? (7)
- 17 Coach (or several of them) about to return ?? (7)
- 20 8 beat English 14 after shower? (8)
- 22 Make bubbly that's consumed over a long time (6)
- 23 Sturdy onesie? Trouble is, sadly, I must be squeezed into it (6,4)
- 24 Asian wearing this runs a risk unnecessarily to some extent (4)
- 25 Occasionally thank one German for house (4,2)
- 26 He charged the Russians for jumper (8)
- 27 Make bubbly that's consumed over a long time (6)
- 28 Small hole, not large, in 9 say (4)
- 29 They may hide tights, ironically (6)
- 30 Lower margin stops good (very good) service (7)

DOWN

- 1 Seaman heckles Henry the redcap? (8)
- 2 Small hole, not large, in 9 say (4)
- 3 They may hide tights, ironically (6)
- 4 Lower margin stops good (very good) service (7)
- 5 One who respects Sunday (8)
- 6 Engineer Bob married NCO in artillery (10)
- 7 Shop name in Italian city (4,2)
- 13 It helps to keep a cool head - help them with it possibly (4,6)
- 16 Bags pics heading north carrying old bishop (8)
- 18 Cross endless borders from elsewhere (8)
- 19 Trade function essentially obsolete (7)
- 21 Trainspotter's article artist displayed in fair (6)
- 22 Clothes dry in breeze (easterly) (6)
- 24 Blunder finally across border (4)

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



IT is now the first sector to call out a revival post pandemic

DEBNANI GHOSH
NASSCOM PRESIDENT

THUMBNAILS

Arohan IPO: Kolkata-based microfinance company Arohan Financial Services Ltd has filed papers with the Securities and Exchange Board of India for an initial public offering (IPO) and is planning to raise Rs 1,750-1,800 crore, sources said on Monday. The public offer comprises the raising of fund via a fresh issuance of shares, amounting to Rs 850 crore and an OFS (offer for sale) of 27,055,893 equity shares by a section of the existing investors, they said. SNS

Term plan: Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance has launched a new term plan ~ ABSL DigiShield Plan ~ to cater to the unique protection needs of customers. This single plan will offer multiple plan options, added benefits linked to life stages, joint life protection, critical illness cover and rider options to tailor-make a distinctive protection solution, said a release. SNS

ICICI Pru Life: ICICI Prudential Life Insurance has launched a new goal-based savings product ~ ICICI Pru Guaranteed Income for Tomorrow ~ which provides guaranteed income to policyholders to help them achieve their long-term financial goals. This non-participating savings product can enable customers to eliminate the uncertainty of future income streams to a large extent, according to the company. SNS

Samsung tie-up: Samsung has partnered with udChalo, an online travel portal for Indian Defence personnel, to launch an exciting defence purchase programme for the Indian armed forces personnel. This program will be available for all udChalo verified customers to purchase Samsung products on its online store ~ Samsung.com, said a Press release. SNS

Wakefit.co's programme: A Bengaluru-based Wakefit.co is back with its 'sleep internship programme' and season-2 promises to be bigger and better than its earlier season that rewarded 'sleep lovers' with their #DreamJob. This year, selected sleep interns will not only earn Rs 1 lakh but the pool of interns will get to compete with each other too, for a grand prize of Rs 10 lakh', said the Press release statement. SNS

Renault Kiger: Renault India on Monday launched the Renault Kiger with price starting from Rs 5.45 lakh onwards, which makes it the most affordable car in its segment, according to a Press release. A collaboration between the corporate design teams in France and Renault India design, Renault Kiger will be the third global car from Groupe Renault to be launched in India first, followed by other markets, said the release. SNS

Sensex jumps 610 pts to finish above 52K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 15 FEBRUARY

Equity benchmark the Sensex rallied over 610 points to finish above the 52,000-mark for the first time today, tracking significant gains in financial stocks amid a positive trend in global markets.

After touching a record high of 52,235.97 points during the day, the 30-share BSE index ended 609.83 points or 1.18 per cent up at 52,154.13 points.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty soared 151.40 points or one per cent to finish at a record high of 15,314.70 points. It touched an intra-day peak of 15,340.15 points.

Axle Bank was the top

IT industry revenues to grow 2.3% this fiscal: Nasscom

We have emerged more resilient and more relevant from the crisis, says Nasscom's president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 15 FEBRUARY

Despite a dip in global technology spending amid the coronavirus pandemic, the country's information technology sector is set to post a 2.3 per cent rise in revenues to \$194 billion in the current fiscal, Nasscom said today.

The industry added 1.38 lakh people to its workforce on a net basis during the year, taking the total number of employees to 44.7 lakh, the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) said in its review of the current financial year ending 31 March 2021.

Over the past few years, the industry has been clocking a revenue growth in higher single digits or double digits as the demand for IT services in a digitising world continues to grow. However, the pandemic led to a sharp dip in growth hitting tech spend while the lockdown also led to concerns over delivery as work shifted from campuses to homes.

NASSCOM PROJECTIONS



► Exports for the fiscal year ending March 2021 are set to grow 1.9 per cent to \$150 billion while domestic revenues are projected to rise at a faster clip of 3.4 per cent to \$45 billion.

► IT services segment will grow 2.7 per cent to \$99 billion

Nasscom's president Debjan Ghosh said the industry reworked its models amid the lockdowns and ensured that work continues to get delivered as per schedules, and IT is now the first sector to call out a revival post pandemic.

"We have emerged more resilient and more relevant

said.

IT services segment will grow 2.7 per cent to \$99 billion while business process management (BPM) will see a growth of 2.3 per cent at \$38 billion.

► Software products segment will witness a growth of 2.7 per cent at \$9 billion and hardware will grow 4.1 per cent to \$16 billion.

from the crisis. We have been the bellwether to lead the fight against Covid," she said.

Exports for the fiscal year ending March 2021 are set to grow 1.9 per cent to \$150 billion while domestic revenues are projected to rise at a faster clip of 3.4 per cent to \$45 billion, the industry lobby group

noted.

The domestic industry players filed 1,15 lakh patents in FY21 in India and 8,000 in the US while 1,600 new startups were added during the same period, taking the total number of such tech companies to 12,500.

In terms of outlook, Nasscom pointed to some of the listed companies mentioning about a pipeline of over \$15 billion while a survey of 100 chief executives also painted a positive picture.

As per the survey findings, 71 per cent of the respondents are expecting a significantly higher tech spend in 2021 and 95 per cent of the CEOs said their hiring will be higher than the 2020 levels during the new year.

Ghosh said Nasscom has identified artificial intelligence, Internet of Things and cybersecurity as the focus areas which will hold the sector in good stead going forward. A fourth of the Indian workforce is digitally skilled, which will make it possible to take on the newer opportunities in the upcoming areas, she said.

of the High Court of Delhi,"

FRL said in the filing.

Amazon had moved the Supreme Court in a bid to block Future Group's deal with Reliance after the Delhi High Court stayed a previous order of status quo on the deal. The court had also said that statutory authorities cannot be restrained from acting in accordance with law.

After Amazon moves SC, Future says will defend the matter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

Future Retail Ltd (FRL) today said Amazon has approached the Supreme Court against a Delhi High Court order that vacated the status quo on Future Group's proposed Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance Industries.

In a filing to stock exchanges, FRL also said that "shall defend the matter/proceedings through its legal counsels."

Amazon and Future are locked in a bitter legal tussle after the US e-commerce giant dragged Future Group to arbitration at SIAC, arguing that the latter had violated their contract by entering into the deal with rival Reliance.

"...the company's advocates are in receipt of communication dated 13 February 2021 from advocates of Amazon.com NV Investment Holdings LLC (Amazon) informing that Amazon has filed a special leave petition before the Supreme Court of India against the captioned order dated 8 February 2021 passed by the Division Bench

Last month, Amazon had approached Delhi High Court seeking enforcement of the interim order of the Emergency Arbitrator (EA) at the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) that had restrained FRL from going ahead with the deal with Reliance.

ing and said that the outlook for core inflation is influenced by the escalation in cost-push pressures seen in recent months.

Petroleum product prices have reached historic highs as international crude prices surged in recent months and the high indirect taxes remain, both in the Centre and states.

"...the headline WPI inflation is set to record large upticks over the course of the next few months. We now expect the WPI inflation to average 5.5-5.5 per cent in FY2022, unless the available vaccines turn out to be ineffective against new Covid-19 variants, causing commodity prices, consumer confidence and business sentiment to plunge," Nayyar added.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its monetary policy decision on 5 February, kept interest rates unchanged for the fourth consecutive meet-

ing and said that the outlook for core inflation is influenced by the escalation in cost-push pressures seen in recent months.

Rising demand and strengthening pricing power will make core inflation rise further to as much as 7-7.5 per cent during April-June quarter, according to Icra.

"...the headline WPI inflation is set to record large upticks over the course of the next few months. We now expect the WPI inflation to average 5.5-5.5 per cent in FY2022, unless the available vaccines turn out to be ineffective against new Covid-19 variants, causing commodity prices, consumer confidence and business sentiment to plunge," Nayyar added.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its monetary policy decision on 5 February, kept interest rates unchanged for the fourth consecutive meet-

WPI inflation rises to 2.03% in January

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

PRICE RISE

► While food articles saw softening in inflation, the sharp rise in the WPI inflation in January was led by manufactured non-food products, fuel and power, and crude petroleum and natural gas, data released by the commerce and industry ministry showed.

► Food inflation in January stood at (-) 2.8 per cent, against (-) 1.11 per cent in the previous month. In vegetables and potatoes, it was (-) 20.82 per cent and 22.04 per cent, respectively.

potatoes, it was (-) 20.82 per cent and 22.04 per cent, respectively.

Core inflation rose to a 27-month high of 5.1 per cent in January 2021.



In non-food articles, inflation was higher at 4.16 per cent, while in the fuel and power basket it was (-) 4.78 per cent, during the month under review.

Icra principal economist

Coal India cuts expenditure by 3.3% in first 9 mths of FY'21

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 15 FEBRUARY

removal (OBR) during the third quarter ended December 2020.

The major reduction was visible in employee benefit expenses which stepped down by Rs 735 crore. These include salaries of the employees, performance related pay of executives, performance-linked reward of non-executives, coal mines provident fund contributions, etc. Other miscellaneous expenses accounted for Rs 126 crore, during the period.

The coal major's overall expenditure dropped to Rs 54,241 crore during the referred period from that of Rs 56,079 crore in the same period of the previous financial year, according to a Press statement issued by Coal India Ltd.

CIL's expenditure climbed down while the company clocked 6.3 per cent output growth, 9.1 per cent surge in coal off-take and 17.3 per cent increase in over burden

stood at 2.72 lakhs at the beginning of the current fiscal compared to 3.22 lakh employees four years ago.

During the nine-month period of the current fiscal, the manpower reduced by 13,800. This reduction is expected to continue for few more years which would further shrink the employee benefit expenditure which currently stands close to 50 per cent of CIL's overall revenue expenditure.

Coal India Limited's OBR has been consistently on an upward trend during the current fiscal despite the covid slowdown. OBR growth was 20.3 per cent ending December 2020 at 967.26 million cubic metres. OB growth peaked to a record high of 70.5 per cent during the month of September 2020, the CIL statement said.

Hiranandani Group to invest ₹10,000 cr in West Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, 15 FEBRUARY

be ready by June 2022 and the first data centre by 2023, it said.

Mumbai-based Hiranandani Group today said it will set up an integrated logistics and data centre park with an aggregated investment of around Rs 10,000 crore.

It has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to acquire 100 acres of land at Uttarpara in Hooghly district from Hindustan Motors to set up the integrated logistics and data centre park.

The data centre will be capable to serve the entire eastern region, it said.

Kicking off this project would not have been possible without the tremendous support of West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee.

The state is the gateway to the east. It is an ideal hub for logistics and industrial development with excellent road, rail and riverine connectivity," the group chief executive officer Darshan Hiranan-

dani said.

The announcement comes ahead of the West Bengal assembly elections, due in April-May.

Speaking on the proposed project by the group, the West Bengal chief minister said: "It is encouraging for West Bengal. We are ready to offer all the support."

Echoing Banerjee, West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation chairman Rajiva Sinha said: "We are glad to hear their investment announcement. We will offer all the assistance to the project."

Hiranandani said the data centre business will benefit from the digitisation revolution, the upcoming "Silicon Valley" at New Town in Rajarhat, the fibre connectivity on land and the new submarine cable coming up at Tajpur.

Exports up by 6.16%, trade deficit narrows

NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

Growing for the second consecutive month, the country's exports rose by 6.16 per cent year-on-year to \$27.45 billion in January 2021 following healthy growth in pharma and engineering sectors, according to provisional data of the commerce ministry.

Trade deficit during the month narrowed to \$14.54 billion from \$15.3 billion in January 2020. It was \$15.44 billion in December 2020.

Imports in January 2021 rose by 2 per cent to \$42 billion. Exports of pharmaceuticals and engineering grew by 16.4 per cent (\$2 billion), and about 19 per cent (\$7.4 billion), respectively, the data showed.

Other sectors which recorded growth included oil meals, iron ore, tobacco, rice, fruits and vegetables, carpets, handicrafts, spices and tea.

PTI

INDIA RATINGS REPORT



► We expect the aggregate fiscal deficit of states for FY'22 to come in at 4.3 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) compared to 4.6 per cent (revised) in FY'21," India Ratings and Research said in a report.

► It had earlier forecast FY'21 fiscal deficit of states to be at 4.5 per cent, but revised it later due to a sharper-than-expected contraction of 6.1 per cent year-on-year in the nominal GDP.

(BE).

The agency now estimates the aggregate revenue deficit to come in at 3.2 per cent, high-

er than the earlier forecast of 2.8 per cent of GDP in FY'21.

The Union government in its FY'22 Budget has committed to retaining the vertical share of states in Central taxes at 41 per cent, as per the recommendations of 15th Finance Commission (FC).

The Union Budget for FY'22 has budgeted Rs 6.66 lakh crore for distribution out of the net proceeds of Central taxes (FY'21 RE: Rs 5.50 lakh crore).

The agency said although it estimates the aggregate revenue receipt of the states to grow 8.4 per cent year-on-year in FY'22 from a decline of 0.6 per cent in FY'21 (f), the revenue deficit would persist in FY'22.

It expects the aggregate revenue deficit of states to be Rs 6.4 lakh crore in FY'22.

come in at 1.5 per cent of GDP in FY'22 as against FY'21 (f) 3.2 per cent.

The pressure on the debt burden is likely to persist in FY'22 due to a combination of revenue deficit, some pickup in capex and repayment of past market borrowings, the agency said.

It estimates the states' aggregate debt/GDP to rise to 33.9 per cent in FY'22 from 32.8 per cent in FY'21 (f).

States' fiscal deficit is now financed mainly through market borrowings and the report estimates the gross market borrowings of states will increase to Rs 8.38 lakh crore in FY'22 from Rs 8.2 lakh crore in FY'21 (f). The net market borrowings would be Rs 6.4 lakh crore in FY'22.



You must not take the side of the terrorists.
You have to be on our side

TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN
ACCUSING US OF SUPPORTING KURDISH MILITANTS

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 16 FEBRUARY 2021

09

Nigerian economist Okonjo-Iweala named first woman African WTO head

Three months after Trump admin rejected her, Okonjo-Iweala received unanimous backing to become the WTO chief

AGENCY

GENEVA, 15 FEBRUARY

Nigerian economist Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed Monday as the first female and first African head of the World Trade Organization, at a special general meeting.

"WTO members have just agreed to appoint Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as the next director-general," the global trade body said in a statement, adding that the former Nigerian finance minister and World Bank veteran will take up her post on 1 March.

Three months after the Trump administration rejected her, Okonjo-Iweala received unanimous backing on Monday to become the first woman and first African director-general of the World Trade Organization.

A self-declared "doer" with a track record of taking on

seemingly intractable problems, Okonjo-Iweala will have her work cut out for her at the trade body, even with Donald Trump, who had threatened to pull the United States out of the organisation, no longer in the White House.

As director-general, a position that wields limited formal power, Okonjo-Iweala, 66, will need to broker international trade talks in the face of persistent US-China conflict; respond to pressure to reform trade rules; and counter protectionism heightened by the pandemic.

A 25-year veteran of the World Bank, where she oversaw an \$81 billion portfolio, Okonjo-Iweala ran against seven other candidates by espousing a belief in trade's ability to lift people out of poverty.

She studied development economics at Harvard after experiencing civil war in Nigeria as a teenager. She returned to the country in 2003 to serve



as finance minister and backers point to her hard-nose negotiating skills that helped seal a deal to cancel billions of dollars of Nigerian debt with the Paris Club of creditor nations in 2005.

"She brings stature, she brings experience, a network and a temperament of trying to get things done, which is quite a welcome lot in my view," former WTO chief Pascal Lamy told Reuters. "I think she's a good choice."

Key to her success will be herability to operate in the cen-

tre of a "US-EU-China triangle", he said. The endorsement of the Biden administration cleared the last obstacle to her appointment.

Sweet but strong

Okonjo-Iweala becomes one of the few female heads of a major multilateral body. She is expected to join the WTO's Geneva lakeside headquarters within weeks where her portrait is set to be hung beside others of men, mostly white and from rich countries.

Her bright Nigerian prints are sure to stand out among the suits there where the majority of top staff are also men, like most of the delegates and ministers that walk its corridors.

The Trump administration's main criticism of her was that she lacked direct trade experience compared to her main South Korean rival and even supporters say she will

have to quickly get up to speed on the technicalities of

trade negotiations. She has rejected this, saying that she has plenty of experience of trade plus other expertise. "The qualities I have are even better," she said.

Raised by academics, the mother-of-four earned a reputation for hard work and modesty amid the pomp of Nigeria's governing class, acquaintances say.

Even when her elderly mother was kidnapped in the Niger Delta, she refused to back down on a series of oil reforms, one of several incidents that earned her the nickname 'Okonjo-Wahala', Wahala meaning "trouble" in Nigerian Pidgin. "People recognise that this is not someone who is going to tolerate nonsense," her son Uzodinma Iweala, a writer, told.

"She's a very strong woman like many African women. There's that song 'Sweet Mother' and that's true for her but you also know that you don't

cross a Sweet Mother."

Reforming the unreformable

The 26-year-old WTO that Okonjo-Iweala inherits after a six-month leadership gap is partially paralysed, thanks to the Trump administration which blocked appointments to its top appeals body that acts as the global arbiter of trade disputes.

But even before Trump, negotiators had struggled to clinch deals that must be agreed by consensus, with the United States and other developed WTO members arguing that developing countries, notably China, cannot cling on to exceptions and that rules need to change to reflect China's economic growth.

Okonjo-Iweala who is a special envoy for the World Health Organization on Covid-19, until recently chair of the board of global vaccine alliance Gavi, told that trade's contribution to public health would be a priority.



not leave Pakistan. I will live and die in my country," she asserted.

Pakistan interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed has said that the PM-N supremo Nawaz Sharif's passport will be cancelled on 16 February. Sharif has been living in London since November, 2019 after he was allowed to leave the country for medical treatment.

Advised to the PM on Accountability and Interior Mirza Shahzad Akbar said that United Kingdom authorities had been asked to deport the convicted former prime minister from their country.

He said Pakistan had written a letter to the UK to cancel the visa of Sharif which was issued for medical treatment after taking an undertaking.

Myanmar security forces intensify crackdown on protesters

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YANGON, 15 FEBRUARY

the protesters, according to a photographer who witnessed the events.

The soldiers and police then attacked the protesters with sticks, and police could be seen aiming long guns into the air amid sounds that resembled gunfire. Local media reported that rubber bullets were also fired into the crowd, and that a few people were injured. Police were also seen pointing guns toward the protesters.

In the capital, Naypyitaw, protesters gathered outside a police station demanding the release of a group of high school students who were detained while joining anti-

coup activities.

One student who managed to escape told reporters that the pupils thought to range in age from 13 to 16 were demonstrating peacefully when a line of riot police suddenly arrived and began arresting them. It wasn't clear exactly how many students were rounded up, but estimates put the figure at between 20 and 40.

Earlier Monday, Myanmar's military leaders extended their detention of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi, whose remand was set to expire and whose freedom is a key demand of the crowds of people continuing to protest the 1 February coup.

Addressing his ruling party's supporters in the Black Sea city of Rize, Erdogan also took aim at a US State Department statement which deplored the deaths of the hostages, but added that the United States would condemn the deaths in the strongest possible terms if it is confirmed that they died at

Turkey accuses US of backing PKK after Turks killed in Iraq

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANKARA, 15 FEBRUARY

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan laid into the United States, accusing it of supporting Kurdish militants on Monday, days after Turkish troops found the bodies of 13 Turkish soldiers, police and civilians abducted by Kurdish insurgents in a cave complex in northern Iraq.

If we are together in NATO, and if we are to continue our (alliance) in NATO, you have to be sincere towards us, Erdogan said. You must not take the side of the terrorists. You have to be on our side."

The victims were discovered in a cave complex in the Gara region, near the Turkish border, during an operation against the PKK, launched on 10 February, that had aimed to free the hostages.

Did you not say you don't support the PKK, the YPG or the PYD? You are with them and behind them pure and simple, Erdogan said, referring to Syrian Kurdish groups linked to the PKK, which Turkey considers to be terrorists but which were allied with the United States in the fight against the Islamic State.

Twelve of the victims were shot in the head and one died of a shoulder bullet wound, the country's defense minister said Sunday. The 13 were kidnapped inside Turkey in the last five or six years.

Erdogan said 51 PKK militants were killed during the offensive and vowed to press ahead with cross-border offensives against the PKK in Iraq, and against the Syria-based militants.

Tens of thousands of people have been killed since the PKK, which is designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. and the European Union, began an insurgency in Turkey's majority Kurdish southeast region in 1984.

Rain triggers landslide in Indonesia; 10 dead, 9 missing

NGANJUK (INDONESIA), 15 FEBRUARY

Torrential rains triggered a landslide on Indonesia's main island of Java that killed at least 10 people, with rescuers digging desperately with their bare hands and farm tools on Monday to locate nine missing people, including four children, officials said.

Dozens of soldiers, police and volunteers took part in the search in Selopuro in East Java's Nganjuk district, National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson Raditya Jati said.

EU's anti-fraud body warns against Covid-19 vaccine scams

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUSSELS, 15 FEBRUARY

vaccines, deliver a sample in order to pocket the first advance payment and then vanish with the money," said Ville Italo, the OLAf director-general.

They may deliver batches of fake vaccines, "It added. "Or they falsely may purport to represent legitimate business and claim to be in the possession of or have access to vaccines. All of these claims have one thing in common: they are false."

The EU has been criticized for a slow rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in comparison with other parts of the world, lagging behind the

pace of countries like Britain or Israel.

The EU commission has signed six contracts for more than 2 billion doses of various coronavirus vaccines, but only three of them have been approved for use so far and the delivery of shots has been disturbed by production delays.

OLAF's message echoed a warning from the EU's police agency Europol, which in December highlighted the risk of organised crime scams linked to COVID-19 vaccines, including the possibility criminals will try to sell dangerous

counterfeit vaccines or to hijack shipments of genuine shots.

The EU has bought vaccine doses collectively but member states can also decide to negotiate separate agreements outside the commission's umbrella as long as they don't compete with the advance purchase agreement negotiated by the EU's executive arm.

Hungary has criticized the pace of the EU's vaccine rollout and sought shots from countries outside the bloc's common procurement program. Hungarian health authorities last month

approved the jab developed by China's state-owned company Sinopharm and also authorised use of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine.

In addition to vaccine scams, OLAf is also monitoring illicit trade of face masks, test kits and other products linked to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The anti-fraud body said they have not seized any fake vaccines so far but identified more than 1,000 suspected fraudsters and seized or detained over 14 million items including dangerous hand sanitiser, substandard face masks and fake test kits."

Allegations of abductions grip Uganda after tense elections

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KAMPALA (UGANDA), 15 FEBRUARY

Ugandan Opposition leader Bobi Wine on Monday released a list of 243 people who have allegedly been abducted by the security forces, piling pressure on the government to find those missing amid continuing political tensions after last month's elections.

Wine, a singer and lawmaker whose real name is Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, has asserted that at least 3,000 of

his followers were detained before and after the presidential elections on 14 January.

Suggesting that Museveni is responsible for the abductions, Wine posted: Like all tyrants, he pushed the narrative that all is well, with hundreds of mothers, fathers and siblings in tears over missing loved ones.

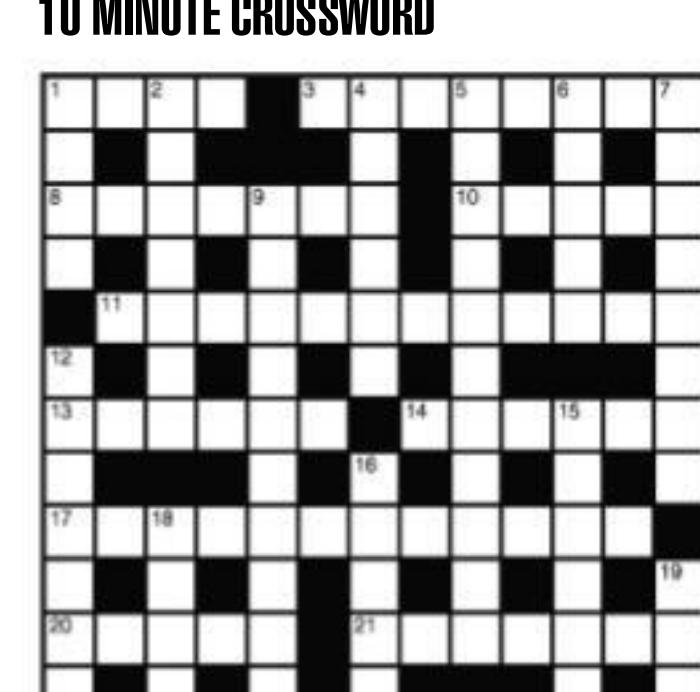
Uganda's top court will hear a case in which Wine seeks to overturn Museveni's victory.

Wine's allegations, newspaper reports and statements by diplomats have raised the specter of illegal abductions by state agents in Uganda.

Wine, in a Twitter post on

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Knitting stitch (4)
3 Crevices (8)
8 Badly brought up (3-4)
10 Prise (5)
11 Gossip (6-6)
13 Reckless (6)
14 Piece of landed property (6)
17 Carefree (5-7)
20 Morsel (5)
21 Perceptible to the ear (7)
22 Wobbled (8)
23 Caustic (4)

DOWN
1 Narrow-minded person (4)
2 Recovered (7)
4 Certainly (6)
5 Confident (4-7)
7 Wizard (8)
9 Able to be drawn back in (11)
12 Unstated (8)
13 Wallaper, 15 Insurrection, 17 Fake, 18 Swindler, 19 Dog, 20 Stun, 21 Astute, 22 Get, 23 Transient, 24 Vendetta (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Wry, 3 Tie, 5 Dear (Right ideal), 7 Clemency, 8 Fate, 9 Beat a
DOWN
1 Retreat, 3 Crevices, 5 Trend, 7 Sway, 9 Vendetta, 11 Wallaper, 13 Visage, 14 Forest, 16 Rusks, 18 Dog, 19 Dog, 20 Stun, 21 Astute, 22 Get, 23 Transient, 24 Vendetta, 25 Wallaper, 27 Very Zen, 29 Transient, 31 Amenity, 33 Wallaper, 35 Wallaper, 37 Wallaper, 39 Wallaper, 41 Wallaper, 43 Wallaper, 45 Wallaper, 47 Wallaper, 49 Wallaper, 51 Wallaper, 53 Wallaper, 55 Wallaper, 57 Wallaper, 59 Wallaper, 61 Wallaper, 63 Wallaper, 65 Wallaper, 67 Wallaper, 69 Wallaper, 71 Wallaper, 73 Wallaper, 75 Wallaper, 77 Wallaper, 79 Wallaper, 81 Wallaper, 83 Wallaper, 85 Wallaper, 87 Wallaper, 89 Wallaper, 91 Wallaper, 93 Wallaper, 95 Wallaper, 97 Wallaper, 99 Wallaper, 101 Wallaper, 103 Wallaper, 105 Wallaper, 107 Wallaper, 109 Wallaper, 111 Wallaper, 113 Wallaper, 115 Wallaper, 117 Wallaper, 119 Wallaper, 121 Wallaper, 123 Wallaper, 125 Wallaper, 127 Wallaper, 129 Wallaper, 131 Wallaper, 133 Wallaper, 135 Wallaper, 137 Wallaper, 139 Wallaper, 141 Wallaper, 143 Wallaper, 145 Wallaper, 147 Wallaper, 149 Wallaper, 151 Wallaper, 153 Wallaper, 155 Wallaper, 157 Wallaper, 159 Wallaper, 161 Wallaper, 163 Wallaper, 165 Wallaper, 167 Wallaper, 169 Wallaper, 171 Wallaper, 173 Wallaper, 175 Wallaper, 177 Wallaper, 179 Wallaper, 181 Wallaper, 183 Wallaper, 185 Wallaper, 187 Wallaper, 189 Wallaper, 191 Wallaper, 193 Wallaper, 195 Wallaper, 197 Wallaper, 199 Wallaper, 201 Wallaper, 203 Wallaper, 205 Wallaper, 207 Wallaper, 209 Wallaper, 211 Wallaper, 213 Wallaper, 215 Wallaper, 217 Wallaper, 219 Wallaper, 221 Wallaper, 223 Wallaper, 225 Wallaper, 227 Wallaper, 229 Wallaper, 231 Wallaper, 233 Wallaper, 235 Wallaper, 237 Wallaper, 239 Wallaper, 241 Wallaper, 243 Wallaper, 245 Wallaper, 247 Wallaper, 249 Wallaper, 251 Wallaper, 253 Wallaper, 255 Wallaper, 257 Wallaper, 259 Wallaper, 261 Wallaper, 263 Wallaper, 265 Wallaper, 267 Wallaper, 269 Wallaper, 271 Wallaper, 273 Wallaper, 275 Wallaper, 277 Wallaper, 279 Wallaper, 281 Wallaper, 283 Wallaper, 285 Wallaper, 287 Wallaper, 289 Wallaper, 291 Wallaper, 293 Wallaper, 295 Wallaper, 297 Wallaper, 299 Wallaper, 301 Wallaper, 303 Wallaper, 305 Wallaper, 307 Wallaper, 309 Wallaper, 311 Wallaper, 313 Wallaper, 315 Wallaper, 317 Wallaper, 319 Wallaper, 321 Wallaper, 323 Wallaper, 325 Wallaper, 327 Wallaper, 329 Wallaper, 331 Wallaper, 333 Wallaper, 335 Wallaper, 337 Wallaper, 339 Wallaper, 341 Wallaper, 343 Wallaper, 345 Wallaper, 347 Wallaper, 349 Wallaper, 351 Wallaper, 353 Wallaper, 355 Wallaper, 357 Wallaper, 359 Wallaper, 361 Wallaper, 363 Wallaper, 365 Wallaper, 367 Wallaper, 369 Wallaper, 371 Wallaper, 373 Wallaper, 375 Wallaper, 377 Wallaper, 379 Wallaper, 381 Wallaper, 383 Wallaper, 385 Wallaper, 387 Wallaper, 389 Wallaper, 391 Wallaper, 393 Wallaper, 395 Wallaper, 397 Wallaper, 399 Wallaper, 401 Wallaper, 403 Wallaper, 405 Wallaper, 407 Wallaper, 409 Wallaper, 411 Wallaper, 413 Wallaper, 415 Wallaper, 417 Wallaper, 419 Wallaper, 421 Wallaper, 423 Wallaper, 425 Wallaper, 427 Wallaper, 429 Wallaper, 431 Wallaper,

If the EU decides that it's necessary to restore relations, we will be ready for it.



LAVROV'S STATEMENT FOLLOWED HIS WARNING LAST WEEK THAT MOSCOW WAS READY FOR A SPLIT WITH EU

THUMBNAILS



Two seagulls try to snatch a piece of bread, off the banks of the Main River in Offenbach, Germany.

AGENCY

Israeli strike near Syrian capital kills 6 fighters: Israel fired several missiles early on Monday targeting areas near the Syrian capital, Damascus, Syria's state news agency reported. An opposition war-monitoring group said the strikes killed six Iran-backed fighters. The SANA news agency claimed that Syrian air defenses shot down most of the missiles. AP

Russian cargo ship launched: An unmanned Russian cargo ship launched successfully Monday with a load of supplies for the International Space Station. The Progress MS-16 cargo ship blasted off from the Russia-leased Baikonur launch facility in Kazakhstan and reached a designated orbit en route to the station. It is carrying water, propellant and other supplies and is set to dock at the space outpost Wednesday. AP

Cairo building partially collapses; 3 dead: An apartment building in Cairo partially collapsed overnight, killing at least three people, Egyptian officials said on Monday. By late morning, rescue workers were still searching for possible survivors trapped under the rubble of the two-story building in the Roud el-Farag neighbourhood of Cairo. AP

Cold weather hits Greece: A cold weather front has hit Greece, sending temperatures plunging from the low 20s Celsius on Friday to well below freezing on Monday, and seeing snowfall in central Athens. AP

5 Tajiks charged with membership in IS group

BERLIN, 15 FEBRUARY

German prosecutors said Monday they have charged five Tajik men with being members of the Islamic State group, accusing them of participating in a cell of the extremist organisation in Germany.

Federal prosecutors filed the indictment at the Dusseldorf state court, where an alleged associate of the five was convicted last month of membership in IS for co-founding the German cell and supporting two planned attacks. He was sentenced to seven years in prison.

The suspects now charged were identified only as Farhodshoh K., Muhammadali G., Azizjon B., Sunatullokh K. and Komron B., in keeping with German privacy rules.

Prosecutors say that Azizjon B. administered propaganda channels and helped collect money for a Russian- and Tajik-language IS online network. They say he also personally recruited IS members, leading to the founding of a cell in western Germany in early 2019 that aimed to carry out attacks in Germany.

The rest of the accused, along with Rovsan B., the man convicted last month, are alleged to have belonged to that cell.

Prosecutors say that they trained their military skills in paintball games, and that participants in those included other people from the Islamist scene who were in contact with the gunman who killed four people in an attack in Vienna in November. They also allegedly acquired components for an unexploded bomb.

Farhodshoh K. and Rovsan B. are accused of traveling to Albania in 2019 to carry out a contract killing that was intended to finance IS to the tune of USD 40,000. AP

Support grows for Capitol riot inquiry after Trump acquittal

Investigations into the riot are already planned, with Senate hearings scheduled later this month

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 15 FEBRUARY

After former President Donald Trump's acquittal at his second Senate impeachment trial, bipartisan support appears to be growing for an independent 11 September-style commission into the deadly insurrection that took place at the US Capitol.

Investigations into the riot were already planned, with Senate hearings scheduled later this month in the Senate Rules Committee. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., has asked retired Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honor to lead an immediate review of the Capitol's security process.

Lawmakers from both parties, speaking on Sunday's news shows, signaled that even more inquiries were likely. The Senate verdict Saturday, with its 57-43 majority falling 10 votes short of the two-thirds needed to convict Trump, hardly put to rest the debate about the Republican former president's culpability for the 6 January assault.

There should be a complete investigation about what happened, said Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, one of seven Republicans who voted to convict Trump. What was known, who

there's still more evidence that the American people need and deserve to hear and a 9/11 commission is a way to make sure that we secure the Capitol that killed five people, including a police officer, and disrupted lawmakers' certification of Biden's White House victory.

Graham said he looked forward to campaigning with Trump in the 2022 election, when Republicans hope to regain

a close Trump ally. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., voted for acquittal but acknowledged that Trump had some culpability for the siege at the Capitol that killed five people, including a police officer, and disrupted lawmakers' certification of Biden's White House victory.

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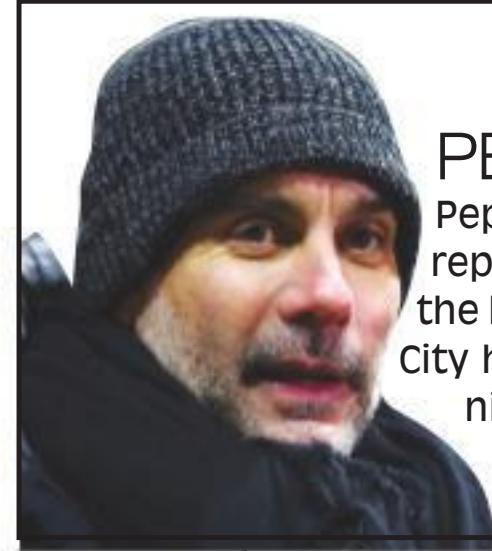
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PEP'S PROMISE

Pep Guardiola (photo, left) has said he would not replace any of his Manchester City players with the likes of Lionel Messi or Cristiano Ronaldo. Man City have set an English top-flight record by winning their last 16 games across all competitions and are unbeaten in their last 23 outings.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Singh booked: Yuvraj Singh has been booked by Haryana Police for an eight-month-old complaint about him making a "casteist slur" against Yuzvendra Chahal. A complaint was lodged against Yuvraj by Hisar-based Dalit activist Rajan Kalsan in June last year.

Twose appointed: Former cricketer Roger Twose has been appointed director by New Zealand Cricket to replace Greg Barclay, who was required to step down upon his election to the International Cricket Council chair. Steve Tew will be a board observer.

Chepaulk pitch: Sunil Gavaskar on Monday hit back at former cricketers, including Michael Vaughan and Mark Waugh, for their criticism of the pitch for the second Test between India and England, saying that "it's a challenging wicket all right but not unplayable at all."

Ashwin's feat: Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Sunday became the first player in the 143-year history of Test cricket to take 200 wickets against left-handed batsmen. He achieved the feat during the second day of India's second Test against England.

Haq's plan: Head coach Misbah-ul-Haq believes Pakistani batsmen need to get better against spin if they are to do well in this year's World Twenty20 Cup in India. He also hinted at having seniors like Shoib Malik and Muhammad Hafeez in his plans for the meet.

Racist abuse: Manchester United striker Anthony Martial was subjected to further racist abuse following Sunday's 1-1 draw at West Brom. The Frenchman, who along with Axel Tuanzebe was targeted last month following the Red Devils' loss to Sheffield United.

New chief: Tokyo Olympic organisers could choose their new president as early as this week, a report said on Monday after former chief Yoshiro Mori resigned over sexist remarks that provoked a global outcry. Organisers need "urgently" to pick a new president.

Formula One: Formula One has agreed on a temporary halt to engine development from early 2022 until a regulatory change in 2025, the sport's organisers and the international automobile federation have announced. The change was brought forward one year.

Salah's promise: Mohamed Salah has warned Manchester City Liverpool will "fight like champions" despite a miserable run that plunged his side's Premier League title defence into turmoil. They are 13 points behind leaders City after losing 3-1 at Leicester.

Berger triumphs: Daniel Berger stole the show - and sealed his fourth career Tour win - by draining a 31-footer for eagle at the 18th hole on Sunday to win the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am. It was the fourth eagle of the week - and second of the day - for Berger.

Ojha retires: An emotional Naman Ojha struggled to hold back tears on Monday as he bade adieu to all forms of cricket, bringing down curtains on a two-decade long illustrious domestic career.

Show-cause notice: East Bengal coach Robbie Fowler, suspended for four matches, was on Monday said to have been handed a show-cause notice for his conduct in the stands as his team played in the Indian Super League.

Chennai's 'Super King' Ashwin puts India on course for big win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 15 FEBRUARY

Ravichandran Ashwin first gave a lesson on how to bowl on a rank turner and then provided a batting master-class with a sparkling hundred on a deteriorating strip, putting India on the brink of a massive series-leveelling victory against England on the third day of the second Test here on Monday.

Ashwin's fifth Test hundred -- a gutsy 106 off 148 balls along with Virat Kohli's near flawless 62 of 149 balls got India to a more than decent 286 in 85.5 overs, leaving England with an improbable target of 482 runs on a dust bowl.

At stumps, England were already crumbling at 53 for 3 and it would take nothing short of a miracle for England to bat for two days and save the match.

Even their resolute captain Joe Root and coach Chris Silverwood wouldn't be optimistic on a track where exploding divots are making it extremely difficult to bat.

But difficult doesn't mean impossible. Just like facing a quality seam bowler on a green top is an art, one needs plenty of skills and mental fortitude to counter spinners on a dust bowl.

"I will sleep well through the night, that is all that I am thinking," Ashwin, the star of the day, said after stumps.

"I don't know what the team is feeling like but I am sure they are thrilled."

Skipper Kohli and Ashwin showed the likes of Michael Vaughan that they have abundant skills to tackle the conditions as India batted nearly 182 overs across two innings on a track that many deemed as under-prepared after England failed to score even 150.

For Ashwin, it was the third time in his Test career when he notched up a five-for and a hundred along with it. Only England legend Ian Botham stands

ahead of him with five such efforts in his career.

India's batting exhibition in the second innings was a statement for all the Doubting Thomases on how to bat on a third-day track.

It only helped that Moeen Ali (32-7-98-4) and Jack Leach (33-6-100-4) were not half as good as Ashwin and Axar Patel were on the second day.

Both the Moeen and the Leach bowlers were bowling their deliveries at an identical pace unlike Ashwin who varied the speed. Also another marked difference between Ashwin's deliveries was his pace through the air which was significantly more than Moeen's.

If Rohit Sharma set it up with a classy Day 1 hundred, Ashwin and Kohli, in the next two days, didn't take their feet off the pedal to put England in the tightest of corners.

Till the ball remained hard, England got three quick wickets leaving India in a spot at 65 for 4 but Kohli again seemed in a mood to make batting look easy.

He displayed defensive elegance, coming close to the pitch of the ball to take an off-stump guard in order to negate turn. He also used the sweep shot only for deliveries that were drifting down the leg-side.

There were seven boundaries, mostly drives and in Ashwin he found an able ally. They added 96 runs in 177 balls, a partnership that deflated England completely.

Ashwin relied on shots square of the wicket and left Kohli with the job of grafting, taking it upon himself to attack the England bowling.

In the past one year, he has tremendously upgraded his variations and the confidence in 'Ashwin the bowler' has brought to the fore 'Ashwin the batsman'.

INDIA 1ST INNINGS 329	2
ENGLAND 1ST INNINGS 134	4
INDIA 2ND INNINGS 286	53/3
ENGLAND 2ND INNINGS (TARGET: 482 RUNS)	
Rory Burns c Kohli b Ashwin 25	
Dom Sibley lbw b Patel 3	
Dan Lawrence not out 19	
Jack Leach c R Sharma b Patel 0	
BOWLING: I Sharma 2,1,6,0	
A Patel 9,15,2 R Ashwin 8,1,28,1	

Joe Root (c) not out 2
Extras: (b 4) 4
TOTAL: (19 Ov, RR: 2.78) 53/3
Fall of wickets: 1-17 (Dom Sibley, 8.2 ov), 2-49 (Rory Burns, 15.6 ov), 3-50 (Jack Leach, 16.6 ov)
BOWLING: I Sharma 2,1,6,0
A Patel 9,15,2 R Ashwin 8,1,28,1

LAHORE, 15 FEBRUARY: An investigation into an alleged passing on of an accreditation card to a bookie for the second Test between Pakistan and South Africa held in Rawalpindi is in progress and those found responsible will be punished, Pakistan Cricket Board

Murali among group asking court to reform Lanka cricket

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, 15 FEBRUARY

The root cause of the decline of Sri Lankan cricket is poor governance driven through the flawed constitution of SLC (Sri Lanka Cricket)," the petitioners said in a statement.

"The said constitution has installed a board which is not independent from its playing clubs.

It is severely conflicted between club and country. This system encourages the office bearers to take decisions mostly to satisfy its voter base, causing the playing standards of Sri Lankan cricket to deteriorate."

Sri Lanka, with a population of 22 million, has 24 first-class cricket clubs with 147 votes electing the administrators while India, with more than a billion people, has a voter base of only 38, the statement added.

Card for Pakistani bookie

LAHORE, 15 FEBRUARY: An investigation into an alleged passing on of an accreditation card to a bookie for the second Test between Pakistan and South Africa held in Rawalpindi is in progress and those found responsible will be punished, Pakistan Cricket Board

chief executive Wasim Khan has said. The PCB chief executive said the authorities concerned were investigating the matter, adding that appropriate action would be taken. Khan said he hoped the PCB board of governors would accept his request for a one-year extension. DAWN/ANN

Play-off spot in sight, Hyderabad FC hope to return to winning ways

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
VASCO, 15 FEBRUARY

Bengaluru win

A play-off spot in sight, Hyderabad FC can ill-afford any slip-up when they take on a struggling Kerala Blasters in an Indian Super League match at the Tilak Maidan Stadium here on Tuesday.

The championship was played as part of the Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) and Ultimate Kho Kho (UKK)-organised first-ever high-performance evaluation and scientific assessment training camp.

The winners and runners-up team in the men's event received Rs 2 lakh and Rs 1.50 lakh prize money respectively. SNS

Mumbai City FC had 23 shots, the most they have had in the entire season but they just couldn't get the result they were looking for. Instead, it was a rejuvenated Bengaluru FC side that walked away with three points after an impressive 4-2 win in the Hero Indian Super League at the GMC Stadium, Bambolim, on Monday.

The night saw the best of BFC skipper Sunil Chhetri, who scored a brace (57', 90') in his 200th game for the club. Cleiton Silva also bagged his double (1', 22') while Adam Le Fondre (50', 72') scored for Mumbai.

From here on, Hyderabad can't afford more slip-ups. They have played out six draws in their last seven matches. And when the Nizams face Kerala Blasters on Tuesday, they will know that any more dropped points will hugely dent their play-off ambitions.

"We will play with Kerala with our style. We are nine games unbeaten but six of them are draws. We have to continue in the same vein and try to win the game because our season has been fantastic. We want to be in the top four."

Plenty of drama can be expected from these two sides right until the final whistle. Fourteen of Kerala's 22 goals have come in the second half while Hyderabad have scored 16 goals after the break - the second-most by a side this season.

Fitness under scrutiny as Lanka begin training

THE ISLAND/ANN
COLOMBO, 15 FEBRUARY

health authorities have given them the green light to go ahead with training. The players' skin folds were to be tested along with the enforcement of other fitness measures.

Skin folds are an indicator of the total amount of body fat in a person. But most of the attention will be on the two-kilometer run that has been introduced as a new fitness measure. Several probables for the West Indies tour had failed the fitness test a fortnight ago while one-day opener Avishka Fernando had failed the fitness test twice in the space of 10 days.

Sri Lanka Cricket had promised to tackle the problem of poor fitness levels among the coaching staff.

players firmly, indicating that anyone who failed the test would be ineligible for selections. The board also threatened to reduce players' salaries if anyone failed a fitness test. The board also withdrew no objection certificates given to some contracted players to take part in a franchise tournament in the United Arab Emirates. The more scientific approach seems to be that if someone fails a fitness test, he would begin a month to prove himself. A second failure should result in a player being made unavailable for selections.

In the summit clash played at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, skipper Waikar dished out a solid all-round performance and guided his side to a 31-25 win.

The 25-year-old all-rounder, who also played as a Wazir for the team and has been consistent throughout the tournament, again proved his mettle as he defended for one minute and 50 seconds

Pahadi Billas lift Kho Kho c'ship

NEW DELHI, 15 FEBRUARY

and then chased down 11 points for his team.

Maharashtra's Pratik Waikar continued his spectacular show at the Super League Kho Kho tournament as Pahadi Billas lifted the trophy with a convincing six-point win over Panthers in the final here on Monday.

In the summit clash played as part of the Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI) and Ultimate Kho Kho (UKK)-organised first-ever high-performance evaluation and scientific assessment training camp.

The winners and runners-up team in the men's event received Rs 2 lakh and Rs 1.50 lakh prize money respectively. SNS

Barty reaches quarters Top-ranked Ash Barty moved into the Australian Open quarter-finals for the third straight year by beating Shelby Rogers 6-3, 6-4.

Barty lost in the semifinals last year to eventual champion Sofia Kenin and didn't play another major tournament in 2020 after deciding to stay in Australia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She had two match points in the eighth game of the second set but made four consecutive errors. Rogers capitalized to break and then hold and force Barty to again serve for the match.

Barty made no mistakes the second time when she held at

love to close it out. Barty is aiming to be the first Australian woman since 1978 to win the Australian title. She will next play No. 25 Karolina Muchova.

Muchova rallied from 5-2 down in the first set to upset 18th-seeded Elise Mertens 7-6 (5), 7-5.

Mertens won the Gippsland Trophy tuneup tournament at Melbourne Park before the Australian Open started and won the first four games against Muchova but then started to tighten up as the Czech player found her range with her big ground strokes.

Muchova is in the quarter-finals at a major for the second time.

Nadal gets past Fognini to enter quarter-finals

AGENCIES
MELBOURNE, 15 FEBRUARY

Medvedev beat the 25-year-old American 6-4, 6-2, 6-3 in his fourth-round match that lasted an hour and 29 minutes at the Margaret Court Arena. He will face Andrej Rublev in what can be a blockbuster quarter-final clash on Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, fourth seed Daniil Medvedev also booked his place in the quarter-finals after a commanding straight-set win over Mackenzie McDonald.

When you go on court against Fabio, you worry," said Nadal after the match as per the ATP Tour website.

"There can always be problems. I was just lucky that when he broke me (in the second set) I responded imme-

dately and held the score. Today was very humid and quicker during the day, which I like, but I have to adapt to every condition," he added.

The 34-year-old is looking to become the first man in the Open Era to clinch each of the four major championships on two or more occasions.

He will next face fifth-seed Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas, who received a walkover after No. 9 seed Matteo Berrettini of Italy withdrew due to an abdominal strain.

Earlier in the day, fourth seed Daniil Medvedev also booked his place in the quarter-finals after a commanding straight-set win over Mackenzie McDonald.

Without his two main creators, Mbappe will be heavily reliant on Marco Verratti pushing up as a makeshift playmaker. That makes Barcelona's task straightforward in shutting him down. That's if Verratti even starts, because he's nursing a bruised hip.

Leipzig's preparations for the game have been overshadowed by the coronavirus and future of star defender Dayot Upamecano. The latter has been cleared up by Bayern Munich's confirmation on Sunday that he will be joining the eight-time defending champions at the end of the season.

Fears of coronavirus mutations have led to the game being held in Budapest rather than Leipzig as German authorities would not grant the Liverpool team an exemption to travel restrictions.

WEDNESDAY

Porto vs Juventus: Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo returns to his homeland hoping to leave with his side firmly in control ahead of the second leg. Ronaldo shows no sign of slowing down despite turning 36 earlier this month.

Juventus' preparations for the game have been overshadowed by the coronavirus and future of star defender Dayot Upamecano. The latter has been cleared up by Bayern Munich's confirmation on Sunday that he will be joining the eight-time defending champions at the end of

DELHI EDUCATION MODEL: A PATHBREAKER FOR STUDENTS

The Delhi education system made history as a record breaking 98% students of Delhi government schools passed 12th board examinations



For the fifth year in a row, class 12th students of Delhi Government schools outperformed private school students beating their own record. The pass percentage of Delhi government schools improved from 94.2 per cent last year to 98 per cent this year. The overall percentage, including both government and private schools, in CBSE's Class 12 exams improved by 5.38 percentage points. Government school results were 5.9.

A Delhi government school has been ranked No. 1 among all government-run day schools in the country, while two others have made it to the top 10.

Delhi government school students set a benchmark with 53 students having qualified in JEE Advance and 569 students having qualified for NEET.

" Feeling very proud to announce that the CBSE Class 12 result of Delhi government schools this year is 98 percent - highest ever so far. It's historic. Congratulations to my Team Education, all students, teachers, parents and education officers. Proud of you all.

—Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said in his tweet

percentage points higher than private schools' in Delhi. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal congratulated the students. "Feeling very proud to announce that the CBSE Class 12 result of Delhi government schools this year is 98 percent - highest ever so far. It's historic. Congratulations to my Team Education, all students, teachers, parents and education officers. Proud of you all," Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said in his tweet. The Delhi government schools had crossed the 90 per cent pass percentage mark for the first time in 2018. This increased to 94.29 per cent last year, and zoomed up to 97.68 per cent for Delhi East and 97.91 per cent for the newly formed administrative unit of Delhi

West this year. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also lauded the results. "Over the past 5 years, we at #DelhiGovtSchools have been competing with ourselves to break our own record each time. This year is no exception... Congrats to students, parents & Team Education," Deputy Chief Minister had tweeted. The surge in the Delhi government schools pass percentages is largely responsible for the increase in Delhi's overall pass percentage. Private schools have registered a slight increase from 90.68 per cent in 2019 to 91.69 per cent this year for Delhi East, and 92.12 per cent for Delhi West. The number of students who appeared for the examination from Delhi government schools was also higher - with 1,13,013 between Delhi East and West - as compared to 1,01,614 from private schools. A Delhi government school has been ranked No. 1 among all government-run day schools in the country, while two others have made it to the top 10. Delhi government school students set a benchmark with 53 students having qualified in JEE Advance and 569 students having qualified for NEET. The principal of a government school in Khajuri Khas said that his school registered a pass percentage of 98 percent. That is the school's highest pass percentage yet, having registered 94.47 per cent last year. In line with the pattern of earlier years, a higher percentage of girls passed the exams than boys in Delhi by a gap of almost 4 percentage points - 96.43 per cent of the girls who wrote the exam clearing it as compared to 92.48 per cent of the boys. Like across the country, multiple students scored above 99 per cent in Delhi-NCR.



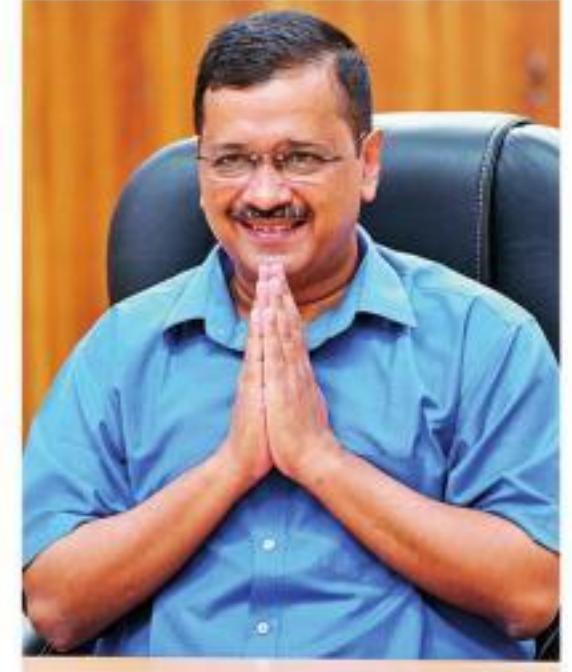
CHANGE STARTS WITH A SINGLE 'DOORSTEP'

The Delhi government is transforming the ration system one 'doorstep' at a time

On the eve of Republic Day, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal declared that Delhi government's highly ambitious welfare project 'Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana' will begin by March 2021. The scheme which was announced in July 2020 proposes a complete transformation of the ration system in Delhi. Under this scheme, the beneficiaries will have the option to get neatly wrapped packets of dry ration delivered to their homes. The scheme comes in response to the wide ranging issues in the Public Distribution System such as contamination of ration, less quantity of dry ration provided to people, untimely closing of shops and other such inconveniences.. Through this revolutionary approach, the government hopes to ensure all people have the capacity to feed themselves with dignity. While Corona lockdowns began across the world, it became increasingly apparent that the world faced not just a health emergency but a food emergency as well. During lockdown in the month of April, the Delhi government was prompt in declaring an increase in quantity of dry ration by 50% to 70 lakhs ration card holders free of charge. They were also provided with ration kits which included essential items such as chickpeas, oil, soap, spices, sugar, salt, etc. But the loss of jobs and reduced income increased the number of vulnerable households facing acute food insecurity. Aware of the circumstances

faced by the public, 26 lakh Chief Minister Corona Relief Kits were distributed once per family to both ration and non-ration card holders. The uniqueness and success of the initiative lay in the fact that beneficiaries could register for e-coupons online and collect ration from a nearby location. In an effort to cover migrant workers temporary coupons were issued to them through public representatives. These coupons made them eligible for 5kg free dry ration. Each MLA/MP was given 2000 coupons each, which were

" Delhi government's highly ambitious welfare project 'Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana' will begin by March 2021



distributed to migrant workers in need of food. During the pandemic lockdown the government provided ration to nearly one crore people which is nearly half the population of Delhi. These accomplishments show that Delhi is a pioneer state for its commitment in ensuring food security to its people. The welfare schemes initiated during the pandemic have shown the effectiveness of government's reforms towards transforming the Public Distribution System. Delhi government's latest initiative of providing doorstep delivery of ration is another step in making the Public Distribution System more efficient and transparent.

" During the Corona pandemic, the government has decided to distribute free 5kg ration to another three million people. So, in all, our food security scheme will now cover 10 million people, which is more than half of Delhi's population."

— Arvind Kejriwal,
Chief Minister of Delhi



Delhi government launched 'Jahan Jhuggi Wahin Makaan' scheme for EWS and slum dwellers

Under the scheme 89,400 flats for EWS and slum dwellers will be built and given to eligible persons as per Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojna

In a bid to provide permanent housing to the poor and needy, the Delhi government fulfilled its promise and initiated the 'Jahan Jhuggi, Wahin Makaan' policy for eligible persons.. To fulfill the needs of the economically weaker section of the society, the Delhi government launched 'Jahan Jhuggi Wahin Makaan' Scheme under which 89,400 flats for EWS and slum dwellers will be built and given to the eligible persons. In meetings held at regular intervals, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has directed

the officials to ensure the allotment of the flats within five km of where their slums were located, for which the land should be allotted. The project will be executed and implemented by the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board. Under the flagship policy of the Delhi government, process for the in-situ rehabilitation of the people in EWS Flats has been initiated.

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the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board (DUSIB) to check the status of the progress of the policy. The 'Jahan Jhuggi Wahin Makaan' policy is the flagship policy of the Delhi government. The Delhi Government is working relentlessly to ensure the construction of the EWS flats for the in-situ rehabilitation of the people should be completed in its due timeline.. The Delhi government is preparing a detailed rehabilitation and construction plan (and) architect consultants will be appointed for the project.

73.54% consumers received zero electricity bills in Delhi

Delhi is the only state in India with no electricity tariff hike in the past six years

The Delhi government's free-electricity scheme is an example of 'smart governance' as it is encouraging Delhites to reduce their power consumption. In August, the Delhi government had announced free-electricity of up to 200 units for domestic consumers and later extended the scheme to tenants residing in the national capital. In December 2020, 38 lakh consumers received Zero Bills for consumption under 200 units. This last one year has been a very tough year, especially in terms of the financial condition of the government. Significantly, despite all the limitations, the Delhi government has maintained all the development schemes for the citizens of Delhi. Lakhs of consumers have received the benefit of zero electricity bill when the pandemic wreaked havoc in their lives, thousands and thousands of people lost their jobs and suffered a lot. Delhi has total of 51,98,533 consumers and 73.54% of these consumers received zero bills which is around 38,23,232. Talking to Twitter, CM Arvind Kejriwal said that residents of the city were trying to consume less than 200 units of electricity to avail the benefit. Under the scheme, people consuming electricity between 201 units and 400 units are eligible to avail up to Rs 800 per month subsidy from the government on their bills.

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since the past 6 years - Delhi has the most progressive tariff structure, rewarding low electricity consumption by providing big subsidies. The Delhi government has also drastically improved the power infrastructure of Delhi which has helped to bring down power

cuts. The Delhi government has also tried to develop the infrastructure of alternative sources of generating electricity. In the last one year, the Delhi government has given an immense focus on the solar power infrastructure. The solar power system not only has the potential to generate a lot of electricity but also this is absolutely environment friendly. The Delhi government has developed and installed over 13 megawatts (MW) of solar rooftop plants across 150 Delhi government schools during last one year. These are expected to save about Rs 5 crores on electricity bills cumulatively each year, apart from earning Rs 6 crores from selling power.

