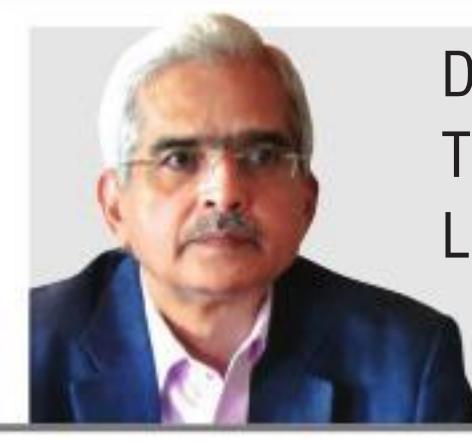




LENIN'S LEGACY



DAS ASKS BANKS
TO STRENGTHEN
LENDING CAPACITY



'PRACHANDA' NOW
RULING PARTY'S NEW
CHAIRMAN



ADELAIDE
ROUT IS
ANALYSED

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Moderate to dense fog in the morning. Cold wave conditions at isolated pockets. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 23 and 04 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 49%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 23.3°C (+2) Min: 4.0°C (-4)

SUN RISES

07:12 hrs

MOON RISES

13:46 hrs

SUN SETS

17:31 hrs

MOON SETS

02:43 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Farmers during their protest against the Centre's farm laws at Singhu Border, in the Capital on Wednesday.

SNS

Cabinet nod for revised DTH service guidelines: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved revision in guidelines for providing direct to home (DTH) services in the country under which licenses would be issued for 20 years, Union minister Prakash Javadekar said. He said the change in guidelines would also allow 100 per cent FDI in the DTH sector. While the Commerce Ministry had spoken of 100 per cent FDI in the DTH sector, the guidelines of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry needed to be changed.

'11 passengers of 4 UK flights test Covid +ve at Delhi airport: Eleven passengers on four flights from the UK were found positive for Covid-19 when tested on arrival at the Delhi airport, said Gauri Agarwal, founder of the Genestrings Diagnostic Center, on Wednesday. Genestrings is handling coronavirus testing of all passengers at the Delhi airport. Agarwal said 50 passengers of these four flights have been put under institutional quarantine.

Two IFFCO officials dead, 16 injured in UP ammonia gas leak

NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW,
23 DECEMBER

Two IFFCO officials died and 16 other employees were injured in a major ammonia gas leak at the fertilizer major's plant at Phulpur near Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, the firm said on Wednesday.

The gas leakage that took place on Tuesday night around 10.30 pm, however, was restricted and stopped in a short time, the fertilizer cooperative major said in a statement.

The two persons who died in the accident were identified as IFFCO Deputy Manager Abhay Nandan and Assistant Manager V P Singh.

Out of the 16 injured IFFCO employees, including three contract labourers, two have been discharged while 14 others are undergoing treatment in different hospitals, the firm said.

IFFCO said the accident took place as tie rods of an ammonia plunger pump suddenly broke and got detached leading to heavy ammonia leakage.

Following the leakage, IFFCO ordered a technical investigation into the cause of the gas leakage while Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath also ordered an administrative probe into the accident.

"We deeply regret the sad and unfortunate accident happened yesterday night around 10.30 pm due to mechanical failure at #IFFCO #Phulpur Ammonia Urea unit in #Prayagraj. Our employees at the site fought bravely to handle the situation," IFFCO CEO and Managing Director U S Awasthi tweeted on Wednesday.

"Our emergency response group fought with the emergency situation and restricted the leakage to small area within the plant," the IFFCO later said. PTI

DDC polls: People of J&K have spoken, says Omar

PAGD sweeps maiden J&K DDC polls with 110 seats; BJP gets 75 seats, is single largest party

SP SHARMA
JAMMU, 23 DECEMBER

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) swept the maiden District Development Council (DDC) polls by winning 110 seats, while the BJP emerged as the single largest party by getting 75 seats after securing the largest vote share in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Wednesday.

Amid Union minister Jitendra Singh interpreting the DDC results as acceptance of BJP as pan-Jammu and Kashmir party, a Twitter war has broken out with the Gupkar Alliance leader Omar Abdullah claiming that "we" have received strong support in both J&K.

The results of two constituencies—one each in Bandipora and Kupwara districts of north Kashmir—are still awaited as counting of votes has been deferred there till further orders, they said.

The PAGD was upbeat after winning 24 seats in Jammu, whereas the BJP managed only 4 in the Kashmir Valley. Besides, the Congress bagged 16 seats in the Jammu division.

Reacting to BJP's claim of having emerged as the single largest party, Omar tweeted: "It's amusing to see the desperation of the BJP propaganda wallas."

Yesterday it was about 3 seats in the valley & today it's about being the single largest party. They aren't even embarrassed about making comparisons with @JKNC which contested far



fewer seats due to an alliance". Singh tweeted: "BJP has emerged as single largest party in #JammuAndKashmir and registered its presence in all the regions. A vote to be part of development journeyed by PM SH @narendramodi".

A top Congress leader P Chidambaram also jumped into the war of words and tweeted: "Undeterred by the denial of democratic rights, the voters of the Kashmir valley have firmly rejected the BJP and its misguided Kashmir policy. I compliment the voters for their courage and resolve".

Gupkar Alliance leaders Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti called their lead in the DDC elections an endorsement of their fight for restoration of the Article 370 that was abrogated last year by the Modi government.

"The trends that have emerged in the DDC polls in J&K are very encouraging for the @JKPAGD.

In a series of tweets, these leaders thanked the people for the confidence expressed in the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD).

The BJP had made this election a prestige issue about Art 370 & J&K's special status. The people have now spoken & it's for those who believe in democracy to pay heed to these voices".

Omar Abdullah tweeted: "The people have endorsed this alliance and we now have the mandate to continue to fight for what we started with, which is our opposition to the changes made on August 5, 2019".

"The @JKPAGD is an alliance that emerged out of the betrayal of the people of J&K on August 5, 2019. We have faced every obstacle - illegal detentions, agency threats & pressures, our candidates were locked up to stop them campaigning & from all this we are emerging victorious".

"The trends that have emerged in the DDC polls in J&K are very encouraging for the @JKPAGD.

The BJP had made this election a prestige issue about Art 370 & J&K's special status. The people have now spoken & it's for those who believe in democracy to pay heed to these voices".

"All of us in the @JKPAGD are deeply indebted & grateful to the people of J&K for your support at this critical juncture. We reaffirm our commitment to use all democratic & legal weapons at our disposal to continue to fight for our rights".

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti tweeted: "DDC results have made it clear that people of J&K voted en masse for @JKPAGD thus rejecting the unconstitutional decision to abrogate Article 370. They have overwhelmingly supported @JKPAGD which stands for restoration of J&K's special status".

"Our win is dedicated to PAGD cadre who worked tirelessly to ensure our success. GOI left no stone unturned to create hurdles for us. Beginning with @parawahid's arrest a day after he filed his DDC nominations, restricting our movement & not allowing us to campaign".

In another tweet Mehbooba said: "I was illegally detained thrice over the course of a fortnight. PAGD candidates were locked up in a government building while others barred from canvassing. Despite all these obstacles PAGD emerged as winners. This has been a hard earned victory for all us".

"Even after a split in PDP engineered by GOI & all the attempts to write us off, my cadre worked day & night to ensure party's victory. I am extremely grateful to them", she added.

Two Pakistan-occupied Kashmir nationalists (PoK), who are married to former militants, are among the contestants from the Drangmulla constituency in Kupwara and Hajin-A in Bandipora and the state election commissioner has directed the returning officers concerned to defer the counting of votes in the two constituencies till further orders, the officials said.

Among the PAGD constituents, the National Conference won the highest number of 67 seats, followed by PDP (27), People's Conference (eight), CPI(M) five and J&K Peoples Movement (three), getting a total share of over 3.94 lakh votes together.

Send concrete proposals, not love letters: Farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

hours.

"Farmer unions are ready to hold talks with the government and that they are waiting for the government to come to the table with an open mind," said Yadav, who is also a member of Mocha.

He alleged that the Union government is holding parallel talks with farmer unions that have no relation with the protest and termed it as an attempt to derail the ongoing agitation against the three farm laws.

"We urge you (government) not to repeat those meaningless amendments that we have already rejected but come up with a concrete proposal in writing that can become an agenda for fresh talks," Yadav said while reading out the reply sent to the Centre's letter dated December 20.

"We are surprised that the government is not able to understand our basic objections. Representatives of farmers have demanded a complete repeal of these farm laws...but the government wants to cleverly project our demands for amendments.

"In our previous talks, we have clearly told the government that they don't want amendments," Mocha said in its letter.

Yadav alleged that government wants to project that the farmers are not ready to hold talks, adding that the ball is in the government's court as peasants are ready for the same, but only after a concrete proposal.

Kakka said that the government should "abandon its stubbornness" and accept the demands of farmers.

India logs 23,950 new cases; recoveries surge to 96.63 lakh

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

in the country which comprises 2.86 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's COVID-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on September 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one crore mark on December 19.

According to the ICMR, 16,42,68,721 samples have been tested up to December 22 with 10,98,164 samples being tested on Tuesday. The 333 new fatalities include 75 from Maharashtra, 38 from West Bengal, 27 from Kerala and 25 from Delhi.

A total of 1,46,444 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 48,876 from Maharashtra.

There are 2,89,240 active cases of coronavirus infection



Army chief visits forward posts in eastern Ladakh amid border impasse

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

Army chief Gen MM Naravane on Wednesday visited various high-altitude forward areas in eastern Ladakh and reviewed India's overall military preparedness as the tense border standoff with China in the region prolonged for over seven months, the Army and official sources said.

The Army said Gen Naravane reached Ladakh at 8:30 am on a day-long visit with an aim to review the ground situation in the region that is experiencing harsh winter.

"General MM Naravane #COAS visited forward areas including Rechin La and undertook a first-hand assessment of the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh.

Nearly 50,000 troops of the Indian Army are deployed in a high state of combat readiness in various mountainous locations in eastern Ladakh in sub-zero temperatures.

China has also deployed an

equal number of troops, according to officials.

Lt Gen PGK Menon, the commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps, popularly known as 'Fire and Fury' Corps, briefed the Army chief on various aspects of the situation in eastern Ladakh.

Sources said Gen Naravane

reached Ladakh at 8:30 am on a day-long visit with an aim to review the ground situation in the region that is experiencing harsh winter.

"General MM Naravane #COAS visited forward areas including Rechin La and undertook a first-hand assessment of the situation along the LAC. He was briefed by #GOC #Fire-and-Fury Corps and other local commanders on the operational preparedness of our forces," the Army tweeted.

The Army said Gen Nar-

avane interacted with the troops deployed in forward areas and exhorted them to continue working with the same "zeal and enthusiasm".

He also distributed sweets and cakes ahead of Christmas.

Around three-and-a-half months ago, Indian troops had occupied a number of strategic heights in the Mukhpari, Rechin La and Magar hill areas around the southern bank of the Pangong lake in eastern Ladakh after the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) attempted to intimidate them in the area on the intervening night of August 29 and 30.

"General MM Naravane #COAS undertook on the spot inspection of the state of habitation of troops on the forward line of defences at Rechin La. He appreciated

the efforts made by the formation to make troops comfortable along the LAC," the Army said in another tweet.

It said the Army chief also visited the forward base of Tora and interacted with the local commanders and troops. He appreciated their high morale and state of readiness.

The military face-off erupted on May 5 following violent clashes between the Indian army and the PLA in the Pangong lake area. The clashes were followed by a similar incident in north Sikkim on May 9.

Last week, India and China held another round of diplomatic talks during which they agreed to continue work towards ensuring complete disengagement of troops in all friction points along the LAC in eastern Ladakh at the "earliest".

Lack of funding hampering marine research: UNESCO's IOC report

RAMAN PANDIT
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

The lack of funding is hampering the development and implementation of marine research, according to the Second Global Ocean Science Report published by the UNESCO's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC).

The report has been released ahead of the United Nations Decade of Ocean Sciences for Sustainable Development 2021-2030.

On an average, states devote only 1.7 percent of their research budgets to sciences (0.03 percent to

Director-General. Azoulay said: "The Global Ocean Science Report 2020 underlines the essential role of ocean research and international cooperation for all key issues of the 21st century."

The report states that the budgets for ocean science vary considerably from country to country and over time. "Between 2013 and 2017, 14 countries increased their average budget, with the Russian Federation recording the highest annual growth (over 10 per cent), followed by the UK and Bulgaria, while nine countries reduced expenditure, in some cases significantly."

The report highlights an increase in international collaboration among oceanographers and calls for the strengthening of South-South and North-South partnerships. The report states that innovation, complemented by technology transfer, must play a fundamental role



The first DDC elections in J&K are historic and decisive, they show the intent of the voter to choose development over divisive politics. This shows a clear faith in the leadership of PM Narendra Modi.

ANURAG THAKUR
UNION MINISTER

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER 2020

03

Frame post Covid-19 SOP: HC to AAP govt

HC asks Delhi govt to prepare SOPs for post Covid complications; says in view of new corona strain in UK, from where many people arrived before flight suspension, it should ensure proper testing & follow-up

PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

The Delhi High Court Wednesday directed the AAP government to frame standard operating procedures (SOPs) to deal with post COVID-19 complications relating to the lungs and other vital organs in those who have recovered from the coronavirus infection.

The high court further said that in view of the new coronavirus strain in the UK, from where a large number of people arrived before the Centre suspended the flights between the two countries, the Delhi government should "ensure prompt and adequate testing and follow up in respect of those found positive with all seriousness to avoid another spate of infection in the city". The new strain can spread faster.

The directions were issued by a bench of Justices Hima

Kohli and Subramonium Prasad while hearing a PIL by advocate Rakesh Malhotra seeking increase in the COVID-19 testing numbers in the national capital and getting speedy results.

Malhotra, during the hearing, told the court that there should be some SOPs for managing post COVID-19 complications in those who have recovered from the infection. He told the bench that persons who have recovered from the COVID-19 infection continue facing serious health issues and are finding it difficult to go back to normal life. Subsequently, the bench directed that the Expert Committee already constituted by the Delhi government shall examine the aforesaid aspect and come up with a SOP which will be given wide publicity. "Needful shall be done within two weeks. A copy of the SOP shall be filed along with the next status report,"



the court said to the Delhi government, represented by additional standing counsel Satyakam, and listed the matter for further hearing on January 14, 2021.

The court, in its order, also took note of the district-wise data of COVID-19 infections in the national capital and the submission by the Delhi government that it was "enhancing contact tracings and creating more contain-

ment zones" in areas where the positive rate is higher.

The Delhi government also told the court that in a meeting held on December 21 by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), it was decided that the "representative testing" shall be followed and the focus would be more on pockets where the positivity rate is more.

According to the status report filed by the Delhi govern-

ment, as of December 19 the positivity rate was below 2 per cent in all districts except north-west where it was 2.12 per cent.

After perusing the status report, the bench said that while following the representing testing suggested by DDMA, Delhi government "shall ensure that testing through RT-PCR remains higher than through Rapid Antigen Testing.

RT/PCR, short for Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction, is a laboratory technique widely used in the diagnosis of genetic diseases and to measure gene expression in research.

The court on December 3 had directed the Delhi government to "focus on testing and tracing" to deal with the COVID-19 infection numbers in the national capital, as the "fear factor" regarding the virus was "huge" in the minds of people.

SAD condemns PSPCL's proposal for 8 per cent power tariff hike

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 23 DECEMBER

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Wednesday condemned the Congress-led Punjab government for repeated power hikes and said its latest proposal to hike power tariff by another eight per cent would result in "untold sufferings" to the common man as well as trade and industry which was reeling from the adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Demanding the government to roll back its decision immediately, former minister Sikander Singh Maluka said the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited's (PSPCL) requisition for an eight per cent hike in power tariff for the 2021-22 fiscal amounted to transferring its own inefficiencies to the consumers.

"We condemn this anti-people step. The government should provide much-needed relief to the common man as well as trade and industry instead of seeking hefty power hikes," he added.

He said that the Congress government had already increased power tariff by more than 30 per cent since coming to power in Punjab and the latest proposed hike would make power rates in the state among



Sikander Singh Maluka

the most costliest in the country. Asking the Congress government not to penalise the people for its failure to run the PSPCL on professionalism, Maluka said the PSPCL had run up a revenue loss of Rs 8363 crores during the last three years.

"We demand the Congress government should release a white paper on the entire issue. The PSPCL has lost money due to the Rs 4,300 Crore power scam besides failure to strike out against corruption and even mismanagement in power purchases," the former minister said.

Maluka said the recent hikes had made Punjab a most unfavorable destination for investment. He said simultaneously the Scheduled Caste population, which was given partial free power by Parkash Singh

Badal, had been worst hit with the Congress government changing norms to virtually do away with this facility. He said due to this the SC population was being served highly inflated bills which they were unable to deposit.

The SAD leader said the industry had also been tricked in a similar manner.

"First the industrial sector was promised power at a landing cost of Rs Five per unit but was charged between Rs Eight to Rs 8.50 per unit. Now during lockdown the industry was told that fixed charges applicable during closure of units would be waived off. This is yet to take place. The SAD demands both promises be implemented immediately to make an economic revival possible in the state," he said.

HP Guv asks VCs to prepare vision document for NEP implementation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 23 DECEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya on Wednesday directed all the Vice Chancellors (VCs) of the universities of the state to prepare a vision document in accordance with the National Education Policy (NEP) for its implementation.

He also directed for submitting its final draft till 15th

February next year during an interaction with Vice Chancellors on NEP and its implementation through video-conference from Raj Bhawan.

He also advised them to formulate a policy in improving the ranking of the institute and work accordingly and also asked them to send a detailed report regarding initiative and achievement of the universities during Covid pandemic period.

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February next year

Police vehicles in Andhra get YSRCP hues; Opposition TDP hits out at govt

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 23 DECEMBER

After Panchayat buildings, police patrol vehicles got a dab of blue and green, the party colours of the ruling YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh, prompting the Opposition TDP to slam the government for using police vehicles for its own publicity.

TDP's Nara Lokesh took a dig at over-enthusiastic police officials after some two-wheelers used for patrolling by Disha teams were painted in blue, green and white, and tweeted, "Some over-enthusiastic are looking forward to changing their uniforms to

Delhi principals oppose scrapping of nursery admissions for 2021

PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

Principals of schools in the national capital are not in favour of scrapping nursery admissions for next year in view of the COVID-19 pandemic even as the government maintains that no final decision has been taken yet in this regard.

Usually, the process to enter children in nursery in around 1,700 schools in Delhi begins in last week of November.

The Directorate of Education (DoE) releases guidelines and schools are asked to furnish required information following which the application process is rolled out usually in

YSRCP colours". TDP's Andhra Pradesh unit president Atchanaidu shot off a letter to DGP Gautam Sawang alleging that 800 two-wheelers which were bought during TDP's tenure for 'She Teams', meant to ensure security of women, have been repainted in the party colours of YSRCP and is being used for its "publicity". The Disha teams were launched by the YSRCP government last year to tackle crime against women and children. It was named after a veterinary surgeon was raped and murdered in Hyderabad last year, prompting the chief minister to tighten laws to curb atrocities against women.

However, this is not the first time the YSRCP government has landed in a controversy over painting government property in party colours. Prior to local body polls, the Panchayat department had issued an order to paint the gram Panchayat buildings in blue, green and white. Many buildings were painted in white, blue and green before the High Court intervened. After ignoring the High Court's order initially to repaint the buildings in white, the state government was forced to retract after the Supreme Court refused to entertain its plea against the lower court's order.

December.

However, there has been no development on it this year.

According to a senior Delhi government official, since the schools have been closed since nine months due to COVID-19 and will remain closed till a vaccine is available, a whole year of online learning for small children seems unviable.

"The government has decided that schools will not reopen in Delhi till a vaccine is available. Even if they reopen, pre-primary students will be the last ones to start going to school. So, it's unviable to enrol them for a year of online learning," the official said.

"However, no final decision has been taken in this regard

and any move will be planned in consultation with schools only," the official added.

Reacting to the proposed idea, Alka Kapur, Principal, Modern School, Shalimar Bagh said, "I don't think it would be too prudent to cancel nursery admissions in the coming year. By getting their children enrolled in schools, the parents can, at the very least, introduce them to formal education. Even if they cannot attend the schools physically, they will have the option to learn online."

The pandemic has made it quite evident that we will be relying on technology for disseminating education in the future, and the sooner children are introduced to this hybrid way of teaching, the better they will fare in the long run."

"Also, with the vaccine, things may begin to improve soon. Imagine if the pandemic begins subsiding by the June-July 2021, the entire year would go a waste if the nursery admissions are cancelled," she said.

According to Sumeeda Goel, Director, The Shri Ram Wonder Years, Rohini, scrapping the nursery admissions may not be a great step.

"The growth of the children can suffer. Giving a halt to their growth for a year can be a setback to their holistic development. E-learning has emerged as the powerful tool to impact education even during this pandemic. Our teachers have various platforms and methods now to impart knowledge virtually. As per the response of the parents, the online methods have so far been successful," Goel said.

"Therefore, the decision to not make the children of nursery come to school will be better than scrapping the admissions of nursery," Goel said.

Seema Kaur, Principal, Pacific World School, said, "It is not an advisable decision as doing away with schooling completely at a foundation level might only lead to an increase in the learning gap as school provides an environment for children to explore, gain a sense of self, interact and play with peers and build self confidence. Also, it is a known fact that 90 per cent of the child's brain develops during this age group".

Students who are eligible to take admission in Nursery in 2021-22 have never been to a play school and considering the pandemic it is quite likely that they have not developed the social and emotional skills that a child of grade nursery has."

"Hence, it will be extremely challenging for students to adapt to the school environment when schools open physically. Even if schools open physically by July, effective online classes will bridge the learning gap and will help the students of Nursery to be ready for school, she said.

Manit Jain, Co-founder of The Heritage Schools, believes it will be extremely traumatic for the families who have children going to nursery next year as they will have to rely on pre schools or take the decision of providing no education to their children for the year.

"A gap in the child's education is not recommended at this stage, as it is absolutely essential for the children's cognitive development and will lead to substantial gaps. Secondly, it will be challenging for the parents to make arrangements this time or to seek education from preschools with teachers and staff who may not have the expertise to provide the children the support and resources that they need at this stage," he said.

One of the most celebrated Malayalam poets of

the pandemic has made it quite evident that we will be relying on technology for disseminating education in the future, and the sooner children are introduced to this hybrid way of teaching, the better they will fare in the long run."

Confirming the changes in night curfew dates and timing, Yediyurappa in a tweet said, it will now be from 24 December till 1 January, 2021, between 11 pm to 5 am (2 January, 5 am.).

"Midnight mass on 24 December on account of Christmas can be held without any obstruction," he

Maharashtra has slipped to the third place from the top spot in attracting FDI under the Shiv Sena-led government.

BJP LEADER DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

ATTACKING SENA OVER THE RECENT FDI NUMBERS FOR STATES ANNOUNCED BY THE RBI

Covid-19: Night curfew in Karnataka from today

Curfew to continue till 1 Jan between 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. amid concern over a new strain of virus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU, 23 DECEMBER

The Karnataka government on Wednesday said night curfew will be imposed between 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. from 24 December till 1 January across the state as a precautionary measure in line with the Centre's advice, amid concerns over a new Covid-19 variant spreading in the UK.

Earlier in the day following a meeting with health minister K Sudhakar, members of the state Technical Advisory Committee for Covid-19 and senior officials, chief minister BS Yediyurappa had announced that the night curfew will be imposed from tonight till January 2 between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Confirming the changes in night curfew dates and timing, Yediyurappa in a tweet said, it will now be from 24 December till 1 January, 2021, between 11 pm to 5 am (2 January, 5 a.m.).

"Midnight mass on 24 December on account of Christmas can be held without any obstruction," he

said in another tweet.

According to the government order imposing the night curfew, while movement of individuals shall remain strictly prohibited between 11 p.m. to 5 a.m., except for essential activities, there shall be no restriction in movement of all types of goods through trucks, goods vehicles or any goods carriers, including empty vehicles.

It said all industries/companies/organisations which require operations at night shall be permitted to operate with 50 per cent staff, and movement of employees of such organisations shall be allowed on producing valid ID cards issued by their respective organisation/institution.

Further stating that industries/factories which require 24/7 operations will be allowed to operate without any restrictions, the order issued by Chief Secretary T M Vijay Bhaskar said movement of long distance night bus, train services and air services are permitted.

To and fro movement of taxis and auto are permitted for dropping or pickup of people to or from bus stops,



railway stations and Airports. It will be allowed on displaying valid tickets.

Also, midnight Christmas Mass on 24 December night shall be permitted as per norms issued earlier, the order said, clarifying that celebration of Christmas and New Year festivities shall be as per guidelines issued on 17 December.

In the guidelines issued on 17 December, the government had said, organisers and supervisors at Churches must ensure that a large number of people don't gather at a time and social distancing maintained.

Also people should not indulge in handshakes or hugging during the festivi-

ties.

It had also prohibited parties, special DJ dance programmes and special events at clubs, pubs, restaurants and other places that attract people in large numbers without social distancing from 30 December to 2 January.

Yediyurappa had earlier said it was decided to impose night curfew in view of the new Covid-19 strain and as per the advice of the Government of India and Technical Advisory Committee.

"It will be applicable for the entire state. I request all public to cooperate to prevent and contain the new Covid-19 strain," he told reporters after meeting with Health Ministers and senior officials.

Neighbouring Maharashtra declared a night curfew in municipal corporation areas as a precautionary step amid growing concerns over a new coronavirus variant spreading in Britain.

Police personnel were also seen conducting a march in Dindoshi area here.

They were seen also conducting checks in suburban Goregaon and Malad and asking people, who were out on streets, to go to their homes and adhere to the government's order.

Priest, nun given life term in Sister Abhaya case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
23 DECEMBER

A CBI special court here on Wednesday awarded life imprisonment to the catholic priest and nun, who were found guilty of the murder of Sister Abhaya 28 years ago in Kottayam.

Special CBI Judge K Sanal Kumar awarded double life sentence to Father Thomas Kottoor and imposed a fine of Rs 6.5 lakh.

Whereas the other accused in the case, Sister Sephy, was sentenced to life and a fine of Rs 5.5 lakh was slapped on her.

The court had on Tuesday found the two guilty of the murder of Sister Abhaya, who was found dead in a well in St Pius convent in Kottayam in 1992.

The court also sentenced

the duo to seven years of imprisonment for tampering with evidence.

However, the sentences shall run concurrently, the court said.

Fr Kottoor has been sentenced for double life imprisonment for two offences—murder and criminal trespass under sections 302 and 449 of IPC respectively.

The court has slapped a fine of Rs five lakh under section 302 and one lakh for criminal trespass.

It also sentenced the

priest to seven years of imprisonment and Rs 50,000 fine for tampering with the evidence under section 201 of the IPC.

Sister Sephy has been imprisoned for life under section 302 of IPC along with a fine of Rs five lakh and seven years imprisonment for tampering with the evidence which also carries a fine of Rs 50,000.

While pronouncing the verdict on Tuesday, the court had said the murder charges against the two accused will stand. The detailed verdict is not out yet. The accused, who were on bail, were taken into judicial custody on Wednesday after the mandatory Covid-19 testing and police had shifted Father Kottoor to Poonjapura central jail and Sister Sephy to Attakulangara women's prison here.

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It also sentenced the

Medium range MRSAM successfully test fired

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BALASORE, 23 DECEMBER

developed the missile in collaboration with Israel Aerospace Industries. The MRSAM has been manufactured by Bharat Dynamics Ltd.

The entire mission trajectory from the launch to plunging into the sea was monitored by various radars and electro-optical instruments.

The missile targeted the *Banshee*, an Aerial target (unmanned aerial vehicle) which was flown from LC-I, a report stated.

The DRDO has jointly

Moderate fog in parts of Capital, minimum temp dips to 4 degrees



PTI
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

Some parts of Delhi were shrouded by fog on Wednesday as the minimum temperature in the city dropped to four degrees Celsius, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Moderate to dense fog lowered visibility to 201 metres at Safdarjung and to 350 metres at Palam, an IMD official said.

According to the weather department, visibility is between 0 and 50 metres, 51 and 200 is dense, 201 and 500 is moderate, and 501 and 1,000 is shallow.

The Safdarjung Observatory, which provides representative data for the city, recorded a minimum of four degrees Celsius, which was four notches below normal.

The Lodhi Road weather station recorded a low of 3.7 degrees Celsius, according to the IMD.

The Safdarjung observatory had recorded a minimum of 3.4 degrees Celsius on Sunday, the lowest this season so far.

The minimum temperature had increased slightly on Monday and Tuesday under the influence of a fresh Western Disturbance affecting the upper reaches of the Himalayas.

The WD has withdrawn. So, the temperatures are going to drop again, Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre said.

The WD led to light to moderate snowfall in the upper reaches of Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.

Poet-activist Sugathakumari succumbs to Covid

SNS & PTI
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
23 DECEMBER

Eminent Malayalam poet, conservationist and women's activist, Sugathakumari, who had tested positive for Covid-19 and was undergoing treatment, died at the government medical college hospital here on Wednesday.

She was 86 and leaves behind daughter Lakshmi Devi, family sources here said.

The octogenarian poet rarely made any public appearance in recent days due to old age difficulties.

Fondly being called as 'Sugatha Teacher' by her hundreds of admirers and followers, the activist-poet had been admitted to the intensive care unit of the medical college after being diagnosed with the viral infection on 21 December.

Though she was first admitted to a private hospital, she was rushed to the government health facility after she tested positive.

As her condition remained critical without any change and her body failed to respond to medicines, the poet was on ventilator support, medical college authorities said.

Besides the severe bronchial pneumonia, an after-effect of Covid-19, the condition of her vital organs also deteriorated and the end came at around 11 a.m.

One of the most celebrated Malayalam poets of

the contemporary era, Sugathakumari was known for her unique poems filled with compassionate empathy, human sensitivity and philosophical quest.

In her poetic career spanning over six decades, she, through her subtle and sublime lines, fought against the injustices in this world especially against the ruthless oppression of women and indiscriminate exploitation of nature.

She had spearheaded the fiercest environmental campaign witnessed by Kerala, against a proposal to set up a hydel project in the Silent valley in Western Ghats three decades ago, and was also in the forefront of the recent agitation against construction of an airport at Arambol.

Born as the second daughter of freedom fighter and poet, Bodheswaran and wife Karthiyayini Amma on January 22, 1934, Sugatha had entered into the world of poetry in 1960 with her first collection of poems—*Muthuchippikal*.

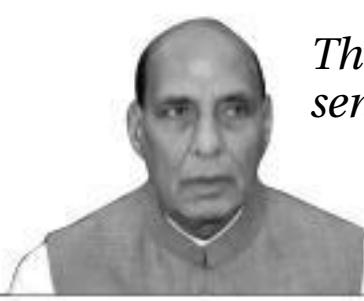
The PIL had sought action on the sordid episode and directions to the government to end such practice. SNS

Discrimination against menstruating women: Guj HC assured of steps

AHMEDABAD, 23 DECEMBER

The Gujarat government has assured the High Court that it would soon be informed of the steps proposed to be taken to end discrimination against menstruating women in public and private institutions.

The government assurance came in response to a Public Interest Litigation filed by



The government has been talking to them (farmers) with utmost sensitivity. I hope they will soon withdraw their agitation

DEFENCE MINISTER RAJNATH SINGH
ON THE FARMERS' STIR OVER NEW FARM LAWS

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 24 DECEMBER 2020

'DDC results show J&K people stand with PAGD'

NC president Farooq Abdullah said that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have firmly and avowedly rejected the 'misguided policy' of BJP and its ilk in the state

SP SHARMA
JAMMU, 23 DECEMBER

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference party president and Member of Parliament from Srinagar Farooq Abdullah on Wednesday said the massive mandate for Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) spells out people's rejection of 5 August measures saying that despite all the display, people of Jammu and Kashmir have firmly and avowedly rejected the 'misguided policy' of BJP and its ilk in Jammu and Kashmir.

He made these comments while addressing party workers in Srinagar. Party vice-president Omar Abdul-



I am Shere-Kashmir's son, they won't be able to cringe my resolve by coercive tactics. The workers of the National Conference have again proven that the anti-Kashmir forces cannot wipe out our party from the political landscape of J&K.

FAROOQ ABDULLAH
J&K NATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

The Modi government is doing everything possible to restore the grassroots democracy in Jammu & Kashmir. The recently held DDC polls for the first time in the history of J&K is the testimony of the same

AMIT SHAH
UNION HOME MINISTER

lah and other senior functionaries were present at the meeting.

Dr Farooq Abdullah said the victory has frontally and suggestively pronounced that the people of Jammu and

Kashmir stand with the idea behind PAGD. "I am Sher-e-Kashmir's son, they won't be able to cringe my resolve by coercive tactics. The workers of the National Conference have again proven that the anti-Kashmir forces cannot wipe out our party from the political landscape of J&K. Our party has right from its inception been witness to such tempest; our party structure has overly been fashioned and strengthened by hardships. Our workers have never cringed beneath the frown of divisive forces; today's victory also bears it out. I have full

Slap in the face of separatists: BJP

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

The BJP has said its good performance in the District Development Council (DDC) polls in Jammu & Kashmir is encouraging as it emerged as the single largest party with 74 seats.

The BJP said that by showing faith in democracy, the people of Kashmir delivered a slap in the faces of separatists. The "lotus bloom" in the valley was described by the BJP as a victory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies.

Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad held a press

conference at the party headquarters here on Wednesday.

BJP has emerged as the single largest party in the District Development Council polls in Jammu & Kashmir. BJP has won 74 seats, National Conference 67 seats, PDP 27 and Congress has got 26 seats.

Prasad said the BJP received a total of 4,87,364 votes, while the National Conference got about 2.82 lakh votes, PDP got around 57,000 and Congress got just 1.39 lakh votes. He said, "Thus, in the Jammu & Kashmir DDC election, the BJP has got more votes than the NC, PDP and Congress

combined."

He said, "There are 49 independents who won in the Zilla Vikas Parishad elections and many of them were supported by the BJP."

He said, "Those talking about the PAGD alliance victory, they should know that this alliance was formed as these parties could not face the BJP alone." He said that the people of Kashmir have recognised the difference between those who rule and those who work. People have seen that democracy can bring development to their doorstep. People believe in democracy. BJP's victory in J&K is very encouraging."

the status of the state.

"BJP is now selling the results as a triumph of democracy. Had the PAGD lost then it would have spelled it out as people's rejection of PAGD. The alliance took birth in the wake of tough times. Last year all the constituent parties of PAGD were pitched against each other during the parliament elections but today the adversary has made us join our efforts to protect the interests of Jammu and Kashmir, which is under assault from divisive forces," he said.

Alluding to the statements emanating from BJP that it was Democracy that has won, he said, "Surely the democracy has won but BJP should now waste no time and accept the democratic verdict of people against the 5 August, 2019 decisions."

Exhorting the workers and party workers for abiding by the decision of party president on party mandate, Omar said

Independents emerge as key player in J&K DDC polls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAMMU, 23 DECEMBER

Independent candidates have emerged as big winners in Jammu and Kashmir's maiden District Development Council polls, with 49 of them having been declared elected so far from 280 seats, putting them ahead of parties like the Congress and the PDP.

Among the big independent wins is Taranjit Singh defeating BJP's two-time MLA and former minister Sham Lal Choudhary in Suchetgarh in Jammu region by a slender margin of 11 votes.

Though the BJP maintained its supremacy by emerging as the single largest party with 74 seats and is leading in another seat, the

defeat of its stalwarts Choudhary and another former minister Shakti Raj Parihar, who lost from two constituencies in Doda district, has come as a shock for it. Choudhary lost to Singh by a razor-thin margin. Singh polled 12,969 votes against Choudhary's 12,958, according to the results declared by the J&K Election Commissioner in the early hours of Wednesday.

Choudhary, who originally hailed from Bhimber Tehsil in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir before his family migrated to border village Chakroin RSPur sector, had won Suchetgarh assembly seat for the first time in 2008 and repeated the performance for the party in 2014.

that the party has sacrificed for strengthening PAGD. "I appreciate the efforts of our workers who stood the ground and abided by the decision of the party president. It was indeed a tough call for them to give up on segments where the party had tremendous support. Yet they took the hard decision and relinquished their stake to strengthen the efforts of Dr Farooq," he said.

'India determined to become defence equipment hub'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

The upcoming "Aero India-21" was symbolic of India's will to be a leader amongst leaders, said Defence minister Rajnath Singh

gic partnership between the United States and India to address global challenges," was an acknowledgement of his newly-acquired role as a military ally of the United States, according to the editorial.

Trump gave the honour simultaneously to Scott Morrison, Australian Prime Minister, and Shinzo Abe, who till recently was Japan's Prime Minister. All three were instrumental in lining up their countries to join the US-led quadrilateral alliance (QUAD), which the Pentagon foresaw as a military

alliance, according to *People's Democracy*.

The only two Indians who received this award before were Field Marshal Cariappa and General S M Srinagesh in 1950 and 1955 respectively, according to the CPI (M) journal.

Both were army chiefs and had fought in the Second World War as officers of the British Army. In those days, the Legion medal was conferred on various chiefs of armed forces around the world. One of the recipients was the Nepal army chief, the editorial said.

The upcoming "Aero India-21" was symbolic of India's will to be a leader amongst leaders, said Defence minister Rajnath Singh

beneficial partnerships with friendly countries to set up industries in India for Indian manufactured defence equipment for India and the world. He was of the view that Indian missions should impress upon the leadership and industry captains in foreign countries to participate in "Aero India-21" at a senior level so as to dive deep into the strategic and business opportunities available in India.

'Ishapore may offer 7.62x51mm sniper rifles to ITBP, NSG for trial'

SOMYADIP MULLICK
KOLKATA, 23 DECEMBER

The Finnish sniper, Simo Hayha, is said to have neutralised more than 500 enemy soldiers with his Mosin Nagant bolt-action rifle in the Winter War, during 1939-40, fought against the Soviet's Red Army who referred to him as the "White Death". At high altitudes during winter, a precision shot taken by a sniper camouflaged in the snowy white landscape may seem like a bolt from the blue to the adversary.

In the wake of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and National Security Guards (NSG) having floated a tender for 7.62x51mm bolt-action sniper rifles that they seek to acquire by end-December, the Rifle Factory Ishapore (RFI), in the outskirts of Kolkata, is considering possibilities to offer its indigenous sniper rifle of the same calibre to both the security forces for trials.

The ITBP along with Indian Army guards the border posts along LAC with China. It mainly uses the SSG-69 bolt-action and the Russian Dragunov rifles for sniper operations which take place in the mountainous terrain where they are deployed. In the face of India-China conflict at Ladakh, ITBP is increasing its capabilities. Similarly, NSG Commandos have their specialised sniper units for counter-terrorism operations. A weapon expert explained, snipers pre-

fer bolt-action rifles than gas-operated ones because of their high levels of accuracy due to less recoil.

RFI sources said, "The 7.62x51mm sniper rifle is a single bolt action rifle with a target range of 800m with accuracy more than 1 MoA. It can accommodate five magazines and has a quick release push button type for safety. The existing users of this rifle include the Assam Rifles and Kolkata Police. The RFI may offer the weapon to ITBP and NSG for trials." The Statesman had recently reported that RFI is also developing a long-range 8.6mmx70mm sniper rifle with 1500m range for the Indian Army. The 7.62x51mm sniper rifle by the Ishapore factory was launched during the Atmanirbhar Week. This particular calibre of sniper rifle was placed under the import embargo list by Ministry of Defence, encouraging indigenisation. The RFI learned the Golden Peacock Innovative Product/Service Award 2020 for this particular rifle.

Recently, the RFI's 5.56x30mm J1PC carbine successfully cleared the final phase of user trials meeting all the General Service Qualitative Requirements (GSQR), paving the way for induction in the Indian Army.

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AMU again

The comparison may well leave admirers of both India's first and current Prime Ministers enraged but facts don't lie. The similarities between the thrust of Jawaharlal Nehru's and Narendra Modi's speeches at Aligarh Muslim University in 1948 and 2020 respectively are eerie. But first it would be helpful to contextualise the narrative around 'The Muslim Question' in the sub-continent which had created a serious dilemma for the Congress post-Independence. Nehru followed a dual strategy in dealing with the fact that the state-seeking religious nationalism of South Asian Muslims which fed into a pan-Islamist paradigm had come to fruition with the creation of Pakistan, yet millions of Indian citizens were Muslims. So, on the one hand he set into motion a state-sponsored project of secular pedagogy with the help of left-wing intelligentsia while on the other he tried to convince Indian Muslims to embrace the Indic culture of the pre-Islamic period and make it their own. The former effort has been discussed ad nauseum but the latter, which was encapsulated in his address to the students and faculty of AMU on 24 January 1948, has in the main conveniently been elided by both critics who term him pseudo-secular and admirers who hold him up as an exemplar of secularism. Judge for yourself: "I am proud of our inheritance and our ancestors who gave intellectual and cultural pre-eminence to India. How do you feel about this past? Do you feel you are also sharers in it and inheritors of it and, therefore, proud of something that belongs to you as much as to me? Or do you feel alien to it and pass it by without understanding it or feeling that strange thrill that comes from the realisation that we are the trustees and inheritors of this treasure?" This was not a one-off. Nehru repeatedly expressed his cultural pride by unequivocally identifying India's civilisational ethos as the main factor which kept her united over millennia.

When Prime Minister Modi told the same audience 72 years later on Tuesday that "we are heading to a path where no one is left behind because of religion", he was iterating the Nehruvian construct. "Whatever religion we are born in, it is important to see how to blend our aspirations with national goals... There can be ideological divides in society but when it comes to the nation's development, everything else is secondary. When it comes to the nation, there is no question of ideological differences," Mr Modi said. The "Naya Bharat (New India)" headlined by the Prime Minister with its roots in an Indic ethos is no different, in that sense, from Nehru's. Where there are differences in the playbooks of the two Prime Ministers is in the former aspect of Nehru's formulation. But even there, it is more of a mirror image playing out. For, what the Congress did with the help of the 'leftist' intelligentsia to build an allegedly modern narrative the BJP is doing using their 'rightist' counterparts to create an allegedly nativist one.

Odisha's blueprint

Far from engaging in a bout of competitive electoral rhetoric in the manner of Amit Shah and Mamata Banerjee, the Odisha Chief Minister has dwelt on brassstacks if Monday's presentation by Naveen Patnaik at the ruling BJD's state council meeting is any indication. Well and truly has he put in place a new benchmark in the state's drive against corruption. Towards that end, annual property statements are to be filed by all public servants ~ from the sarpanch to MLAs, MPs and all government staff up to the level of Chief Secretary. These are to be made public and also advanced to the Lokayukta. So sweeping a measure has seldom been announced by any state. It is most particularly significant in the case of Odisha, now in the vanguard as an investment destination. Mr Patnaik was remarkably explicit when he told the meeting that the fight against poverty, disease, injustice, natural calamities or regional disparities "will be worthless if we do not ensure transparency and eradicate corruption ~ the enemy of development". He has highlighted the contrived co-relation between development and corruption, though the second runs counter to the first. The relentless fight against corruption, he claimed, has brought Odisha a measure of fame all over the country. The Chief Minister has now tightened the screws, the exemplars being the establishment of a Bench for the trial of corruption cases or the confiscation of assets of those involved in corruption. As many as 91 allegedly corrupt officials have been dismissed over the past year, a drastic action that many states would be proud of but few able to boast. "We have stopped their pension and will further intensify the struggle against corruption," Mr Patnaik has warned his party leadership. The subtext is fairly obvious. A section of worthies of Odisha's ruling party are wallowing in the mire of corruption.

Another critical announcement was the decision to reserve seats in medical and engineering colleges for students of government schools. This initiative in terms of social justice will be buttressed with surveys of the backward segments. Also to be welcomed is the impetus to women's empowerment, specifically the demand for reservation of seats in the state Assembly and Parliament. The proposal will be furnished to the respective ministries for a proper follow-through. Mr Patnaik has in effect underlined the role of regional parties in the overall construct of development untainted by endemic corruption. He has drawn a very pertinent distinction between regional and national parties which tend to "mainstream policies and languages". The development paradigm has been covered fair and square with the emphasis on corruption, the emphasis on engineering and medical education and reservation in legislatures for women.

Lenin's Legacy

It is a cruel fact of history that just as the Russian Tsar threw away a golden opportunity of transforming Russia into a working constitutional state if he had cooperated with the moderate liberal opinion after the revolution of 1905, Lenin repeated the same mistake by not attempting to create a constitutional government



In the twentieth century, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (1870-1924) occupied an important position as one of its makers. He led the October Revolution of 1917 and established the first communist state in Russia. He was primarily a strategist with a keen purpose of fomenting a social revolution and secondarily a theoretician. Most of his tracts were in response to issues that confronted him as a revolutionary tactician. He ensured the success of the regime through a bloody civil war, founded the Communist International and subsequently initiated the New Economic Policy (NEP) to sustain the system in the erstwhile Soviet Union.

In deference, the communist party invented the term Marxism-Leninism and refused to bury his corpse. The latter was embalmed, placed in the glass case in a mausoleum outside the Kremlin in Red Square for public viewing. On his death, he was hailed as the greatest genius of mankind, creator of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the leader and teacher of the peoples of the whole world. However, 70 years later when the communist system collapsed in the erstwhile Soviet Union, the deification gave way to frustration, anger and even total rejection of the Leninist heritage.

Lenin rejected the social democratic approach of continual reforms within capitalism as that was the result of economic advantages that skilled workers, the 'labour aristocracy', enjoyed thereby losing their class solidarity. He considered economism to be the most serious threat to the maintenance of a revolutionary spirit among the Russian workers.

Fearing that Bernstein to be right which meant rendering the Marxist prophecy of a proletarian revolution redundant, he advocated staging of a revolution by subjective action with the help of a body of professional revolutionaries who would educate, guide and produce a revolution on behalf of the working class that was unable to transcend their narrow economic interests. This notion of the vanguard party was articulated in *What is to be done?* (1903) and has been regarded as his most original contribution to Marxism.

The common point between Lenin and Bernstein was the acceptance of the fact that the industrial proletariat was overwhelmingly rejecting revolutionary Marxism though their remedial measures were poles apart. It is for this reason that Lipset considered Lenin and not Bernstein to have brought about a 'profound revision in the Marxist doctrine'.

Interestingly, Luxemburg disagreed with Lenin's blunt rejection of 'spontaneous working-class movement' though she, like him, was committed to revolutionary Marxism and was critical of Bernstein. Lenin was the first to lay down the ground rules for mass mobilization and manipulation which were subsequently emulated by others like Mussolini, Hitler, Stalin and Mao.

For the Russian Marxists, the central problem was the nature of the impending

revolution. Plekhanov cautioned against the establishment of premature socialism in a relatively backward and autocratic country like Tsarist Russia. Lenin regarded Plekhanov's observations as a gospel and reiterated his views on the industrialization of Russia and the need for a bourgeois democratic revolution before commencing on a struggle to bring about socialism. He justified the October Revolution as socialist and the February Revolution as bourgeois democratic. Lenin resurrected the controversial and ambiguous

state structure to secure practical benefits in hope of reforming and transcending its bourgeois class basis and evolve gradually but definitely towards an egalitarian, democratic socialist and an emancipatory society.

The Labour Party in Britain was also working towards that direction. The situation in France was similar. All these indicators meant that the 'Marx's apocalyptic vision of capitalism', according to Grenville, "in its last throes bore little relevance to conditions in the most industrialized countries". Instead of analyzing the social and economic basis of what he contemptuously referred to as 'revisionism', Lenin believed that through positive subjective action rooted in a violent revolutionary seizure of power the social developments that the revisionists spoke of would be surmounted.

Leninism was criticized by Kautsky, Luxemburg, Martov and Bernstein for the lack of democratic norms and culture in the Bolshevik experiment. Lenin attempted half-heartedly to liberalize the Soviet system during the phase of new economic policy but that was confined only to the economic field. The failure to liberalize politically led to the rise of Stalinism. If the latter was a malignant form of Leninism, then Leninism itself was an authoritarian offshoot of Marxism. Lenin's insurrectionist politics, conspiratorial tactics and strategy set aside the entire thrust of Marx's concept of a majoritarian and democratic revolutionary transformation. The Leninist revolution in reality was a minority revolution.

It is a cruel fact of history that just as the Russian Tsar threw away a golden opportunity of transforming Russia into a working constitutional state if he had cooperated with the moderate liberal opinion after the revolution of 1905, Lenin repeated the same mistake by not attempting to create a constitutional government.

The establishment of a repressive and an authoritarian state and the subjugation of civil society logically followed such a denial. Moreover, under the Tsar one was condemned for one's own action; under communism, any deviating thought was dubbed as counter-revolutionary and dealt with dire consequences. The Tsarist state reincarnated as the Leninist state in a more repressive form.

"Like Marx", observes Djilas, "even Lenin never spoke of a law governed state... because they considered the state would inevitably wither away". Instead of withering away the erstwhile Soviet state became omnipotent and repressive eventually straddling all aspects of individual and societal life.

For the collapse of communism, the originators themselves have to be blamed as they never produced a blueprint for actualizing true democracy and full freedom. A well-developed Marxist theory of the state based on equity, just reward, rule of law and freedom as an alternative to liberal democratic theory eluded all important Marxists including Lenin.

The opposing views of Russian Marxists led by Lenin and the Western Marxists reflected two very different situations. In Germany, where the followers of Marxism were the largest and with the existence of the powerful Social Democratic Party, the lot of the working class had improved. This was contrary to Marx's predictions.

The collapse of capitalism did not seem imminent. The working class also lost its revolutionary spirit. The majority of the SPD members concentrated on utilizing the exist-



SUBRATA MUKHERJEE
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Malnutrition a cause of worry

SIR, The results of the first phase of National Family Health Survey should cause

(stunting), underweight (wasting) and anaemia, which are the most impor-

tant indicators of children's health, have increased between 2016 and 2019. The performance of states like

serious concern over the state of health of the country's children. They show that cases of low height

and weight, and anaemia, which are the most impor-



Kerala and Maharashtra has also suffered during this period. What is more disturbing is the fact that the country had seen good improvement in these parameters between 2005 and 2015. The gains have now been erased.

It is not common for social sector gains made over the years to get suddenly reversed. But it should be noted that the years from 2015 had seen economic growth and other important indicators like jobs falling. Interestingly, many government initiatives were flagged during this period with much fanfare, which should have had a bearing on children's health.

They include National Nutrition Mission, National Food Security Act and Swachh Bharat. It clearly

shows that apart from various missions, there are many other factors that influence a children's health.

These include maternal health, education and awareness, women's position in family and society, and the number of children in the family.

The survey indicates that inequalities have widened and the weakest sections of society like women and children have been hit the most.

Government schemes do not keep in mind the distinction between food and nutrition; the decision to drop eggs from mid-day meal is a case in point. Malnutrition debilitates children for their entire life. It is the nation's responsibility to reverse the negative trend.

Yours, etc., Shovanlal Chakraborty,

Kolkata, 22 December.

GORKHAS

SIR, We, the Gorkhas, believe that our Indian brethren have now fully realized our aspiration of completely immersing ourselves in the national identity.

It may be widely known that it is about the identity of every single Indian Gorkha wherever he may be residing in the country.

Our demand for Gorkhaland to be carved out from Bengal has been outstanding and will help solve our political problems in India.

If only our great freedom fighter, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the supreme commander of the liberation army INA, had been living he would have certainly compensated the Gorkhas by granting a safe homeland for them with no hesitation.

We wish our adorable Gurudev, Rabindranath Tagore, had been there to witness our plight, we would be so blessed that we could be now holding our heads high without any fear.

But we are at least hopeful that our Gurudev's ardent followers in 80 per cent cases have been 'Bhadraloks' who favour the fulfillment of our aspiration.

We believe that even the balance 20 per cent who have deeply indulged in the Bengal politics of hypocrisy will one day develop a soft corner for us.

Yours, etc., Dick Dewan, Pedong,

14 December.

The Japanese government has decided to market the country's comprehensive technologies and services for "smart cities", a next-generation city model that optimizes the use of cutting-edge telecommunications, to Southeast Asian countries. By the end of this year, the government will conduct an aptitude survey on what kind of services will be needed for the endeavour in 26 cities in 10 countries that the government regards as the most important markets. It will use the survey results to encourage domestic companies in various industry sectors to venture into the market. Related expenses will be included in the third supplementary budget for fiscal 2020. In the smart city model, basic infrastructure, such as homes, companies and cars, and social infrastructure, including electricity, gas and public transport and schools, are interconnected and provide data. By collecting and analysing this data on consumption and flows of people, smart cities can realize better services and achieve greater energy efficiency.

In Southeast Asian countries, populations tend to cluster in and around big cities. Therefore, the government concluded that the use of information technology could be useful as measures for solving traffic jams, environmental issues and other problems. The government also has an incentive to promoting the protection of personal information. It expects that a wide range of items will be exported under the project. This includes public transport systems

By the end of the year, the government will ask Phnom Penh, Ho Chi Minh City and some other cities to propose what kind of systems they need to solve problems in their urban policies. Based on the proposals, the government will work with each city and together write up a basic plan for urban development. Last year, the government set up a public and private council to market services related to smart cities overseas, together with about 270 companies and organizations, including Hitachi Ltd and MUFG Bank Ltd. Based on the master plan, the government is considering looking for companies that can provide necessary services through the council and implementing demonstrations of the services and provide training and technical support in the Southeast Asian countries. Smart city projects in Japan include Woven City, which Toyota Motor Corp is planning to start building in Susono, Shizuoka prefecture, in February next year. Toward the realization of smart cities, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism started in fiscal 2019 supporting 43 projects, such as the operation of self-driving buses near Haneda Airport in Tokyo. The day when smart cities will be in practical use is coming close.

IN MEMORIAM

BANIK SUNIL BHUSAN — In loving memory, who left us this day in 1997. — Debasis, Suvasish, Rina, Ila (wife), Ranjeeta (daughter-in-law).

CHAKRABARTI PURABI — In fond remembrance on her 94th birthday. — Relatives and friends.

Laicite and the Indian way

SUNIL SHARAN

Laicite (secularism) has assumed massive proportions in the world, especially in the French context. India, like France, is wed to laicite. I too am an avowed secularist. But there are things about the way laicite is practiced in India that have led to the emergence of the Hindu right-wing.

The first thing about laicite is the right to blaspheme. No community likes its god or gods to be blasphemed. But cross your hearts, which community has not blasphemed gods of another community. No community is immune from this misbehavior. It is all right to feel umbraged if someone blasphemes your gods. But is it ok to kill them or threaten to kill them in return? France, and the world, are grappling with this toxic issue.

I am not pointing the finger at any one community. I know that in every community people blaspheme against gods of other communities, and then these very same hotheads promote violence if others blaspheme against their gods. No community is immune from this virus.

The second burning issue is that over *love jihad*. Now this really is a nonsensical debate. One community says that per its religious injunctions, its women cannot marry outside the faith. That if they do, the groom must convert to their religion before marriage. I myself have been approached by women of a certain community who say that marrying me without my converting to their faith would be shirk (forbidden).

But many leaders of the very same community want their men to be free to marry outside their faith. People of one faith rent the air with *betti bachao, bahu lao*. But it is actually people who are complaining most against *love jihad* who are practicing *betti bachao, bahu lao* the most. There is not just an element of hypocrisy here. Such behavior has hypocrisy written all over it.

Indian secularists who go after *love jihad* seem to have blinders on. It is precisely the hypocrisy built in *love*



jihad that has led to the rise of the Hindu right-wing and the desecularization of our body politic.

The third issue that needs to be confronted is that of proselytization. It is well-known in India that certain communities proselytize more than others. The right to proselytization is enshrined in the Indian Constitution.

But when certain communities are very aggressive in this regard, while others are much more passive, it breeds tension.

Ghar Wapsi has been decried by diehard secularists and people of certain communities. But what is sauce for the goose must be sauce for the gander. If one community is allowed to spread its faith, then all other communities should be allowed to spread their faith.

Secularists say that we are becoming a Hindu Pakistan. No way!

In Pakistan the majority community is allowed, in fact encouraged, to spread its faith. Dare a member of a minority community there try to convert a member of the majority community. Just watch the consequences thereafter to the member of the minority community.

The Constitution of India is a living document. It is high time that the right to proselytization needs to be revisited. In theory, I am all for it in India. In India, in practice, it is just not working, and stoking up all kinds of fears.

The other issue that needs to be addressed right away is that of a Uniform Civil Code. India is a mature democracy now and no community needs to be protected any further. A UCC will remove hypocrisies like *love jihad*. Secularists will cry hoarse against my stand. But isn't the very

definition of secularism that every religion and community be treated equally by the State. That is precisely what the UCC enables.

Secularists should note that whenever Indians, an Indian of any or no religion, migrate to the West, all of them adhere to the laws of the country they go to. Without fail, each western country has the same set of laws governing all of its citizens. In the UK, the former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams sparked an outrage across the political spectrum in 2008 when he backed *sharia* for a certain community.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the most senior figure in the Church of England after the queen, who of course is its head. Then-British prime minister, Gordon Brown, swiftly rejected Williams's proposal, and insisted that British law would be

based on British values and that *sharia* law would present no justification for acting against national law. In other words, *sharia* had no place in the UK. All residents of the UK would have to be governed by British law.

Indian values are firmly rooted in the practices of the founder of the country, Mahatma Gandhi, who firmly believed in secularism and the equal treatment of all religions and communities. Isn't it high time that that vision of the Mahatma be put into practice by adopting a UCC? Of course, members of certain religions and castes in India continue to face diabolical discrimination. The State must strive to put an end to this as well. Equal means equal for all, not for some, and not for a few.

The writer is an expert on energy and contributes regularly to publications in India and overseas.

Freedom as unviable as dignity



MAHIR ALI

Even in his hometown of Sidi Bouzid, many people don't look back kindly on Mohamed Bouazizi, the 26-year-old Tunisian fruit vendor who set himself on fire 10 years ago this month.

It was an act of despair rather than rebellion. He had a family of eight to feed. Being deprived of his only means of livelihood — his fruit cart — by officious representatives of the state was more than Bouazizi could bear. His self-immolation sparked protests across Tunisia. Ten days after Bouazizi succumbed to his

burns on Jan 4, 2011, Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia's president for 23 years, fled to Saudi Arabia (where he died last year). Even more amazingly, though, events in the relatively small North African state resonated widely across the region as pent-up political and socioeconomic frustrations bubbled to the surface.

The tensions exploded most spectacularly in Egypt, with spontaneous mobilisations centred on Cairo's Tahrir Square. Hosni Mubarak was the next head of state to be toppled, after 30 years at the helm. Popular rebellions also erupted in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain. Even in

countries with little or no unrest, the ruling elites panicked.

A decade on from what was dubbed the 'Arab Spring', it is neither unusual nor inappropriate to ask: but what good came of it, after all?

The horrifying trajectory of Yemen, Syria and Libya speaks for itself — although in both cases it is worth taking into account the liberal doses of foreign intervention. Egypt's story is very different, but nonetheless deeply depressing. There, a short-lived experiment in representative government, somewhat blighted by the Muslim Brotherhood's dismal administration, made way all too

swiftly for a return to strongman rule. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's regime is widely viewed as even more repressive than the Mubarak variant.

Tunisia is often held out as the sole instance where the changes wrought in 2011 have been institutionally entrenched to some degree. It had close calls but managed to crawl back from the brink. Yet economic conditions remain precarious and corruption remains rife. Tunisians are among the most eager recruits to the jihadist cause, as well as the most numerous contributors to the refugee flow towards the Italian coast. Hardly a happy ending.

A recent report in *The Guardian* quotes a roadside bread seller in the Tunisian hinterland, 60-year-old Aisha Quraishi, as looking back on Ben Ali's ouster in these words: "We won a little freedom. Under him we couldn't speak. But does this affect my life? I want freedom and dignity. Can't I have both?" The direct or subtle response from most Middle Eastern regimes would be a simple 'no'. The continuing tragedy across much of the region is that for large segments of the population neither freedom nor dignity is a viable option.

Historically, the unwritten compact between authoritarian regimes and their populations could occasionally be summed up as: keep quiet and your basic needs will be met. That is generally unfeasible in the age of neoliberal capitalism. The lesson autocrats would like their subjects to draw from the Arab Spring is that resistance is futile.

A recent YouGov survey carried out in nine countries across the region suggests that most people acknowledge things are in many respects worse than they were 10 years ago. At the same time, though,

many of them don't regret the uprisings.

The absence of any obvious alternatives was among the factors that blighted the Arab Spring. The protests may have been very successfully coordinated on social media, but there was no organisation behind them, no opposition parties that could channel the largely organic mobilisations. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood, taken by surprise, eventually took advantage of the vacuum — even though its ideology was anathema to the vast majority of protesters — with ultimately disastrous consequences.

The tendency of authoritarian regimes to crush all dissent often works all too well, with the result that when it comes to the crunch the seething masses are rudderless. Hence, once the dust has settled, the usual suspects — often in uniform, or at least closely affiliated with the economic elite and the military hierarchy — are invariably waiting in the wings. And it's back to square one for those agitating for democracy and socioeconomic change.

The extent of foreign intervention, whether from near or afar, also matters a great deal. In the past decade, Middle East's turmoil has been exacerbated by the Saudi, Iranian, Israeli, Qatari, Turkish and Emirati role, and equally if not more by American, European and Russian machinations, to say nothing of the arms sales that fuel the conflicts.

So, is there no scope for hope? Just last year, political changes followed uprisings in Algeria and Sudan that echoed the Arab Spring. Pockets of unrest sporadically emerge here and there. But cosmetic change doesn't count and, from an optimistic standpoint, the real thing could still be decades away.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28174

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

"Medicine and the Law" is the theme of a presidential address delivered to the Medico-Legal Society by Lord Justice Atkin. The speaker defines medical jurisprudence as that large body of medical and surgical knowledge which is applicable to the elucidation of the issue which are determined in courts of justice; but he thinks the medical witness is sometimes at a disadvantage because, however well versed in his own subject, he is ignorant of the law. Medical jurisprudence is taught in medical schools by doctors, but it would be an advantage to have lectures to doctors by lawyers and to lawyers by doctors as part of the regular training for both professions. As a matter of fact, the Council of Legal Education has appointed a medical man to give lectures during the present term on medical jurisprudence. His lordship would like to regard a medical man who gives evidence, not as an advocate put forward by one side to establish the case, but as an officer of justice there to help the Court to elicit the truth, and thinks it is of extreme importance that expert witnesses should remember that such is their position. But he does not subscribe to the dictum of one of his legal brethren that the lawyer is an advocate for his case and the doctor an advocate for his case and the doctor an advocate for truth.

NEWS ITEMS

TRAFFIC DANGERS IN CALCUTTA

The Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce have been in correspondence with the Commissioner of Police on the subject of traffic control. One of the matters to which they had invited attention was the nuisance caused by cattle straying in the streets. In reply to a representation from them the Commissioner had suggested that the poundage fees should be increased. With this suggestion the Committee were in accord, and in writing to the Commissioner, they informed him to that effect. It is undoubtedly very difficult for the police to deal effectively with many cattle that are allowed to stray about the streets. The Committee consulted the Marwari Association on the subject, and they found that the members of the organisation were also of the opinion that the fees should be raised.

BISHOP COTTON HIGH SCHOOL

The distribution of prizes at the Bishop Cotton High School was held on Friday in the Cathedral Hall. The Right Revd. Eyre Chatterton, Bishop of Nagpur presided and Miss Sly gave away the awards. The Head Master in his report mentioned that in spite of the numerous changes on the staff there was considerable improvement in every department of the school. The Lord Bishop said that this was a critical time for the Anglo-Indians in that great changes were soon to take place in India, so that if they hoped to hold their own higher education must be sought for by very many more of the rising generation of the community. The boys and girls went through the programme of songs, recitations with great credit.

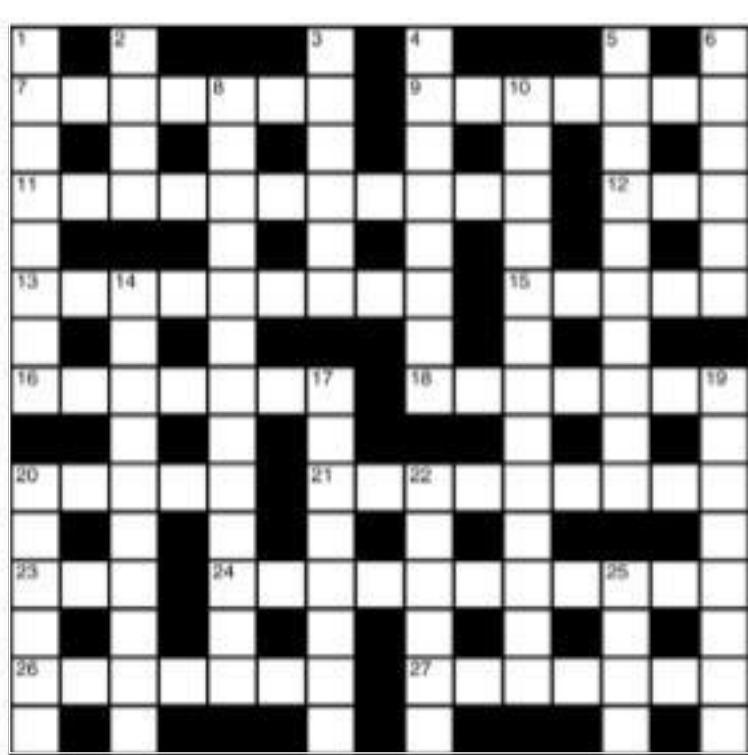
HOME RULE BILL APPROVED

The Commons agreed to the amendments to the Home Rule Bill returned from the Lords, with one or two unimportant amendments. Sir L. Worthington Evans said that Ireland was receiving self-government in a form consistent with the liberties of both South Ireland and North Ireland, and with the integrity of the United Kingdom. An instrument had been put into the hands of the Irish people, which, by agreement between the two Irish Parliaments and with the free consent of both peoples, might be used to build up a single Parliament representing the united nation, without any further legislation by the Imperial Parliament. It now remained for moderate and loyal Irishmen to prove their mutual goodwill and desire to act as good citizens of the Empire.

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

At the conclusion of the Seventh Quadrennial conference of the Y.W.C.A. of India, Burma and Ceylon, held at Ranchi, the election of the Headquarters Members of the Committee was made, but the representatives of the eight districts, viz., Bengal, Burma, Ceylon, Central Provinces, North India, Cochin and Western India are to be elected by their own constituencies and ratified by the Headquarters at Calcutta. The National Presidency, which has been vacant since headquarters were removed from Bombay to Calcutta in 1919, has been filled by the election of Mrs. W.R. Gourlay. A strong staff of lecturers, teachers, leaders of recreation and other workers is being arranged for each of the sessions, which will combine the opportunity of holiday enjoyment as well as instructions in the Bible and discussions of the methods of social and Christian work among girls.

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 7 One working in club, working for a bit of pride? (4,3)
- 9 Minor condition of popular imagination (7)
- 11 Famous red clarrets split, drunk by dog (5,6)
- 12 High priest in the limelight once and again (5)
- 13 Will tax shelters end in profit? So be it (9)
- 15 Time dull routine's cut by Bob Hope (5)
- 16 Decline? One may, after retiring (4,3)

DOWN

- 18 Pudding ... Battenburg cakes ... a fool? (7)
- 20 Copies clothing this person rejected in brown (5)
- 21 Very boring during a ball earlier (2,7)
- 23 Score, half of which comes back (3)
- 24 Repeatedly, it is naive to organise ventures (11)
- 26 Endless path round Orient oddly going westward (7)
- 27 Rough element reportedly criminal, in the main (7)
- 1 Damned awful flat packs shop turned up (3-5)
- 2 Maybe the subjunctive in Low Dutch (4)
- 3 A black loaf is burning (6)
- 4 Old cases international court read out (8)
- 5 Clad as Punjabi, welcoming ruler between cities (10)
- 6 Pity's aroused by tense key worker (6)
- 8 Pass address hosting party for getting into bed with others (13)
- 10 What could be overt

target of electioneering (8,5)

- 14 Athlete ruined golf equipment (4,6)
- 17 Foxtrot on Strictly in an unsexy manner (8)
- 19 Try a ruse to fix where your taxes go (8)
- 20 Society getting soft still a western phenomenon (6)
- 22 Eating pastry, one each (6)
- 25 Picked up disgusting medicine in this (4)

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



Paytm has doubled down on its efforts to hire staff from smaller towns

VIJAY SHEKHAR SHARMA

FOUNDER OF PAYTM

THUMBNAILS

Belle Vue expansion: Belle Vue Clinic, Kolkata-based medical care institution set up by M P Birla Group, is coming up with two new hospitals in Rajarhat. The general hospital will have 164 beds while the multi-specialty hospital will have 400 beds. Expansion plans are also afoot at the Loudon Street clinic and the number of beds here along with that of Priyamvada Birla Aravind Eye Hospital will go up to 372 by March 2021. The company has lined up a capital expenditure of Rs 600 crore for the proposed expansion, according to a Press release. **SNS**

Tata Comm buy: Digital technology firm Tata Communications on Wednesday said it has acquired 58.1 per cent stake in France-based eSIM company Oasis Smart SIM Europe SAS (Oasis). Oasis develops and provides advanced technologies and personalised services to enable deployment of eSIM and SIM technologies. With this investment, eSIM technology will be fully integrated into Tata Communications' connectivity solution offering, the company said in a statement. It, however, didn't disclose the amount it has invested. **PTI**

FedEx findings: The pandemic and its resulting restrictions have led to a shift in consumer behaviour towards e-commerce, with 35 per cent of small businesses and 54 per cent of medium businesses believing that e-commerce sales will improve their financial growth following Covid-19, according to a survey conducted by FedEx Express, a subsidiary of FedEx Corp. **SNS**

Visa offers: Visa, the global leader in payments technology, announced that it is partnering with an array of merchants across multiple cities for over 275 exclusive, hyper-local offers to cardholders to keep the celebrations going for consumers this festive season, said a Press release. **SNS**

Govt loses Cairn case, asked to pay ₹10,500 cr in damages

Tribunal unanimously ruled that India's claim of ₹10,247 cr in past taxes was not a valid demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

SETBACK FOR CENTRE



the retrospective levy of taxes. In September, UK's Vodafone Group won an international arbitration against the demand of Rs 22,100 crore in taxes.

India has been ordered to return up to \$1.4 billion to Cairn Energy plc of the UK after the government lost an international arbitration over the retrospective levy of taxes.

The three-member tribunal, which also comprised a nominee of the Indian government, unanimously ruled that India's claim of Rs 10,247 crore in past taxes over a 2006-07 internal reorganisation of Cairn's India business was not a valid demand.

India, it said, "failed to accord the Claimants' (Cairn Energy's) investments fair and equitable treatment" under the bilateral investment protection pact the nation had with the UK, it said in a 582-page order.

The tribunal ordered the government to return the value of shares it had sold, dividends seized and tax refunds withheld to recover the tax demand.

The government was asked to compensate Cairn "for the total harm suffered" together with interest and cost of arbitration, according to the order.

While the order does not contain a provision for challenge or appeal against the award, the government said it will study the arbitration award and "will consider all options and take a decision on the further course of action, including legal remedies before appropriate fora."

► This is the second loss the government has suffered in three months over a 2006-07 internal reorganisation of Cairn's India business was not a valid demand.

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It's called the Covid relief Bill, but it has almost nothing to do with Covid

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

THUMBNAILS



People wait to receive Covid-19 tests in Samut Sakhon province, Thailand, on Wednesday. ■ IANS

Bomb, shooting attacks in Kabul: Separate bombing and shooting attacks in Afghanistan's capital left at least three people dead on Wednesday, including the head of an independent elections watchdog, officials said. The attacks are the latest amid relentless violence in the country even as Taliban and Afghan government negotiators hold talks in Qatar, trying to hammer out a peace deal that could put an end to decades of war.

PTI

France allows British cargo, passengers: Freight from Britain and passengers with a negative virus test began arriving on French shores Wednesday, after France relaxed a two-day blockade over a new virus variant that had isolated Britain, stranded thousands of drivers and raised fears of shortages. Associated Press reporters witnessed a ferry pulling into the French port of Calais before dawn and trains carrying freight and car passengers were allowed to cross to the continent beneath the English Channel again.

AP

200 Chinese moved amid violence: China evacuated more than 200 nationals to a safer area after eight Chinese mining company vehicles were stolen during armed conflict ahead of an election in the Central African Republic, its embassy said. A statement on the embassy website said the situation is now under control with the help of UN peacekeeping forces.

AP

Gunman kills 3 cops in France

PARIS, 23 DECEMBER

A gunman in France has shot dead three police officers who were called to a domestic violence incident, officials said.

A woman had fled to the roof of a house in the remote village of Saint-Just early on Wednesday.

The gunman killed one officer and wounded another. He then set fire to the house and killed two more officers who arrived. The woman was rescued, the BBC reported.

Police are still trying to locate the suspect, 48, who is said to be known to authorities on child custody issues.

The mayor of Saint-Just, Francois Chautard, told Le Figaro that the house had burned down and officers were trying to determine whether the suspect was still inside or had escaped.

However, a police source told BFMTV it was believed the gunman was on the run, the BBC reported. The wounded officer was shot in the leg and his life is not in danger.

In France, a pandemic dilemma over holiday rights for elders

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS, 23 DECEMBER

Not once in the long months since the pandemic struck has 74-year-old Jean-Francois been able to leave his nursing home in eastern France to visit his daughter or sister.

In fact, the retired metal worker thinks it's been two months since he last stuck his nose outside at all, as nursing homes across France shielded their vulnerable residents from another nationwide surge of virus infections and deaths.

Yet freedom now beckons. Until Jan. 3, France is springing nursing home residents for the holidays. The aim is to alle-

'Reversing Trump immigration policies will take months'

Offering a slower timeline than he promised on the campaign trail

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WILMINGTON, 23 DECEMBER

President-elect Joe Biden says it will take months to roll back some of President Donald Trump's actions on immigration, offering a slow-er timeline than he promised on the campaign trail and one that may rile advocates pushing for speedy action on the issue.

His Tuesday comments echo those made by two of his top foreign policy advisers in an interview with Spanish wire service EFE on Monday hitting the brakes on rolling back Trump's restrictive asylum policies.

Susan Rice, Biden's incoming domestic policy adviser, and Jake Sullivan, his pick for national security adviser, as well as Biden himself, warned that moving too quickly could create a new crisis at the border.

Speaking to reporters in Wilmington, Delaware Wednesday, Biden said he's already started discussing the issues with the Mexican president and "our friends in Latin America" and that "the timeline is to do it so that we in fact make it better not worse."

"The last thing we need is to say we're going to stop immediately, the access to asylum,

the way it's being run now, and then end up with 2 million people on our border," Biden said.

He noted that more funding is needed for more asylum judges to process claims, and promised that while he will work to loosen Trump's asylum restrictions, "it's going to take probably the next six months to put that in place."

His comments come as interceptions along the border have increased in recent months.

According to data from Customs and Border Patrol, detentions in October increased by 30 per cent from September, and remained at that rate in November. Some experts predict the surge could increase in the early months of Biden's presidency, as a response to the damage wrought by the two hurricanes that have pummeled Central America and the economic fallout from the pandemic, as well as expectations of a more humane approach to immigration from the Biden Administration.

Sullivan and Rice both said in their interview with EFE that Biden will take executive action where possible to address issues with the immigration system, and emphasized plans to provide humanitarian aid and help bolster



Latin American economies to try to address the root cause of the influx of immigrants to the US.

Biden "will work to promptly undo" Trump's deals with Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador that let the US transfer asylum seekers to those countries, and will "follow through" on his commitment to end a Trump-era program that returns undocumented border crossers to Mexico to await their legal proceedings, Sullivan said. On his campaign website, Biden promised to end the agreement with Mexico, known as the Migrant Protection Protocols, within the first 100 days of his presidency. But Sullivan emphasized that many of those reforms will take time.

He cautioned that "increasing processing capacity and changing policy at the border will take time," and warned those considering fleeing for the US to wait, predicting it will take "months" for the

Biden Administration to fully implement their plans with respect to Latin America.

"Given the pandemic and the large number of migrants already waiting in northern Mexico, now is not the time to undertake the dangerous trip to the United States," he said. "It will take months until we are able to fully implement our plans." Rice said that "processing capacity at the border is not like a light that you can just switch on and off."

"Our priority is to reopen asylum processing at the border consistent with the capacity to do so safely and to protect public health, especially in the context of Covid-19. This effort will begin immediately but it will take months to develop the capacity that we will need to reopen fully," she said.

But Michelle Heisler, medical director of Physicians for Human Rights, expressed concerns about the pace of change during a conference call with reporters Tuesday and said there should be no "public-health rationale" to maintain extraordinary powers to immediately expel people from the United States without an opportunity to seek asylum.

Rice was noncommittal about when Biden would withdraw that authority, which Trump introduced in March

on grounds that it would contain the coronavirus even though reporting by The Associated Press and others has found that government scientists saw no evidence for it.

Still, other pro-immigrant advocates said Tuesday that while they understood it would take time to untangle some of Trump's changes at the border, they underscored a sense of urgency. They hailed Biden's emphasis on working with Mexico and Central America on joint solutions.

"The Biden administration's work to end cruelty must start immediately," said Linda Rivas, executive director and managing attorney of Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center in El Paso, Texas. "Human rights and dignity must take center stage."

Guerline Jozef, executive director of the Haitian Bridge Alliance, said it was a "matter of life and death," with many asylum-seekers waiting in extremely violent Mexican border cities for their cases to be heard in the United States.

She said in a conference call with reporters that she was concerned about how many asylum-seekers will be allowed in by Biden "but we are here, ready, determined that the process works for all those that are impacted."

Doctors detail Navalny poison treatment in medical journal

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BERLIN, 23 DECEMBER

ness and treatment with a variety of drugs to address his symptoms and the underlying medical condition.

As Navalny's condition improved, he was brought out of a medically-induced coma and doctors determined that difficulties understanding speech and speaking he had initially showed after waking up disappeared after three weeks.

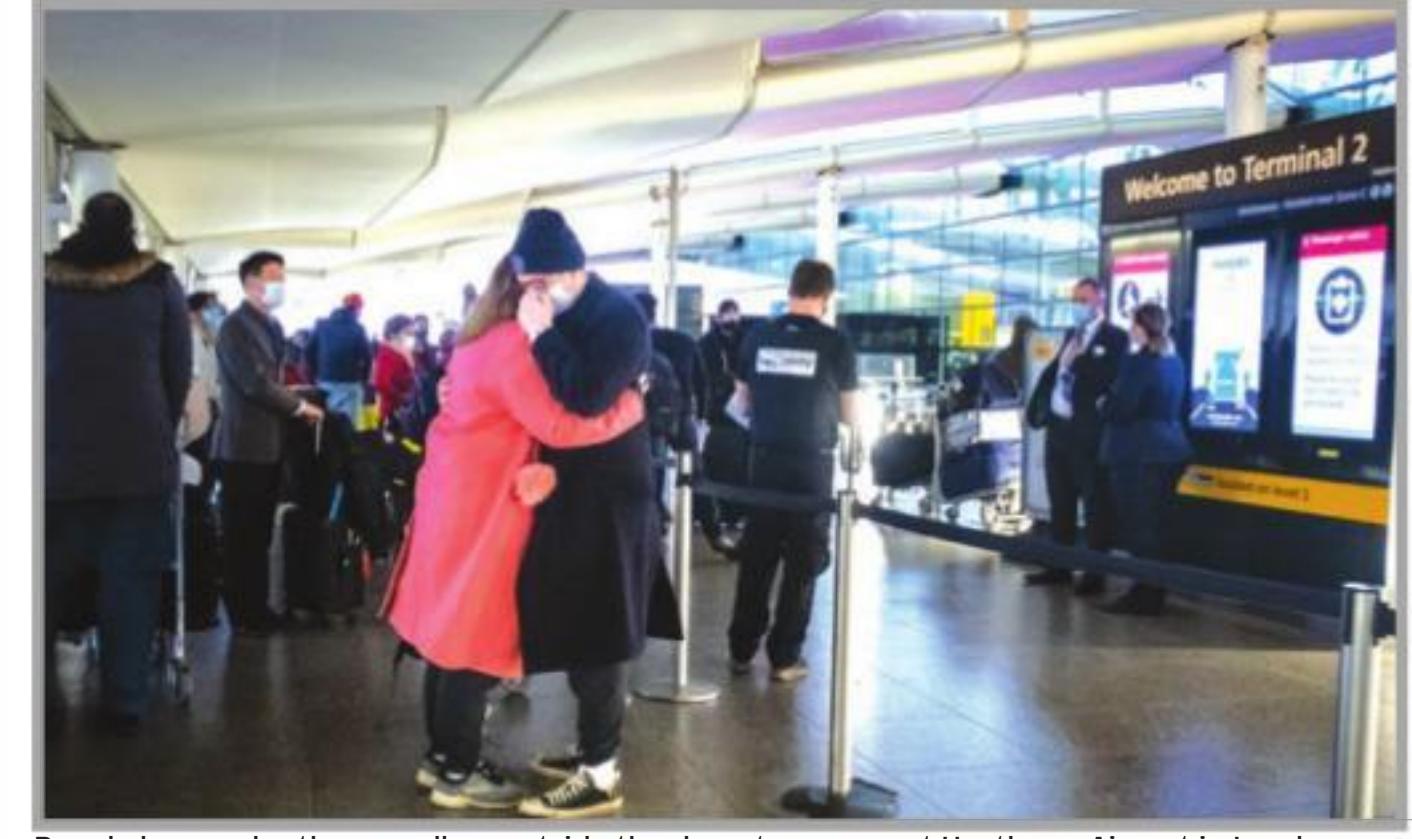
At the last follow-up visit on day 55, we found near-complete recovery of neurological, neuropsychological, and neurophysiological findings without evidence of polyneuropathy, they wrote.

It is the first clinical case study detailing a Novichok poisoning, although the symptoms and treatment are similar to those for exposure to organophosphorus pesticides, which claim over 100,000 lives in Asia each year.

Navalny's doctors note that their patient had a very favourable outcome and attribute this to the swift treatment he received in Russia.

Navalny, who is currently convalescing in Germany, this week posted a video of a phone call to one of the alleged operatives, who said the poison was applied to Navalny's underwear. The FSB has branded the call a fake.

TOUCHING MOMENT



People hug each other goodbye outside the departures area at Heathrow Airport in London, Britain, on Wednesday. ■ IANS

Trump urges Congress to amend Covid relief Bill

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
WASHINGTON, 23 DECEMBER

US President Donald Trump has urged the Congress to amend a \$900 billion coronavirus relief Bill to more than triple its stimulus payments to Americans.

In a video message posted on Twitter, he said the package "really is a disgrace", full of "wasteful" items, the BBC reported on Wednesday.

"It's called the Covid relief bill, but it has almost nothing to do with Covid," he said. The \$900 billion Bill includes one-off \$600 payments to most Americans but Trump said the figure should be \$2,000.

The Republican president, who leaves office on 20 Jan-

uary, had been expected to sign the sprawling legislation into law following its passage through Congress on Monday night.

But in Tuesday night's message from the White House, Trump balked at spending in the bill on other countries, arguing that this money should go to struggling Americans.

He said: "This Bill contains \$85.5 million for assistance to Cambodia, \$134 million to Burma, \$1.3 billion for Egypt and the Egyptian military, which will go out and buy almost exclusively Russian military equipment, \$25 million for democracy and gender programmes in Pakistan, \$505 million to Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and

Panama."

The President questioned why the Kennedy Center, a performing arts complex in Washington DC, was set to receive \$40 million when it is not open, and more than \$1 billion has been allocated to museums and galleries in the Capital.

Trump concluded: "Congress found plenty of money for foreign countries, lobbyists and special interests, while sending the bare minimum to the American people who need it. It wasn't their fault. It was China's fault."

"I am asking Congress to amend this Bill and increase the ridiculously low \$600 to \$2,000 or \$4,000 for a couple. I'm also asking Congress

to immediately get rid of the wasteful and unnecessary items from this legislation and to send me a suitable bill, or else the next administration will have to deliver a Covid relief package."

Trump's statement stunned Capitol Hill, plunging the long-awaited aid bill into turmoil.

If the President vetoes the legislation the US government could shut down on 29 December because the package was attached to a \$1.4 trillion spending measure to fund federal agencies for the next nine months.

Republicans and Democrats have been negotiating a coronavirus stimulus rescue since July.

Pfizer to supply US with 100mn extra doses of vaccine

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 23 DECEMBER

Pfizer and BioNTech will supply the US with an additional 100 million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine under a new agreement.

The drugmakers said Wednesday that they expect to deliver all the doses by 31 May. Pfizer already has a contract to supply the government with 100 million doses of its vaccine.

Pfizer's vaccine was the first to gain approval from the Food and Drug Administration and initial shipments went to states last week.

approval.

The deal with Pfizer moves the nation closer to the goal of vaccinating all Americans.

Alawating back to the Korean War gives the government authority to direct private companies to produce critical goods in times of national emergency.

Called the Defence Production Act, it is expected to be invoked to help Pfizer secure some raw materials needed for its vaccine.

Pfizer already had a contract to supply the government with 100 million doses of its vaccine under Operation Warp Speed, but government officials have said its more of an arms-length relationship with the company and they don't have as much visibility into its vaccine.

Moderna's vaccine comes under the umbrella of the government's own effort, which is called Operation Warp Speed.

That public-private endeavor was designed to have millions of vaccine doses ready and available to ship once a shot received FDA

Health and Human Services



Secretary Alex Azar said last week that the government was negotiating with Pfizer for more doses, but details provided on Tuesday about the company's desire for better access to supplies are new.

"With these 100 million additional doses, the United States will be able to protect more individuals and hopefully end this devastating pandemic more quickly," said Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla. We look forward to continuing our work with the US government and healthcare providers around the country.

The vaccine from Pfizer and German pharmaceutical BioNTech immediately raised hopes of taming a pandemic that has killed nearly 320,000 people in the US and hobbled much of the national economy.

Health care workers and nursing home residents topped the list as local TV stations across the country began broadcasting scenes of the first vaccinations.

One poll shows skepticism about getting vaccinated may be easing.

After early failures with testing, Trump administration officials are hoping to write a very different ending with vaccines. Operation Warp Speed has financed the development, manufacture and distribution of millions of doses, with the goal of providing a free vaccine to any American who wants one.

Operation Warp Speed is on track to have about 40 million doses of vaccine by the end of this month, of which about 20 million would be allocated for first vaccinations.

Distribution of those doses would span into the first week of January. Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines require two shots to be fully effective.

The New York Times first reported the new details of negotiations between Pfizer and the Trump administration.

Study: Secondary bloodstream infections linked to severe Covid-19

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW YORK, 23 DECEMBER

Covid-19 patients with a secondary blood infection were significantly sicker upon hospital admission, had longer hospital stays and poorer outcomes, new research has found.

A bloodstream infection (BSI) is defined as one or more positive blood cultures associated with systemic signs of infection such as fevers, chills, and/or hypotension, according to the International Society for Infectious Diseases.

While primary BSIs occur without another defined nidus of infection, secondary BSIs develop from a detectable area of infection as the source of the bacteremia, it said.

In the study, published in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases, the researchers looked at 375 patients diagnosed with severe Covid-19 from March

to May 2020.

Of that group, they sampled 128 cases who had secondary bloodstream infections, 92 per cent of which were bacteraemic infections.

These patients were more likely to have altered mental status, lower per cent oxygen saturation, septic shock and to be admitted to the intensive care unit compared to those without bloodstream infections," said co-lead author Pinki Bhatt, Assistant Professor at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey, US.

The researchers also found that patients who needed more advanced types of supplemental oxygen upon hospital admission had higher odds of secondary bloodstream infections.

"This likely reflects clinicians' inclination to administer antimicrobials given the limited information on the natural course of this novel disease," Bhatt said.

She noted that further studies are needed to better understand when to suspect and treat empirically for secondary bloodstream infections in severe Covid-19.

According to the study, infections in Covid-19 patients may have contributed to the severity of illness or it may reflect other underlying physiological and immunological complications of Covid-19.

The study showed that the most common cause of secondary bloodstream infections was unknown or not determined.

The study found that 80 per cent of all the patients in the study received antimicrobials at some point during hospitalisation, including those who did not have bloodstream infections.

"This likely reflects clinicians' inclination to administer antimicrobials given the limited information on the natural course of this novel disease," Bhatt said.

Muslim but not minority...

The legal status of Aligarh Muslim University has in many ways defined its existence, says AK GHOSH

While Prime Minister Modi was addressing the students, teachers and authorities of Aligarh Muslim University through a video link on the occasion of its centenary celebration, the students handed over a charter of demands which included the retention of the minority character of the university to be met by the government. It may be recalled that minority status for the university is, at times, debated.

When there was a furor over Jinnah's portrait in Aligarh Muslim University in the recent past, it was surprising to notice that some leaders saw in it a ploy to rob the institution of its minority status. Whether a portrait of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who is largely considered to be responsible for the partition of India, should hang in the university is debatable, but any misinterpretation of the situation is not desirable. This may lead to confusion and chaos.

Let us recall how Lord Antony Macdonell, Lt Governor of NWP and Oudh, in 1896, predicted the future of AMU when he said: "It is not too much to hope that this college will grow into the Mohammedan university of the future...that in these cloisters Mohammedan genius will discover, and under the protection of the British Crown, work out that social, religious and political regeneration, of which neither Stamboul nor Mecca, afford a prospect."

Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College, as also its out-growth AMU, has been the manifestation of Muslim educational and cultural activities after 1857. Sir Hamilton Gibbs called it "the first modernist organisation in Islam." Inevitably, it occupies an unrivalled place in Muslim affections and confidence and round it have centered Muslim hopes and aspirations for a better future of the community. All educational and cultural activities of the Muslims during the last one and half decades have derived inspiration from Aligarh. Its secular outlook should have given it an equally respectable place in the confidence of the wider Indian community. But often, one is made to feel that this trust is missing. Such instances as the one witnessed recently not only go to damage the image of AMU but also adversely affect the secular and democratic atmosphere of the country.

In fact, the university was born in a context which was very specific in the 19th century perspective. Syed Ahmad Khan believed that Indian Muslims were falling back in the race for education. They simply had to be content with traditional Islamic learning imparted through Arabic and Persian. Students coming out of such institutions as Darul Uloom Deoband and Farangi Mahal in Lucknow were hardly equipped to fetch government jobs which were coming up for Indians since the early 1860s. On the contrary, the young Hindus were in position to attain modern western education in institutions like Hindu College as also in the universities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta.

To tide over the situation, Syed Ahmad Khan set up the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College in 1875 which was then affiliated to the University of Calcutta and later to Allahabad University.

In 1968, the Supreme Court ruled that this university



cannot be called a minority institution since it had been set up by a legislative act. In 1981, it was accorded minority status by the Indira Gandhi government. The Allahabad High Court, in 2006, struck this down by declaring that AMU did not merit minority status. Consequently, the University took the matter to the Supreme Court, and in 2016 the Centre said that AMU is not a minority institution, thereby standing by the Court's verdict.

So, according to the judge of the Allahabad High Court, and before him the Supreme Court in Azeez Basha Vs Union of India (1968), AMU lost its minority character on account of being upgraded to a university in 1920. It became altogether a new entity separate from the MAOC.

Some Muslim petitioners challenged the 1965 Amendment Act along with the 1951 Amendment in the Supreme Court, which is known as the Azeez Basha case. The main point of contention of the petitioners was that the Amendment had infringed rights guaranteed to them by virtue of Article 30. They could no longer exercise the freedom to administer the University as per their choice.

The Court observed: "It was clearly brought into existence by the 1920 Act for it could not have brought into existence otherwise. It was thus the Central legislation which brought into existence the Aligarh University and must be held to have established it. It would not be possible for the Muslim minority to establish a university of the kind whose degrees were bound to be recognized by the government and therefore it must be held that the Aligarh University was brought into existence by the Central legislation and the Government of India. If that is so, the Muslim minority cannot claim to administer it, for it was not brought into existence by it. Article 30(1), which protects

educational institutions brought into existence and administered by a minority, cannot help the petitioners and any amendment of 1920 Act would not be ultra vires to Article 30(1) of the Constitution."

The rationale for this conclusion is derived from a certain interpretation of Article 30 (1). The Supreme Court in several of its verdicts has upheld the right of affiliated minority educational institutions to prefer "up to 50 per cent from the communities that run them. Considering the idea of a university and, again, a university fully funded, as AMU, is by the Exchequer, it becomes pertinent whether a university be restricted to one religious community. Such a restriction, it seems, somewhat lessens the meaning and significance of the term 'university'."

However, there are many questions yet to be answered. Could the community have in 1920 made an informed choice in respect of the status of the MAO College? Could they have ever envisaged three decades earlier that the Constitution of India was to enunciate Article 30(1) on the interpretation of which its status would hang in balance? Perhaps the possibility that a minority institution could lose its status on account of being turned into a university could not have occurred to anyone prior to 1950, or even 1968.

Moreover, AMU is not known for its pursuit of all-round excellence except for its contribution to Mughal history made about four facades ago. AMU is just a mirror in which we can catch a glimpse of the educational atmosphere at a time when there is a need for access to and excellence in higher education.

The writer is former associate professor, department of English, Gurudas College, Kolkata and is presently with Rabindra Bharati University.

PERILS OF DATA CUSTOMIZATION

Customised views of internet users can be used to alter voter preferences, says ASHIT KUMAR SRIVASTAVA



Customized views of search engine websites and social media websites have become a new norm. Today, half the feeds on social media are customized and tailor-made to suit the temperament of the user. However, this customization process involves considerable analysis of the big data of an individual, his likes on a photo or his surfing of a website. All this information put together forms a basis for data categorization, more specifically user categorization.

However, no matter how user-friendly the data categorization sounds, at the end of the day it is sheer cataloguing of human beings. All this cataloguing taken together gives a good insight into the political ambience of a country. In research conducted by Robert Epstein titled 'Search Engine

Manipulation Effect', the researcher found that search engines have the capacity to influence the vote preferences of individuals by keeping positives of a candidate on the first list of the search result and not showcasing negatives on the same first page of the result, thus creating ranking bias in favour of the candidate.

These subtle tricks on search engine websites tend to shift voter preference; Google has always claimed that the search engine results on its websites are mostly based on algorithms on trending issues, which are relevant topics and lead to customized searches for the user. However, there have been instances where the auto-completion on the search engine have given less-than-desirable results: one such instance was that of the search engine sug-

gestion against 'women' in 2016, which was ratified by the search engine giant once it was altered, regarding the sexist nature of the auto-completion.

Completely depending on 'Search Engines Suggestions' and 'Search Engine Results' is a slippery slope, at the end of which one might eventually get trapped into a filter bubble (a term innovated by Eli Pariser). A filter bubble basically is a space where the existing bias of an individual are perpetuated through the help of biased video-streaming or biased search results. YouTube, one of the biggest video-streaming websites in the world has been alleged to be prompting right-wing content through the help of video-streaming suggestions. Similar allegations are made about other search engines.

Right-wing movements around the globe have suddenly gained a lot of currency and a lot of money is being invested through advertisements on Search Engine Websites and Social Media Websites. The recent controversy regarding Ankhi Das, Facebook's public policy director in India, where it was alleged that there was lax application of community standards on right-wing contents is just one example.

Right-wing content tends to garner more audiences and more streaming time. Even the small-video streaming on social media produces more time on the website. The more time you spend on a website, the more traffic is created and the more the traffic, the more the money. Therefore, the right-wing contents in last ten years have found thousands of viewers, shares, likes and more stream time. This categorization of users as per their views and likes is pushing them into a filter-bubble. This per se may not seem a violation of any specific right, yet confining within a filter bubble or more specifically in a zone of bias also tends to radicalize the user.

A report by New York Times titled 'Making of a YouTube Radical' talked about how the algorithm of YouTube's suggestion option of 'Up Next' tends to push radical stuff, knowing that such material tends to increase the streaming time on the website.

Turning someone radical might not seem violation of any right. However, data categorization per se has the capacity of segregation. When I say segregation, I mean the idea of segregating the user from a particular piece of information and feeding him with only one kind of information. This is a direct violation of Free Speech. Internet platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Google are deemed to be democratic spaces for sharing of ideas and free exchanges of view. However, once the user gets stuck into a zone of bias, his/her capacity of embracing counter-facts becomes very limited and thus segregates him from other information, which might lead him to not maintain a democratic perspective.

The writer is Assistant Professor of Law, National Law University, Jabalpur.

HOIST BY ITS OWN PETARD

The anti-trust case against Facebook relies heavily on its CEO's emails, says REBECCA HAW ALLENWORTH

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's own words play a starring role in the government's case to break up his social network.

"It is better to buy than compete," he allegedly wrote in an email in 2008, according to the lawsuit. Four years later, after Facebook purchased what he had called a "very disruptive" photo-sharing app, he celebrated by explaining to a colleague in another email: "Instagram was our threat...One thing about start-ups though is you can often acquire them."

As an antitrust professor preparing a new spring course called "Antitrust for Big Tech," I read the FTC's December 9 complaint with great interest. I have taught my students for years that internal documents can come back to haunt antitrust defendants. But I have never seen a plaintiff's case rely so heavily on a CEO's own words.

As I read the FTC's summary of the arguments it plans to make at trial, I began to highlight every direct quote from an internal Facebook communication. My highlighter ran out of ink. Basing a monopolization case on a CEO's own explanations of his conduct may seem like a straightforward strategy to most people. But among judges and antitrust scholars, it's actually controversial, as it is sure to be in this case.

Despite that controversy, the FTC's choice to hoist Facebook by its own petard makes sense. Zuckerberg's emails are voluminous and specific in describing how the mergers will insulate his company from competition. They avoid most of the problems critics have with using what lawyers call "hot documents" to make an antitrust case.

And anyway, it's worked before.

The case against Facebook bears similarities to U.S. v. Microsoft, the landmark 2001 case that found the software company liable for monopolization. Here, the FTC will have to prove that Facebook, like Microsoft, acquired its market power in the social media market by excluding rivals, not merely by making a great product. And in both cases, internal statements by executives play a big role.

In the case, the government produced a 1995 memo in which Microsoft founder Bill Gates identified Netscape as "a new competitor 'born' on the internet." A few years later, another executive allegedly said, "We are going to cut off [Netscape's] air supply."

When Microsoft proceeded to do so by impeding Netscape's access to Windows users, statements like these made it hard for the company to argue that its conduct wasn't predatory, and Microsoft lost the case.

As successful and intuitive as the strategy is, courts are surprisingly reluctant to hang their antitrust rulings on internal documents revealing an executive's intent.

Judges often say that antitrust law is interested only in the economic effects of a business's conduct – such as whether it suppressed competition – not the motives of its executives. Critics have argued that CEOs are not economists and are sometimes prone to chest-thumping braggadocio, making their emails and other communications better for wowing juries than making an economic argument. Judges and scholars worry that juries will see all aggressive comments as evidence of exclusionary intent. But you can "destroy" a competitor by outdooring him; economists call that competition.

For example, Facebook's employee manual reads: "If we don't create the thing that kills Facebook, something else will." That sounds ominous, but creating things to keep rival startups at bay is exactly what the antitrust laws want Facebook to do – innovate.

More fundamentally, relying on statements like these – where a defendant seems to reveal subjective intent – is controversial because the law is unclear about why or whether a defendant's intent to suppress competition matters at all. The clearest statement we get on the issue – from U.S. v. Alcoa – is enigmatic: "To read the [law] as demanding any 'specific' intent, makes nonsense of it, for no monopolist monopolizes unconscious of what he is doing." Even lawyers haven't been able to figure out exactly what that means.

On the other hand, other types of evidence may not be enough to make an antitrust case.

The inquiry in a monopolization case is often framed as whether the monopolist enjoys its market position because it excluded rivals or because it made a better or cheaper product. The difficulty with using only objective market evidence to answer that question is that the evidence usually points in both directions. Defendants can almost always identify some product improvement that came from their conduct, muddying the waters of the plaintiff's story of exclusion. In the Facebook case, the company has pointed to Instagram's growing user base and improved interface during its time under Facebook's control.

So in most monopolization cases, courts get stuck if they try to use only market facts to answer the ultimate question: Did the monopolist flourish because of the improvements or because of diminished competition?

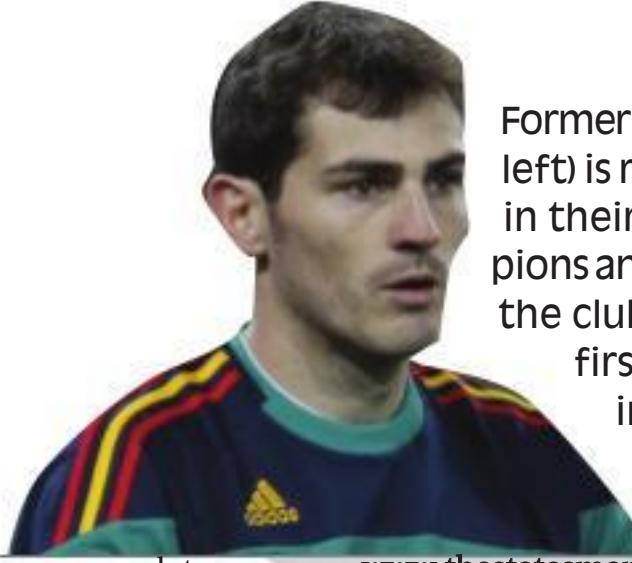
That's where "intent evidence" – information about what a defendant was thinking – can help. If a CEO intended a merger to insulate her company from competition, it likely did in fact insulate the company from competition. Judges will attribute some of the company's dominance to exclusion, and that violates the antitrust laws.

That's why judges will turn to evidence of intent, especially if it is more than just economically ambiguous declarations of war against rivals. Unfortunately for Facebook, Zuckerberg's emails are explicit and detailed in describing his desire to avoid competing with Instagram and WhatsApp. The court will find that relevant – and possibly damning. For example, in the months leading up to the acquisition, Facebook's chief financial officer outlined three reasons for buying Instagram:

"1) neutralize a potential competitor... 2) acquire talent... 3) integrate their products with ours in order to improve our service?" Zuckerberg responded, "It's a combination of (1) and (3)." Zuckerberg goes on to explain Instagram's competitive threat at length. By the time he gets to the product improvement explanation, he's changed his mind. "(3) is also a factor, but in reality we already know [Instagram's] social dynamics and we will integrate them in the next 12-24 months anyway."

After the Microsoft case, many companies adopted communications policies that discourage the creation of documents just like these. Google, for one, circulates a five-point antitrust "communications safety" policy to employees. What I find truly remarkable about this case is not the volume of internal quotes in the complaint, but the paper trail a sophisticated CEO like Zuckerberg created of Facebook's transgressions – which is now why a federal antitrust lawsuit poses an existential threat to his company.

The writer is Professor of Law, Vanderbilt University. This article was published on www.conversation.com



REAL COLOSSUS

Former Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas (in photo, left) is returning to the club to take up a role with their foundation, the 13-time European champions announced on Tuesday. Casillas came through the club's youth ranks and went on to play in the first team from 1999 to 2015, winning 19 titles including three Champions Leagues and five Spanish championships.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

High hope: Union sport minister Kiren Rijiju has said India should not be satisfied with one or two medals at the 2020 Olympic Games and aim to be in top 10 at the Los Angeles Games. "The central and the state governments have to work together," he has said.

Juventus upset: Juventus lost their first Serie A match this season, as the defending champions went down 0-3 to Fiorentina at Allianz Stadium. The Old Lady had been unbeaten before Tuesday's game, managing six wins and six draws in 12 matches.

Cup surprise: Championship club Brentford beat Newcastle United to reach the League Cup semi-finals for the first time with a second-half Josh Da Silva goal earning a 1-0 win on Tuesday. Sergi Canos broke down the left and his low cross was met by Da Silva.

Gunners lose: Arsenal's miserable season continued as they slumped to a 4-1 home defeat by holders Manchester City in the League Cup quarter-finals on Tuesday. City went in front through Brazilian striker Gabriel Jesus, who nodded home a fine cross.

La Liga: La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid consolidated their title bid by beating third-placed Real Sociedad 2-0 away on Tuesday thanks to second-half goals from Mario Hermoso and Marcos Llorente. The game failed to live up to its billing in a drab first half.

Event cancelled: The 2020 World Team Table Tennis Championships have been cancelled amid a Covid-19 resurgence in South Korea. The International Table Tennis Federation met on Monday with representatives from the continents to cancel the event.

Tokyo Games: Organisers of next summer's Tokyo Olympics will spend \$900 million on anti-coronavirus measures to stop the spread of the disease, they said on Tuesday while unveiling their latest budget for the Games. The Games will cost them \$15.4 billion.

Fifa's charge: Fifa has issued a "criminal mismanagement" complaint to prosecutors against disgraced former president Sepp Blatter and other bigshots costing the governing body "half a billion Swiss Francs that could and should have been channelled into football."

ICC rankings: India skipper Virat Kohli has moved up by a spot to number seven while KL Rahul has maintained his third position in the latest ICC rankings for batsmen in T20 Internationals. Kohli scored 134 runs in the three T20I matches India last played against Australia. Rahul, on the other hand, scored 81 runs in the three innings in the series which the Men in Blue won 2-1. Meanwhile, New Zealand opener Tim Seifert and fast bowler Tim Southee have attained career-best positions in their respective rankings after playing important roles in a 2-1 series win over Pakistan.

Tennis championship: Dream run for Wild Card entrant Akshat Agarwal continues as he drubs Amaan Wasim in straight sets to enter the semi finals of the ongoing Calcutta Hard Court Tennis Championship 2020, being held at both Clay and Synthetic Courts of the Calcutta South Club Ltd. Agarwal took less than 90 minutes to outclass younger Amaan Wasim by a straight 6-2, 6-1 in the quarter final match today. Reigning champion Abhinansu Borthakur put qualifier Simon Chakraborty aside as the former won by a clean 6-0, 6-2 to enter the semis.

India begin Test preparations

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
MELBOURNE, 23 DECEMBER

Moving on from the humiliating defeat in the first Test, Team India today began their preparations for the second Test against Australia beginning on Saturday. The official handle of the Board of Control for Cricket in India today tweeted images of the team practising at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. "We are in Melbourne and now as the red-ball Tests start, it is time to regroup," the BCCI caption said. The board also put up a 28-second video of batsmen Shubman Gill training in the nets.

"Easy on the eye. Nice and clean from Shubman Gill," the BCCI wrote. India suffered an emphatic eight-wicket loss in the first, pink-ball Test at the Adelaide Oval, a match which saw the Indian team getting bundled out for 36 in the second innings, their lowest Testinnings total in history. In the remaining three Tests, the visitors will be without captain Virat Kohli and Mohammad Shami. While Kohli has been granted paternity leave, Shami has suffered a forearm fracture to be ruled out of the rest of the Test series. In Kohli's absence, Ajinkya Rahane (in photo).

Australia off-spinner Nathan Lyon, however, believes that despite Kohli's absence, India will fare better as they have many world-class players. "They will be able to hang in. It won't be that bit difficult. You look at the quality of the players in the Indian side. They have got some absolutely world-class players. It was one of those days when nothing went right for them and everything went right for us. We have all had them. It is part of cricket," said Lyon today.



"We expect them to come out firing and no have any scars from the other day. Cricket is a new game, new day. We can't look back expecting we are going to bowl them out for 50 again. So we are preparing well again, just like the Indians. I think they will come out firing," he added.

Warner, Abbott out

Left-handed Australia opener David Warner and fast bowler Sean Abbott have been ruled out of the Boxing Day Test. The duo will, however, rejoin the squad ahead of the third Test currently scheduled to be played from 7 January at the Sydney Cricket Ground. Warner has not yet fully recovered from a groin injury he sustained during the One-Day Internationals series against India, though Abbott has recovered from the calf strain he sustained during Australia's warm-up game against India.

"Warner and Abbott spent time in Sydney outside the team's bio-secure hub to recover from injuries. While neither has been in a specific 'hotspot' as outlined by New South Wales

Health, Cricket Australia's bio-security protocols do not allow them to rejoin the squad in time for the Boxing Day Test," Cricket Australia said today.

"The pair travelled from Sydney to Melbourne to continue their rehabilitation given the changing public health situation in Sydney at the time," it added. With a fresh Covid-19 outbreak in Sydney, there is speculation Cricket Australia might scrap the Sydney Test and conduct back-to-back games at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"No additional players will be added to the squad for the Boxing Day Test," Cricket Australia said.

Rahane is a bowler's captain: Ishant

Stand-in skipper Ajinkya Rahane is a "bowler's captain" whose calm demeanour and clear communication with players should help him lead the team well in remainder of the Test series against Australia, says India fast bowler Ishant Sharma.

With regular skipper Virat Kohli returning home for the birth of his first child, Rahane will lead India in the remain-

ing three Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Ishant, who missed the Australia tour due to a side strain injury, said Rahane has ability to nicely play the leadership role. "He's very quiet and confident and I must say he's a bowler's captain," Ishant told ESPNcricinfo.

"Whenever we have played together and Virat has not been around on the field, he'd ask me 'What kind of field you want? When you want to bowl? If you want to go on (bowling)?'

"He's a bowler's captain. He's not someone who'd say do this or do that... He is very clear about what he wants from his team."

Rahane has led India to victories both the times he had captained the side in absence of Kohli against Australia and Afghanistan.

"You can see what kind of person he is in his captaincy. He is very calm and composed. I can't say he does not have a sense of humor. He jokes around with us," Ishant said.

"Jinx (Rahane) spreads calm energy in a pressure situation. There won't be any tension, he'd communicate with the bowlers very well."

How 'flawed' batting technique caused Adelaide disaster

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER

The only way for Indian cricketers to overcome the crushing defeat by Australia in the first Test is to "fight it out" and do "something magnificent" in the remaining three matches that would end negative thinking, Sachin Tendulkar (in photo) has said.

The failure of their top-order batsmen was largely responsible for India's eight-wicket mauling in Adelaide, but Tendulkar, 47, did not blame the setback on any pressure on the players. He says it was their own technical flaws that let the Indian top-order batsmen down. He noticed one big shortcoming in most frontline batsmen: the absence of a solid forward defence, a technical flaw that became more pronounced by the lack of a big stride forward.

Also, Tendulkar says it would have been better if India had started the tour with the Twenty20 International series, then played the One-Day Internationals, and finally the Test series -- with the last match as the pink-ball one. That would have marked ideal transitions from the white ball to the red to the pink.

Asked if he had had any apprehension that the Australians would have the upper hand in the first Test as it was a day-night one with a pink ball, given India's limited experience of it, Tendulkar said:

"The first Test itself was a bit of apprehension because I



felt that the last Test we had played before the Adelaide one was in February and after that no cricket was played owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. Everyone was preparing for the Indian Premier League, which was Twenty20. According to me, the ideal transition would have been that after the IPL you go to Australia and start with the T20 series, move on to the ODIs, and then the Test series. In the first innings we had the upper hand and started off really well. There was no apprehension as such; just that when I looked at the itinerary, what I said earlier was the better option, I felt. We played good cricket in the first innings, but in the second, that hour was a difficult one and that's when things changed. Also, when Tim Paine came and scored those crucial runs."

He said he had not been expecting the Adelaide result.

"In the second innings, there was not much playing

BCCI AGM: Ratification of IPL teams, tax issues, cricket committees on agenda

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD, 23 DECEMBER



The inclusion of two new IPL franchises, a discussion on the contentious tax exemption demanded by the ICC for global events in India and the formation of various cricket committees will be on top of the agenda when the BCCI holds its 89th AGM here on Thursday.

The BCCI will also have a new vice president in Rajiv Shukla, who is going to officially take over after being put forth as the unanimous choice. Brijesh Patel will also continue to head the IPL governing council. There have been some discussions on whether BCCI president Sourav Ganguly (in photo) will be asked about his brand endorsements and the related allegations of conflict of interest. But there is no clarity if the floor would officially seek an explanation from him on the matter. The biggest development could be the approval of new IPL teams but primarily from the 2022 edition.

"At this point, the 10-team IPL, if BCCI intends to conduct it in 2021, will be a hurried one given that the tendering process and a mega auction will be difficult to organise in such a

short span of time," a senior BCCI official told PTI on the eve of the meeting. "It is only fair that the approval is taken and the big 94 match tournament is held in 2022," he said.

There's only a week left for the BCCI to meet the ICC's deadline of giving complete assurance that the global body will get full tax exemption for holding the World T20 in October-November or else it will be shifted to the UAE. While there has been precedence of exemptions during earlier global events, the current tax laws won't allow exemption for a sporting event and it will be interesting to see what will be the BCCI's stand on the issue. BCCI secretary Jay Shah will remain India's representative at the ICC on var-

ious issues like last year along with Ganguly.

If BCCI supports cricket at the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028, it might end up losing its autonomy as being a National Sports Federation means coming under the ambit of sports ministry with constant government interventions.

The BCCI hasn't constituted important cricket sub-committees for the longest time. It is understood a new Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) will be formed which will interview candidates for three new selectors.

Also the various cricket committees like umpiring committee and the technical committee are also likely to be formed.

Messi's feat

BARCELONA, 23 DECEMBER

Lionel Messi has moved past Pele to become the highest scorer ever for a single club. Messi achieved the feat during Barca's 3-0 win against Valladolid last evening.

The Argentine has now scored staggering 646 goals, all in a Barcelona FC shirt, across 17 seasons and 749 games. That surpasses the 643 goals that Pele scored for Santos. The Brazilian, of course, managed it in 656 matches (according to Goal.com).

"When I started playing football I never thought I would break any records. And even less the one I achieved today," Messi posted on Instagram shortly after the game. "I can only thank all those who helped me over the years, my team-mates, my family, my friends and all those who support me every day," he added.

Pele earlier congratulated Messi when the latter equalled his record. "When your heart overflows with love, it is difficult to change your path. Like you, I know what it's like to love wearing the same shirt everyday. Like you, I know that there is nothing better than the place we feel at home," Pele said in an Instagram post. AGENCIES

Spin legend Bedi calls it quits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 DECEMBER



Lambasting the DDCA for deciding to install a statue of its late former President Arun Jaitley at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground, spin legend Bishan Singh Bedi (in photo) has asked the body to remove his name from the spectators' stand, named after him in 2017.

Lashing out at the Delhi and District Cricket Association's (DDCA) culture, which he alleged promotes nepotism and puts "administrators ahead of cricketers," Bedi also renounced his membership of the body. He made the demand in a scathing letter addressed to DDCA President Rohan Jaitley, the son of the late politician, who was a minister in the BJP-led NDA government and died last year owing to multiple health issues. "I pride myself as a man of immense tolerance and patience... but all that I'm afraid, is running out. DDCA has truly tested me and forced me to take this drastic action."

"So, Mr President, I request you to remove my name from the stand named after me with immediate effect. Also, I hereby renounce my DDCA membership," Bedi wrote in his letter. When contacted for a response to Bedi's letter, the DDCA declined any comment. Jaitley was DDCA president for 14 years, from 1999 to 2013, before quitting cricket administration. The body plans to have a six-foot statue of him installed at the Kotla to honour his memory. DDCA had named one of the stands after Bedi in November 2017 along with Mohinder Amarnath.

"I've taken this decision with sufficient deliberations. I'm not prone to disregard the honour that was bestowed upon me. But as we all know with honour comes responsibility. They feted me for the total respect and integrity with which I played the game. And now I'm returning the honour just to assure them all that four decades after my retirement, I still retain those values."

Putting his decision in context, Bedi wrote that he was never a fan of Arun Jaitley's working style and always opposed any decision that he did not agree with. "My reservations about

comment. Jaitley was DDCA president for 14 years, from 1999 to 2013, before quitting cricket administration. The body plans to have a six-foot statue of him installed at the Kotla to honour his memory. DDCA had named one of the stands after Bedi in November 2017 along with Mohinder Amarnath.

"I think I was too head strong... too Old school... & too proud an Indian cricketer to be co-opted into the corrupt darbar of sycophants Arun Jaitley mustered at the Kotla during his stewardship." Bedi said it pains him that even the current leadership follows the culture of "fawning obeisance". "After the Feroz Shah Kotla was named hurriedly & most undeservingly after Late Arun Jaitley my reaction then was maybe somehow good sense might prevail that the statue of Arun Jaitley coming up at Kotla." Bedi said since the late administrator was primarily a politician, it's the Parliament which needs to "remember him for posterity." "This is not a rhetorical assessment but a factual appraisal of his time at DDCA. Take my word, failures don't need to be celebrated with plaques & busts. They need to be forgotten."

FC Goa defeat Jamshedpur FC

AGENCIES
GOA, 23 DECEMBER

Igor Angulo scored a stoppage-time winner to help FC Goa script a thrilling 2-1 win over Jamshedpur FC in the Hero Indian Super League at Tilak Maidan, Vasco, on Wednesday. Stephen Eze (33') had put Jamshedpur ahead in the first half but Angulo's brilliant brace (64', 90+4') helped Goa claim all three points and end JFC's six-match unbeaten run. Both sides showed attacking intent from the word go but had just a single shot on target in the first half as they failed to create clear-cut opportunities.

Brandon Fernandes had a chance to put his side ahead in the game early on when he was set up by Jorge Ortiz on the

left. The midfielder got the ball at the edge of the box and curled at the far post, but only to see his attempt miss the top corner. Jamshedpur broke the deadlock at the half-hour mark and the goal came from a set-piece. Aitor Monroe put in a long ball at the far post and Eze managed to beat Mohammad Nawaz with an outstretched right foot. The Goa custodian should have done better. Jamshedpur's defence frustrated Goa's attack in the first half, with Eze standing tall at the back. The defender was there to thwart every danger posed by the Gauras. Though Goa dominated in terms of possession and passes, they hardly tested Jamshedpur keeper TP Reheman in the first 45 minutes.

"For far too long Ashwin has

been a divide within the Indian team, hints Gavaskar

Former India skipper Sunil Gavaskar (in photo) has hinted at a divide within the Indian team, saying that treatment meted out to bowlers like R Ashwin and T Natarajan is biased as there are "different rules for different players". The former India opener said that Ashwin has suffered within the Indian team because of his forthrightness. He also took a dig at the India skipper Virat Kohli, who got permission to leave the tour of Australia to attend the birth of his child, while T Natarajan, who became father during the IPL playoffs, is yet to see his daughter.

"Any other country would welcome a bowler who has more than 350 Test wickets and not to forget four Test match centuries, too. However, if Ashwin doesn't take heaps of wickets in one game he is invariably sidelined for the

next one. That does not happen to established batsmen though. Even if they fail in one game they get another chance and another and another but for Ashwin the rules seem to be different," he added.

Gavaskar added that Natarajan has been forced to stay back only as a net bowler even though the limited-overs series, of which he was a part, ended almost a fortnight back.

"Another player who will wonder about the rules but, of course, can't make any noise about it as he is a newcomer. It is T. Natarajan. The left-arm yorker specialist who made an impressive debut in the T20 and had Hardik Pandya gallantly offering to share the man of the T20 series prize with him had become a father for the first time even as the IPL playoffs were going on. He was taken to Australia directly from the UAE and then looking at his brilliant performances, he was asked to stay on for the Test series but not as a part of the team but as a net bowler. Imagine that," wrote Gavaskar.