



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



RAHUL GANDHI A
MIGRANT LEADER:
PRALHAD JOSHI



SUU KYI FACES NEW
CHARGE; CRACKDOWN
INTENSIFIES



PELOSI PROPOSES
9/11-TYPE PANEL
TO PROBE US RIOT



WHY DE KOCK
REQUIRES
A RESPITE

P4

P9

P10

P11

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 28 and 11 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100%	Min: 48%
TEMPERATURE	
Max: 29.4°C (+5)	Min: 11.6°C (+1)
SUN RISES	SUN SETS
06:57 hrs	18:13 hrs
MOON RISES	MOON SETS
10:44 hrs	23:17 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Children perform during Saraswati puja at Garia in Kolkata on Tuesday.

ANAGHA BANIK

'Farm reforms will benefit small, marginal farmers': Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asserted that the new farm reforms will benefit small and marginal farmers, and that farmers themselves have been exposing those spreading false information against agri laws. While laying the foundation stone for a statue of warrior king Suheldev in Uttar Pradesh via video conferencing, he also said that his government was trying to rectify the "mistakes" of previous regimes.

P5

Puducherry: Kiran Bedi removed as LG

NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Kiran Bedi has been removed as Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry, Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a statement released late Tuesday night.

The statement from President Ram Nath Kovind's office said that Tamilisai Soundararajan, the Governor of Telangana, was directed to discharge functions of the Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry, in addition to her own duties, until a new appointment is made.

"The President has directed that Dr Kiran Bedi shall cease to hold the office of the Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry and has appointed Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan, Governor of Telangana, to discharge the functions of the Lieutenant-Governor of Puducherry, in addition to her own duties, until a new appointment is made."

At the outset, Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain said the Centre was contemplating some action on the issue of regulating OTT platforms.

The CJI sought to know from Jain as to what would be the action from the government and asked him to file the response in six weeks while tagging the matter with the pending petition.

The top court had on October 15 last year issued notices to the central government, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Internet and Mobile Association of

'Contemplating some action on regulating OTT platforms'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

The Centre on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that it was contemplating "some action" on the issue of regulating OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime.

A bench comprising Chief Justice SA Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, which was initially of the view that the petitioner should approach the government for the remedy, asked the government to file its response within six weeks to the PIL seeking OTT regulation by an autonomous body.

With cinema theatres unlikely to open anytime soon in the country, OTT/Streaming and different digital media platforms have surely given a way out for film makers and artists to release their content without being worried about getting clearance certificates for their films and series from the censor board, the plea said.

At present, however, there is no law or autonomous body governing the digital content to monitor and manage these digital contents and it is made available to the public at large without any filter or screening, it said.

The ministry had earlier told the top court in a separate case that there is a need to regulate digital media and that the court may first appoint a committee of persons as amici before laying down guidelines with respect to the regulation of hate speech in the media.

Woman thrashed, forced to walk with boy on shoulders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUNA (MP), 16 FEBRUARY

A tribal woman was beaten up and forced to walk for three km carrying a teenage boy on her shoulders by her in-laws in Madhya Pradesh's Guna district, police said on Tuesday.

The woman had left her husband and was living with another man which apparently led to the assault, police said.

Five persons have been arrested in connection with the incident that took place at Sanai village, said Guna superintendent of police (SP) Rajesh Kumar Mishra.

The incident took place on February 9 and came to light on Monday when a purported video of it went viral.

A case has been registered against a total of eight persons including a minor, the police official said. Earlier the police had said the woman's husband was among the accused, but the SP later said he was not among them.

In the video, the woman, who is around 20 years old, is seen walking barefoot with the boy on her shoulders as some men keep hitting her with sticks and cricket bats.

The woman, who married a man from Bankschedi village two years ago, had separated from him due to some dispute. On February 9, when she was alone, some members of her estranged husband's family and the boy turned up and allegedly beat her up, he said.

Unstoppable Ash wins it for India

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY
KOLKATA, 16 FEBRUARY

Social media last night showed a video which had people ~ standees as well as grandees ~ prognosticating how long India would take today to complete the formality with seven wickets to be taken. Eventually, it turned out to be fast-forward enough, proving nearly all the amateur astrologers right in a collective Nijinsky Leap the great Russian master might himself have thought quite improbable.

Wonders never cease. But if cricket's global media seemed somewhat subdued hours after the hurly-burly had been done, like an uncharacteristically forlorn, soggy pandal

during Durga puja in this city, it, of course, was because some very popular voices had earlier let it be known that they didn't quite think that the Chepauk wicket for the second Test was ***comme il faut. *** Not that the one for the first Test, which England had won, had been deemed just what the doctor had ordered. But the very brief interregnum between the two matches is said to have been quite action-packed in the best traditions of made-in-Mumbai blockbusters. India, reportedly very, very cross after losing, were believed to have told the cricket control board that the pitch they had been expected to win on had let them down badly. With a thud, in fact. So the board's

own pitch-making man who had been flown out to Chennai to supervise the prolonged preparation was told ~ and these messages are never meant to be conveyed in sugar-coated phraseology ~ that he must come back and make himself useful in terms of his requirement for the Vijay Hazare Trophy tournament.



Word is that this was when the Indians, presumably inspired by the ages-old idea that self-help is the best help, took over. While the country has yet to happen on someone who actually saw them, in galoshes with pail, broom and all, go about the job preserving all the while the gung-ho spirit of the archetypal go-getter, suspicions lurked even before the get-go that this was destined to be a dog's dinner. It was a turning track all right and you didn't have to wait and watch ad infinitum to arrive at the conclusion: it revealed itself without a lot of persuasive prodding and pushing. Celebrities like Michael Vaughan, Mark Waugh, Jonathan Agnew, India's own Sanjay Manjrekar, among oth-

ers, were utterly critical of it once the action started, some going to the extent of calling it unworthy of Test cricket. Sunil Gavaskar and Shane Warne, to specify but two, said no. It was no picnic spot but if you kept your nose to the grindstone, you were likely to emerge glowingly out of the contest.

Ravichandran Ashwin, with his coruscating all-round performance, and Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Axar Patel, subsequently lent undeniably strength and authenticity to the positive view. India, despite a few rather egregeous umpiring howlers, won the second Test essentially because they batted better, with their spinners showing a greater command of their

craft than their England peers ever seemed capable of. Ashwin is the most spectacular success story, though, and Chennai, with some crowds back in, would have relished the home boy's personal triumph as much as anything else in the game.

The question, after this, is how long would it be before they made him captain? A prompt answer to this seems unlikely, but he has by now, in modern parlance, ticked all the boxes. His confident return to match-winning prominence was only a matter of time. And now that it has happened, his consistency is part of the story if you consider his track record of the recent past. They will only be fair if they put him in the leading role.

Police deny lapses in Disha's arrest, seek info from Zoom

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Refuting allegations that there were lapses in the arrest of climate activist Disha Ravi, Delhi Police Commissioner S N Srivastava on Tuesday said her arrest was made in accordance with law, which doesn't differentiate between a 22-year-old and a 50-year-old.

"I can not divulge the details of the case as the investigation is underway. Everyone will be notified as and when things become more clear," Srivastava said.

Several political leaders have criticised Delhi police regarding the arrest of Disha, alleging that her arrest is 'unwarranted harassment' and that proper procedure was not followed.

Delhi Police has written a letter to video conferencing platform Zoom over the meeting between jailed climate activist Disha Ravi and others in which they discussed the contentious toolkit, and sought details of other participants of the meeting, sources said.

The police have also sought answers from Google on the toolkit, though no response was received as yet.

Sources said police are likely to approach WhatsApp seeking details of the 'International Farmers' Strike' group created in December



the toolkit with others, which was later shared by global climate activist Greta Thunberg on Twitter. This led to the Delhi Police filing an FIR.

Disha Ravi has been charged with sedition and has been remanded in custody for five days.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Commission for Women sent a notice to the city police on the arrest of Disha Ravi and sought a report by Friday.

The DCW asked the police to provide a copy of the FIR registered in the matter and reasons for allegedly not producing Ravi before a local court for transit remand. It also asked the reasons for allegedly not providing a lawyer of her choice when she was produced before the court here, and a detailed action taken report, a statement said.

Police also said they are also probing the role of a man named Peter Friedrich in connection with the 'toolkit' case.

More reports on Pg 5

New cases fall below 10,000 for fourth time

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI,
16 FEBRUARY

The daily new infections fell below 10,000 for the fourth time this month taking India's tally of Covid-19 cases to 1,09,25,710, while fresh fatalities remained below 100 for the tenth time this month, according to Union health ministry data updated on Tuesday.

The death toll increased to 1,55,813 with 81 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 a.m. showed. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,06,33,025 which translates to a national recovery rate of 97.32 per cent. The active caseload remained below 1.5 lakh.

Delhi sees 94 cases: Delhi today recorded 94 fresh coronavirus



infections ~ the lowest in more than nine months ~ while its positivity rate slipped to 0.17 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. (SEE Pg 1)

Chouhan announced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh each to the kin of the deceased and an additional Rs 2 lakh each from the PM Relief Fund.

The state government will also provide Rs 50,000 to each of the injured.

State water resources minister Tulsiram Silawat and Panchayat and Rural Development minister Ram Khelwan Patel rushed to the spot. Chouhan cancelled the "Griha Pravesh" programme scheduled today under the PM Housing Scheme (Rural).

Army monitoring disengagement at Pangong Tso Lake

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

The Indian Army is closely monitoring evacuation and dismantling of the military infrastructure by Chinese troops at the Pangong Tso Lake in Eastern Ladakh as part of the agreement for disengagement between the two countries, sources said today.

The disengagement process at both northern and southern banks of the lake was expected to be complete by 20 February, sources added.

It is learnt that the Indian Army teams were using drones and high-resolution cameras to check and record dismantling of the infrastructure, especially set up along the lake by PLA troops.

China has created a military garrison at Finger 7 where 13 jetties were stationed, long-range guns were positioned, bunkers were constructed and permanent structures built to accommodate thousands of troops.

"We will verify physically whether each and everything has been dismantled and removed. We will go up to Fin-

ger 8 to check if disengagement is happening as per the agreed terms," sources said.

According to the disengagement agreement, announced by the two countries last week, Chinese troops will move back to Finger 8 and Indian troops will pull back to the Dhan Singh Thapa post between Finger 2 and 3 of the northern bank of the Pangong Tso Lake. Further, there would be a temporary moratorium on military activities, including patrolling to the traditional areas. There have been regular face-offs between the two armies between Finger 4 and Finger 8, on the northern bank of the lake. The Indian Army, meanwhile, released a video of the disengagement process at the lake in which the PLA troops can be seen dismantling tents and bunkers.



I would like to thank everyone at GoWB who've led the fight against #COVID from the front medics, paramedics, police, govt staff, teachers & other parasatals. I care for all my colleagues at GoWB & have personally requested @wbdhfw to ensure max vaccination coverage for them

MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

Kejri govt 2.0 marks its first anniversary

The AAP govt and people made Delhi a 'model of success in the world' in containing Covid pandemic: CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Sharing a message with the people of Delhi on the occasion of the completion of one year of the second term of his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today said that a year ago Delhiites gave the AAP another chance to serve the national capital and that the residents of the city and the government together 'earned a name for Delhi in the world'.

Referring to his government's measures to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, Kejriwal said the Delhi government's work on home isolation, the idea of plasma bank and supplying oximeters to those Covid patients who had been getting treatment at



home were being discussed all over the world.

The CM said that the Delhi government fed millions of

people during the Covid lockdown, distributed free ration,

and arranged transportation for trapped migrant labourers to their home.

He said the Delhi government continued with its free electricity and water supply scheme amidst all the challenges. Government school students made all of Delhiites proud by scoring 98 per cent results in the board examinations. He added that "it was a government of two crore Delhites, who worked 24 hours to make the life of every citizen easier".

Kejriwal said, "One year back today you all gave your son another opportunity to serve everyone. It has been a very tough year but all the citizens of Delhi have worked together. All of us together have made Delhi a model of success in the world so far as the task of containing the Covid-19 pandemic was concerned."

Meanwhile, Delhi government school students scored 98 per cent marks in Class 12 and made all the residents of Delhi proud of themselves, he said.

The CM said the Delhi government also came up with a "remarkable solution" to the stubble burning problem in cooperation with farmers.

Stubble burning has been the key reason behind air pollution in the city. But now Delhi farmers no longer indulge in stubble burning, he claimed.

Kejriwal said, "During these six years of development every child of Delhi has been getting quality education. Today every patient of Delhi is getting quality and affordable healthcare. Delhi also gets 24 hours of free electricity supply."

Capital logs 94 fresh Covid cases, lowest in over 9 mths

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Delhi today recorded 94 fresh coronavirus infections—the lowest in more than nine months—while its positivity rate slipped to 0.17 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital reported 1 Covid-linked fatality, which took its coronavirus toll to 10,894, the health bulletin said.

Delhi had recorded 96 coronavirus cases on 27 January, which was the lowest then in about nine months.

No death due to Covid was recorded in the city last Saturday—the second time in February when the single-day fatality count was nil.

On 9 February, no fatality from the coronavirus infection was registered in the national capital after a gap of nearly nine months.

Today's fresh 94 Covid cases were detected out of 56,944 tests conducted the previous day, according to the bulletin. These tests included 34,679 RT-PCR tests and 22,265 rapid antigen tests.

The Covid tally climbed to 6,37,181 in the city, the bulletin said.

The number of active Covid cases in Delhi dipped to 1,019. The recovery rate was 98.13 per cent.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 141 Covid cases and two deaths due to this deadly viral disease, while the positivity rate had stood at 0.36 per cent.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF SH. HARGURVARDH SINGH

Addl. District Judge-02 Room No. 605, 6th Floor, Dwarika Courts, New Delhi, PC No. 03/2021

Kumud Shrivastava Versus

SBI Cap Securities Limited & Ors.

CITATION UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

Whereas an application under Section 276 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for Grant of Probate/Letters of Administration to the estate of Late Sh. Prabhulla Kumar Shrivastava, who died on 02-12-2017 has been made by Kumud Shrivastava, w/o Late Sh. Prabhulla Kumar Shrivastava, w/o C-73, Sukh Nagar Apartment, Plot No. 1, Dwarika Sector-9, New Delhi-110075 in respect of the movable property during his life time the deceased Prabhulla Kumar Shrivastava was having the holder of below mentioned shares from SBI Cap Securities Limited, PC No. 03/2021, Mentioned Futurex, 12th Floor, A & B, Wing, N.O. 5th Floor, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013.

Holding Statement for the Period 21 Dec. 2018.

ISIN NAME : Brightcom GRC EQ2/-

ISIN CODE : INE42B01027

FREE BALANCE : 985000

ISIN NAME : SAWACA BUSI-NESS-EQ

ISIN CODE : INE4B801025

FREE BALANCE : 50

ISIN NAME : SUEBX LIMITED EQ

ISIN CODE : INE754A01014

FREE BALANCE : 61460

Whereas the 13-04-2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the Administration of the Estate of the said deceased may if he/she desires to appear in this court on the said 13-04-2021 and see the proceedings before the Grant of Probate (or for Letter of Administration).

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 12-02-2021.

Addl. District Judge-02 Dwarika Courts, New Delhi, Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF SH. HARGURVARDH SINGH

Addl. District Judge-02 Room No. 605, 6th Floor, Dwarika Courts, New Delhi, PC No. 35/2020

Kanchan Mata & Ors. Versus Lalit Mohan Singh

CITATION UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

Whereas an application under Section 276 R/W 37 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for Grant of Probate/Letters of Administration to the estate of Late Sh. Shaligram Singh, s/o Late Sh. Shaligram both died on 23-04-2014 and 25-09-2014 has been made by Kanchan Mata, d/o Late Shaligram, w/o Late Pankaj Gera, r/o House No. 704, Sector-4, Near Huda Market, Gurugram, in respect of debts/securities of said deceased.

And whereas the said deceased may if he/she desires to appear in this court on the said 23-03-2021 and see the proceedings before the Grant of Probate (or for Letter of Administration).

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 12-02-2021.

Addl. District Judge-02 Dwarika Courts, New Delhi, Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF SH. HARGURVARDH SINGH

Addl. District Judge-02 Room No. 605, 6th Floor, Dwarika Courts, New Delhi, PC No. 37/2020

Kanchan Mata & Ors. Versus Lalit Mohan Singh

CITATION UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

Whereas an application under Section 276 R/W 37 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for Grant of Probate/Letters of Administration to the estate of Late Sh. Shaligram Singh, s/o Late Sh. Shaligram both died on 23-04-2014 and 25-09-2014 has been made by Kanchan Mata, d/o Late Shaligram, w/o Late Pankaj Gera, r/o House No. 704, Sector-4, Near Huda Market, Gurugram, in respect of debts/securities of said deceased.

And whereas the said deceased may if he/she desires to appear in this court on the said 23-03-2021 and see the proceedings before the Grant of Probate (or for Letter of Administration).

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 12-02-2021.

Addl. District Judge-02 Dwarika Courts, New Delhi, Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5 Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Rajneesh Kumar Gupta DJ-Commercial Court-02 (Central), Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

CS COMM NO. 321/18 ICICI Bank Ltd. Versus Prakash Singh To:

Prakash Singh, s/o Sh. Ram Singh, H. No. 3, Pocket-5, Sector-25, Rohini, Rithala, Delhi-110085.

Defendant abovenamed.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons and failing to defend the cause on the 22nd day of February, 2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court, this 6th day of February, 2021.

DJ-Commercial Court-02 (Central), Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi Seal of the Court

COURT NOTICE (U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC) IN THE COURT OF SH. VIJAY JAMES Additional District and Sessions Judge, Gurugram M/s. Utshark Buldcon Pvt. Ltd. Versus Chander Prakash Banga Civil Appeal No. CA/1068/2018 CRN No. HRGR01-017473-2018 Next Date: 16-03-2021 Publication Issued to Respondent Nos. 11 to 14: 11. Balbir Singh, r/o 453/6, Jatoo Pura, Gurugram. 12. Sh. Anil Kumar, Former Sarpanch, r/o Village - Tigray, Gurugram. 13. Sh. Om Prakash, s/o Sh. Sultan Singh, r/o Berur Pur 14. Manoviraj Khosla, s/o Sh. R. K. Khosla, r/o 26, Lee Road, Kolkota. In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 16-03-2021 at 10-00 a.m. For details logon to https://highcourtndrj.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&dis-trict=gurugram. Dated, this day of 13-02-2021. Additional District and Sessions Judge.

KOLKATA Statesman House, 4, Chowringhee Square Kolkata-700 001 Tel: (033) 41071700 Fax: (033) 2212-6181 / 7107-1780 Email: thestatesman@vsnl.com statesmansdisplay@gmail.com thestatesmansclassified@gmail.com

DEHLI Statesman House, 148, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110 001 Tel: (011) 2331 5911

House, Property 35-a measuring 100 sq.yds. out of Khasra number 26/6/01 situated in the Revenue village Haibatpura, Delhi known as Rajeev Colony, Najafgarh, Delhi.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons and failing to defend the cause on the 22nd day of February, 2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 6th day of February, 2021.

DJ-Commercial Court-02 (Central), Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi Seal of the Court

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

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02

02



We are working more on alternatives for fossil fuel (since it) is the most important thing for the country. Presently, we import Rs 8 lakh crore of fossil fuel.

NITIN GADKARI
UNION MINISTER

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2021

03

BJP, AAP crying foul ahead of 'defeat' in Pb civic polls: Capt

Punjab CM rejects Oppn's allegations over 'rigging' of civic polls whose outcome'll be declared today

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 16 FEBRUARY

Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh today rejected the allegations levelled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) over "rigging" of recent civic polls in the state as a "typical case of crying foul" in the face of their "imminent defeat" in these elections.

The results of these Punjab civic polls will be announced tomorrow.

"It's a panic reaction to their inevitable wipeout in these polls," the CM claimed, adding that the BJP and the AAP, as well as the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), were set to be "completely trounced" in these municipal polls. Their results, Captain Amarinder said, would be the "precursor of worse to come for these parties that have totally lost the confi-



dence and trust of the people of Punjab".

"All these parties have worked together to ruin Punjab, with the black farm laws the latest in the long line of their anti-people and anti-Punjab actions," the CM alleged, adding that the "shock of their total rejection have unnerved their leaderships, who are desperately seeking refuge in lies and

excuses to cover up their impending failure".

"Why would my government or my party try to sabotage an election that we are clearly winning?" asked Captain Amarinder, urging the Opposition parties to "stop whining" and start introspecting on their policies and programmes. As in the case of the Republic Day violence in Delhi, any instances of violence in the Punjab municipal polls were the "handiwork of BJP and AAP working in collusion to seize the polls by hook or by crook", he alleged.

Ridiculing BJP leader Tarun Chugh over his remarks that the people of Punjab were living in "terror and fear", Captain Amarinder said the people of the whole country were, in fact, living under the dread

of the "tyrannical" Central government, which had given up even the pretense of being a democratic regime.

"The BJP-led government at the Centre has become so despotic that it cannot tolerate the minimum of dissent, even on social media, which is why they probably believe that other parties are also running repressive regimes wherever they are in power," he said.

The Congress has always upheld the Constitutional principles of democracy and the freedom of the citizens, and continues to do so in Punjab and other states where it is ruling, Captain Amarinder claimed.

He also charged that Arvind Kejriwal's AAP was "nothing more than a tool of the BJP to spread misinformation, and promote its anti-people agenda". He also alleged that the "lies of these parties are clearly motivated by their petty political agenda".

Inmates released on bail, parole due to Covid to return to Haryana jails

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 16 FEBRUARY

Convicts who were released due to special bail and parole because of the Covid-19 pandemic earlier this year, will now be re-admitted to the respective jails in Haryana.

For this, the jail authorities have been directed to ensure re-admission of the convicts according to the criteria set by the high powered committee and also to ensure that the re-admission of the convicts is based on the

duration of their imprisonment from 23 February.

Giving this information on Tuesday, a spokesman of Legal Services Authority said that under the orders of the high-powered committee constituted under the chairmanship of Justice Rajan Gupta, 2580 convicts were released from various jails for decongestion of jails to check the spread of infection.

Now a meeting of the high-powered committee regarding the permission of readmission

of convicts was held in Narnaul today.

The spokesman informed that the jail authorities and health officials have been directed to coordinate with each other to follow all the protocols during the entry of convicts into jails.

The parole or bail was being granted or extended to the convicts or under trials after duly taking into consideration the Covid-19 situation in order to avoid risk of infection inside the jails.

As per the data, 5194 accidents were registered in the year 2020 while 3866 people lost their lives in road accidents in the same year.

The Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Dinkar Gupta on Tuesday said considering road safety as a major

Road fatalities in Punjab drop by 15 pc in 2020

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 16 FEBRUARY

Punjab has witnessed 15 per cent decline in road accident fatalities and 18 per cent reduction in road accidents during 2020 as compared to 2019.

As per the data, 5194 accidents were registered in the year 2020 while 3866 people lost their lives in road accidents in the same year.

The Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Dinkar Gupta on Tuesday said considering road safety as a major

concern, the Punjab Police has been leaving no stone unturned to make the Punjab roads safer for commuters.

Gupta said to institutionalise the Road Safety, a pilot project "Accident Resolution Team" (ART) was initiated in the Patiala district under which the teams led by the station house officer (SHO) visits and inspects the black spots in their respective jurisdictions.

Patiala police have formulated 25 such ARTs and as many as 20 rectifications have already been realised, mostly on Patiala-Sirhind road,

As per the data, 5194 accidents were registered in the year 2020 while 3866 people lost their lives in road accidents in the same year.

resulting in a remarkable decline in the accident rate.

A standard operating procedure (SOP) to prevent deaths due to stray animals has been formulated by the Punjab Police and cattle accident black spots are also being

Works Department (PWD).

Additional DGP (traffic) Sharad Satya Chauhan said that the traffic wing has established a first of its kind Road Safety and Traffic Research Centre in Mohali, which uses scientific tools of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to find appropriate solutions to curb the road accidents fatalities in the state.

He said to strengthen scientific road crash investigation, the Punjab Police have also in-house developed "Crash Investigation Vehicle" at the Centre.

96,855 quintal wheat seeds to be produced in HP in '21-22

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 16 FEBRUARY

HP Agriculture department director Dr Naresh Kumar on Tuesday said the department was moving ahead on the path of self-dependence and a target of producing 96,855 quintal wheat seeds will be produced in 2021-22.

Kumar said the Department was producing and distributing seeds to farmers. Earlier, the seeds of wheat, maize, grain were brought from outside the state.

The department has prepared an action plan for the year 2021-22 for producing the



REPRESENTATIONAL IMAGE

seeds in the state to fulfill the requirement of the farmers.

Keeping in view the demand of 1,08,000 quintal seeds by the farmers, a target of producing 96,855 quintal seeds in the state has been fixed for the year 2021-22. "Nine registered farmer groups would produce about

95 thousand quintal seeds which would be purchased by the department and later distributed to other farmers of the state," he added.

He said the Agriculture department will purchase the seeds of wheat at a 26 per cent higher rate which would also

boost the income of the farmer groups. Besides this, 1,855 quintal seeds will be produced in the farms of farmers. "40,650 quintal seeds of wheat were produced within the state and distributed to the farmers."

The five registered farmer groups under the department would produce three thousand seeds of grain and make it available to the farmers.

Farmers would be encouraged to produce seeds of two hybrid varieties of maize viz Chitkinu and white corn in Chamba district so that it could be made available to maximum number of farmers," he added.

CPRI holds trials for drone-based potato crop management

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 16 FEBRUARY

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Central Potato Research Institute (ICAR-CPRI), Shimla, recently carried out a drone-based application of crop protection products in 1.2 hectares of potato experimental fields at its Research Station in Modipura in Uttar Pradesh and got "encouraging results" with no adverse effect on potato crops.

The drone trials were done under the guidance of the Horticulture Division of ICAR, said Dr NK Pandey, Principal Scientist and Head of the Division of Social Sciences at ICAR-CPRI, Shimla.

The ICAR-CPRI will conduct a detailed analysis of the data gathered from the observations and will use it for developing recommendations for drone-based potato crop management technologies across India. This will be a giant step for precision farming in India.

The trials were carried out after obtaining the necessary approvals from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and the local administration.

Trained experts from ICAR-CPRI, Bayer Crop Science Limited and General Aeronautics Private Limited recorded observations on parameters such as phytotoxicity, penetration efficiency,



drift and plant coverage.

Dr Pandey said ICAR-CPRI has signed a three-year partnership with Bayer Crop Science Ltd and General Aeronautics Pvt. Ltd. to jointly develop recommendations for drone-based crop management technologies for potato crops in India.

Under the partnership from 2021-2023, Bayer will offer its crop protection solutions for disease and pest management in potato, while General Aeronautics will provide its services for drone equipment and application.

Potato is one of the key horticulture crops in India and a staple part of Indian diets. Nearly 2.16 million hectares of land in India is used for cultivation of this cash crop.

Indian farmers rely on a good potato harvest for maximizing their farm incomes. However, this crop has been highly susceptible to various diseases and pests, denting into the income of potato growers.

Since its inception in 1949, ICAR-CPRI has been working towards harnessing the potential of potato for India's food and nutritional security, which has resulted in phenomenal growth of this crop in our country now only second to China. To take its efforts a step further, ICAR-CPRI, Bayer's collaboration with ICAR-CPRI for drone-based application of crop protection in potatoes will help the company develop digital solutions for Indian farmers as part of its integrated crop management solutions.

This will not only improve the efficiency of crop protection products, it will also reduce operator exposure, time, cost and manual labour used in application and enable lesser use of water.

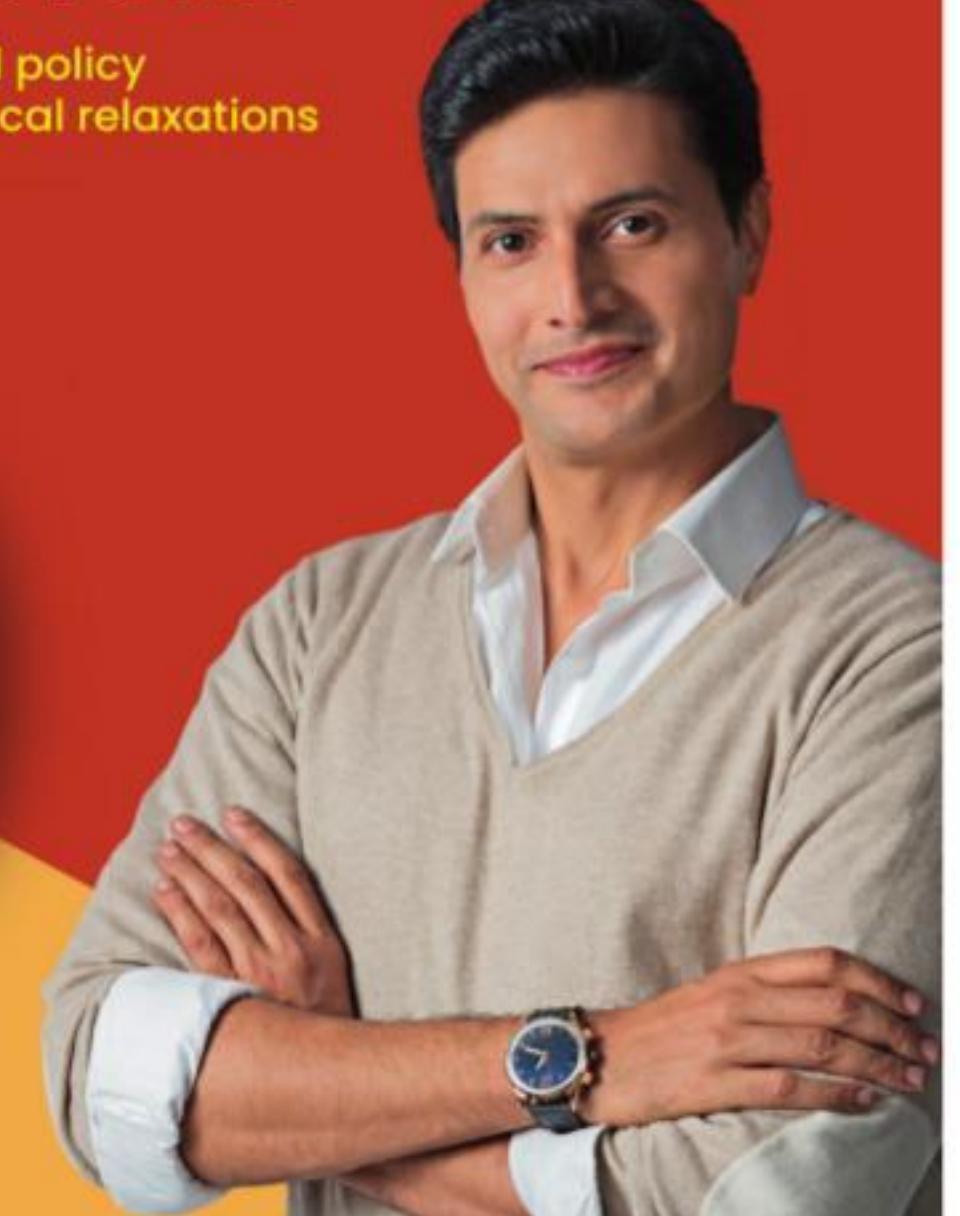
General Aeronautics is working towards making Indian agricultural practices more sustainable with its indigenous drones that utilize precision spray technology.

This will help improve the application efficiency multi-fold and result in higher agriculture yields, while ensuring health and safety for the operator.

This modern technology can also be utilized by smallholder farmers at costs comparable to the cost of traditional manual labour.

HERE'S YOUR SECOND CHANCE AT A SECURE FUTURE

An opportunity to revive your lapsed policy with concessional late fee and medical relaxations



REVIVE RESTORE RISK COVER REMAIN SECURE

PERIOD 07/01/2021 TO 06/03/2021

Certain concession in health requirements* and concession in late fee for eligible policies*

Total Receivable Premium (₹)	Late Fee Concession (%)	Maximum Concession Allowed
Up to 1,00,000	20%	₹ 2000
From 1,00,001 to 3,00,000	25%	₹ 2500
From 3,00,001 and above	30%	₹ 3000

*Not applicable for high-risk plans like Term Assurance, Health Insurance, Multiple Risk Policies etc. Policies can be revived within 5 years from the date of First Unpaid Premium. (TBC Apply)

Call Center Service
(022) 6827 6827

Download LIC Mobile App "MyLIC"

Visit: licindia.in

For details, contact your Agent/Nearest LIC Branch.

Follow us: LIC India Forever

IRDAI Regn No.: 512



भारतीय जीवन कीमा निगम
LIFE INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

NORTH ZONE

Har Pal Aapke Saath





I am not afraid of such complaints or FIRs. Anyone can lodge a complaint, I will give a reply...

HARYANA HOME MINISTER ANIL VIJ
POLICE COMPLAINTS AGAINST HIM OVER HIS TWEET ON THE 'TOOLKIT' CASE

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2021

'PDP demanding restoration of pre-August 2019 status for J&K'

SRINAGAR, 16 FEBRUARY

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said her party was not merely demanding statehood but the restoration of pre-August 2019 status for Jammu and Kashmir.

She also called for resumption of dialogue for the resolution of the Kashmir issue and alleged that there was "jungle raj" in the country.

"We are not demanding (the return of) statehood. We are demanding the pre-August 5, 2019 position of J&K and we also want the Kashmir issue -- for which thousands of youth have rendered sacrifices, lakhs of homes have been destroyed

PTI

and losses in millions of rupees have been suffered -- to be resolved by talking to Pakistan and the people of J&K," Mufti said.

The PDP chief was speaking to reporters after the party's convention in north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

Mufti said and people were being arrested first and then their crime was being proven. "There is a saying that show me a person, I will show you the crime, which means that first they arrest a person, then they prove the crime. Many of our leaders are in custody and they have been shown no orders and there is nothing against them, she said.

Although the girl survived, special POCSO judge Awadesh Kumar was of the view that the accused, Raj Singhania alias Arvind, was guilty of an offence that was "most heinous" and "rarest of rare", and hence deserved no leniency.

The court also slapped him with a fine of Rs 1 lakh and sentenced for life an accomplice Abhishek Kumar on whom a fine of Rs 50,000 was imposed.

The matter had come to light in September, 2018 when the girl fell sick and was taken to a doctor who said she was pregnant. Upon being queried by her parents, she disclosed that she was being subjected to sexual exploitation at the school, situated in Phulwari Sharif locality. An FIR was subsequently lodged at the Mahila police station and the girl was made to undergo abortion at a government hospital. Arvind, a teacher, who was also named as an accused, was made to undergo DNA test and his complicity was confirmed in the report. In her recorded statement, the girl had said her ordeal started when she was told by Abhishek one day that the principal had called her to his cabin. The principal asked her to bring out a register from an enclosure in his chamber, and while she was doing as directed, he forced himself upon her. The sexual assaults continued with the help of Abhishek, who also shot a video of the act and threatened her that it would be made viral if she disclosed her torment to anyone.

Advocate Hiten Venegavkar, appearing for the Delhi police's cyber cell, assured the Mumbai bench that "no prudent officer" would arrest a person when his or her application is pending in court.

The Delhi police on Saturday arrested environmental activist Disha Ravi from Bengaluru in the case and

Principal of Patna school gets death sentence for raping student

PATNA, 16 FEBRUARY

The owner-cum-principal of a private school here has been awarded death sentence by a court for raping an 11-year-old student who became pregnant and had to undergo an abortion.

Although the girl survived, special POCSO judge Awadesh Kumar was of the view that the accused, Raj Singhania alias Arvind, was guilty of an offence that was "most heinous" and "rarest of rare", and hence deserved no leniency.

The court also slapped him with a fine of Rs 1 lakh and sentenced for life an accomplice Abhishek Kumar on whom a fine of Rs 50,000 was imposed.

The matter had come to light in September, 2018 when the girl fell sick and was taken to a doctor who said she was pregnant. Upon being queried by her parents, she disclosed that she was being subjected to sexual exploitation at the school, situated in Phulwari Sharif locality. An FIR was subsequently lodged at the Mahila police station and the girl was made to undergo abortion at a government hospital. Arvind, a teacher, who was also named as an accused, was made to undergo DNA test and his complicity was confirmed in the report. In her recorded statement, the girl had said her ordeal started when she was told by Abhishek one day that the principal had called her to his cabin. The principal asked her to bring out a register from an enclosure in his chamber, and while she was doing as directed, he forced himself upon her. The sexual assaults continued with the help of Abhishek, who also shot a video of the act and threatened her that it would be made viral if she disclosed her torment to anyone.

Advocate Hiten Venegavkar, appearing for the Delhi police's cyber cell, assured the Mumbai bench that "no prudent officer" would arrest a person when his or her application is pending in court.

The Delhi police on Saturday arrested environmental activist Disha Ravi from Bengaluru in the case and

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of the Hazrat Nizamuddin - Manikpur Junction Special Train will be revised as under:-

02448/02447 Hazrat Nizamuddin - Manikpur Jn. - Hazrat Nizamuddin Festival Special

Train No. 02448	↓ STATIONS ↑	Train No. 02447	
Arr.	Dep.	Arr.	Dep.
—	20:00	Hazrat Nizamuddin	03:50
21:18	21:20	Mathura Jn.	01:35 01:37
22:10	22:15	Agra Cantt.	00:55 01:00
01:20	01:30	Jhansi Jn.	22:05 22:15
02:22	02:24	Mau Ranipur	20:34 20:36
03:00	03:02	Harpalpur	20:10 20:12
03:30	03:32	Kulpahar	19:40 19:42
03:50	03:52	Mahoba	19:20 19:22
05:00	05:05	Banda Jn.	18:35 18:40
05:30	05:32	Atarra	18:03 18:05
06:00	06:02	Chitrakutdham	17:32 17:34
07:30	—	Manikpur Jn.	— 17:05

Revised Timing effective from : 02448 Ex Hazrat Nizamuddin from 22.02.2021 (Daily) and 02447 Ex Manikpur Jn. from 23.02.2021 (Daily) to till further advice.

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

For any kind of Information such as detailed Time-Table and Stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website <http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139 Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.

Please join us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/RailMadad/) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/railmadad/) [TikTok](https://www.tiktok.com/@RailMadad/) www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Serving Customers with a Smile

NORTHERN RAILWAY Always at your service Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

HINDUJA LEYLAND FINANCE LIMITED PUBLIC NOTICE FOR AUCTION CUM SALE

Whereas, the undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Hinduj Leyland Finance Ltd (HLF) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2)(i) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued a Demand Notice to the following Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s) calling upon them to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the properties described herein below in exercise of its rights under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in terms of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 as per the mentioned dates. The Borrowers in particular and the public in General is hereby cautioned not to deal with the below mentioned properties in any manner and any such dealing with the properties shall be subject to the charge of HLF for the amounts and interests thereon mentioned against accounts herein below. The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of HLF for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTIES

Name and address of the Borrower/Guarantor /Mortgagor	Date and Amount of Demand Notice	Details of the Properties
1. Miss Siva Paper Mart Pvt. Ltd. (Borrower) Through it's Director) Khasra No. 13, Ibrahimpur Village, Main Burari Road, Near Katra Factory, Delhi-110036	Demand Notice date: 27.12.2019	Entire First floor without Roof Rights of Property unit bearing No. 24-A, area measuring 319 Sq. Yds. in Block E-4, Situated at Model Town, Near Kingsway Camp at Main Burari Road, Delhi-110036
2. Mr. Vipin Chauhan (Co-Borrower) S/o Mr. Suresh Chand Chauhan 35/13 Baldhuri Colony, Matlawa Galli, Bhaktawarpur, Delhi-36 Also at: Khasra No. 13, Ibrahimpur Village, Main Burari Road, Near Katra Factory, Delhi-110036		Bounded by North: Property No. E-4/25, South: Property No. E-4/24, East: Property No. E-4/27, West: Road Possession Taken On: 02.02.2021
3. Mr. Kishan Dev (Co-Borrower) W/o Mr. Kabool Chand-E/24/8, First Floor, Model Town-I, New Delhi-110009 Also at: Khasra No. 13, Ibrahimpur Village, Main Burari Road, Near Katra Factory, Delhi-110036		Entire unit bearing no. M-5, 3RD Floor, Greater Kailash Part-1, (Flat No.1) New Delhi-110048 (said Floor) Bounded by: North: Road, South: Road, East: Plot No. M-7, West: Plot No. M-3.
4. Ms. Alka Kaur (Co-Borrower) W/o Mr. Jagir Singh E-348, 1st Floor, Greater Kailash-II, New Delhi-110048 Also at: CB-385, Ground Floor, Ring Road, Naraina, Delhi-28	Demand Notice date: 27.12.2019	Possession unit bearing no. M-5, 3RD Floor, Greater Kailash Part-1, (Flat No.1) New Delhi-110048 (said Floor) Bounded by: North: Road, South: Road, East: Plot No. M-7, West: Plot No. M-3.
5. Ms. Monika Arora (Co-Borrower) CB-385, Ground Floor, Ring Road, Naraina, Delhi-110028		Possession Taken On: 18.12.2020

HINDUJA LEYLAND FINANCE LIMITED Corporate Office No 27A, Developed Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Tamil Nadu.

Regional Office : B-93, B, Panchsheel Vihar, Near Triveni Commercial Complex, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Contact No.: Authorized Officer: +91 74284 44550; Dial 011-49901381 Email: awadhesh.jha@hindujaleylandfinance.com

Awadhesh Kumar Jha Authorized Officer Hinduj Leyland Finance Limited

Date :

Awadhesh Kumar Jha Authorized Officer Hinduj Leyland Finance Limited

Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited

Corporate Office No 27A, Developed Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Tamil Nadu.

Regional Office : B-93, B, Panchsheel Vihar, Near Triveni Commercial Complex, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Contact No.: Authorized Officer: +91 74284 44550; Dial 011-49901381 Email: awadhesh.jha@hindujaleylandfinance.com

Awadhesh Kumar Jha Authorized Officer Hinduj Leyland Finance Limited

Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited

Corporate Office No 27A, Developed Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Tamil Nadu.

Regional Office : B-93, B, Panchsheel Vihar, Near Triveni Commercial Complex, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Contact No.: Authorized Officer: +91 74284 44550; Dial 011-49901381 Email: awadhesh.jha@hindujaleylandfinance.com

Awadhesh Kumar Jha Authorized Officer Hinduj Leyland Finance Limited

Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited

Corporate Office No 27A, Developed Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Tamil Nadu.

Regional Office : B-93, B, Panchsheel Vihar, Near Triveni Commercial Complex, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Contact No.: Authorized Officer: +91 74284 44550; Dial 011-49901381 Email: awadhesh.jha@hindujaleylandfinance.com

Awadhesh Kumar Jha Authorized Officer Hinduj Leyland Finance Limited

Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited

Corporate Office No 27A, Developed Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Tamil Nadu.

Regional Office : B-93, B, Panchsheel Vihar, Near Triveni Commercial Complex, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Contact No.: Authorized Officer: +91 74284 44550; Dial 011-49901381 Email: awadhesh.jha@hindujaleylandfinance.com

Awadhesh Kumar Jha Authorized Officer Hinduj Leyland Finance Limited

Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited

Corporate Office No 27A, Developed Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Tamil Nadu.

Regional Office : B-93, B, Panchsheel Vihar, Near Triveni Commercial Complex, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Contact No.: Authorized Officer: +91 74284 44550; Dial 011-49901381 Email: awadhesh.jha@hindujaleylandfinance.com

Awadhesh Kumar Jha Authorized Officer Hinduj Leyland Finance Limited

Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited

Corporate Office No 27A, Developed Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Tamil Nadu.

Regional Office : B-93, B, Panchsheel Vihar, Near Triveni Commercial Complex, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Contact No.: Authorized Officer: +91 74284 44550; Dial 011-49901381 Email: awadhesh.jha@hindujaleylandfinance.com

Awadhesh Kumar Jha Authorized Officer Hinduj Leyland Finance Limited

Hinduja Leyland Finance Limited

Corporate Office No 27A, Developed Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Tamil Nadu.

Regional Office : B-93, B, Panchsheel Vihar, Near Triveni Commercial Complex, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017

Contact No.: Authorized Officer: +91 74284 44550; Dial 011-49901381 Email: awadhesh.jha@hindujaleylandfinance.com

Crafty campaign

Crafting an effective campaign for state Assembly polls is one of the toughest tasks in contemporary Indian electoral politics. For a dominant national party, finding the balance between using the advantages this position affords while balancing them with local concerns is vital. The rise of strong regional parties over the past 30 years owes at least in part to the Congress Party, which was in a commanding position in the decades post-Independence, proving unable to maintain this fine balance. It is in this context that the ruling BJP's ability to construct a horses-for-courses strategy which allows it to deploy its most popular leader Prime Minister Narendra Modi in aid of being local for vocal, as it were, is as close to pulling off the impossible as a political party can get. That is what a 'party machine' can deliver. Evidence if any were needed for this assertion can be found in Mr Modi's campaign meetings last week. In Assam, for example, he launched a scathing attack on "international conspirators out to discredit India" over the ongoing farm protests and burnished his national as well as nationalist credentials by iterating that the country will respond to such vilification "with all its might". He then vocalised the local connection with the issue at election rallies in the state's tea belt iterating at Dhekiajuli that even chai was not spared by the conspirators: "You must have heard in the news; these conspirators are saying that the image of Indian tea has to be maligned systematically and discredited worldwide. From the land of Assam, I want to tell these conspirators, no matter how hard they try my tea workers will win this battle." That this polemic came a day after the Union finance minister distributed Rs 3,000 each to over 700,000 tea garden workers was the perfect communications strategy set-up. Then followed the identification with the local. "The red tea of Sonitpur is known for its very different flavour. Who would know better than me how special the taste of tea from Sonitpur and Assam is?" Similarly, the BJP has also managed to maintain an equilibrium between its tom-tomming of bringing in the CAA nationally while managing to project itself as the savour of local Assamese or Ahom cultural traditions by deferring its implementation in the North-Eastern state given the apprehension of indigenous communities of being swamped by persecuted religious minorities in neighbouring Bangladesh.

The BJP's critics may well point to such a campaign as the party trying to ride two horses at once, and the consequences of that are well known. Unless, of course, one digs deep into history – Genghis Khan's horsemen conquered nearly half the world doing precisely that. It is for the political opposition to come up with an alternative narrative marrying the national and the local of which there are no signs on the horizon yet.

Popular discontent

The catchy slogan in Russia on Valentine's Day – "Love is stronger than fear" – served to mould developments on Sunday in robust support of the dissident, Alexei Navalny. In a striking expression of solidarity, the protests were illuminated. Navalny's team had urged people to come to their residential courtyards and shine their cellphone flashlights in a display of unity. As it turned out, the initial response in the form of jokes and sarcasm was misplaced. After two weekends of nationwide demonstrations, the new matrix of protests against Navalny's arrest on his return to Moscow from Berlin, where he was treated for nerve-agent poisoning, was viewed by some as a retreat. The other spectacular feature of the demonstrations was that women – in freezing temperatures – formed a human chain during the rally. It was notable too that the Kremlin moved vigorously to extinguish the illuminated protests in solidarity with Navalny, now behind bars. The Kremlin was quite palpably unnerved and has accused Navalny's allies of acting on NATO's instructions. Television channels, backed by the Kremlin, warned that flashlight rallies were integral to major uprisings the world over. The demonstrations were binned as "unapproved mass protest" and a terrorist group has been charged with plotting attacks. The attempt to suppress the protest represents a tactical change not the least because the authorities had earlier tried to weaken Navalny's influence by "erasing him". On his part, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, has never mentioned his most prominent critic by name. The fact that Navalny in jail can be no less a potent factor in whipping up public fervour in his favour was palpable on Valentine's Day. The public fury was quite decidedly anti-Kremlin. Maybe it represented a thematic deviation, but undisputed has been the groundswell of public support for the dissident. From Navalny's suspected nerve-agent poisoning, it is now a war of nerves between the people and the Kremlin. The average Russian has bared his angst, despite the authoritarian streak in the leadership's paradigm. Hitherto, Kremlin-controlled television channels used to largely ignore protests called by Navalny. A politician and anti-corruption investigator, he has been referred to by Russia's official media as "a blogger" in the rare stories they run mentioning him.

There is little doubt that Navalny, whose name is not allowed to be mentioned, has become the main subject of discussion on state TV. The sudden surge in attention gets reflected in the two-hour video that alleges a lavish palace on the Black Sea has been built for Putin through "elaborate corruption". The video has been watched more than 111 million times on YouTube ever since it was posted on January 19. Moscow on Sunday was witness to the largest outpouring of popular discontent in years. The Kremlin has been rattled. Silence can be counter-productive. And so it has been in contemporary Russia.

Fiscal Roadmap

Like the previous Commission, it has also recommended the setting up of an independent Fiscal Council, which is a must for bringing the much-needed transparency and credibility to our budget numbers, but which, like the previous FC's recommendation, is again likely to be ignored



The adulation for the 2021-22 budget and exaltation of the stock market somewhat eclipsed the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission (FFC), whose report was laid on the table of Parliament along with the budget. Aptly named "Finance Commission in Covid Times", it gives largesse to the populous and poor Hindi-heartland states which share 42.85 per cent of India's population (2011 census), by giving them 48.57 per cent of the divisible pool of Union taxes for 2021-26, while the five southern states – Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana – with a population share of 21.32 per cent might get a little disappointed with only 15.8 per cent of the sharable taxes. Vertical share of the states remains at 41 per cent of the net proceeds of divisible pool of taxes, practically the same as the 42 per cent recommended by the previous Commission, except that 1 per cent has now been set aside for J&K which no longer is a state. Originally slated to give recommendations for 2020-25, the FFC's tenure was extended by one year in November 2019, after the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. It therefore gave an interim report in February 2021 for the year 2020-21 to enable devolution of taxes and grants for this fiscal. The devolution formula of its interim report remains unchanged even in the final report. This was the first Finance Commission of the post-Planning Commission era and after the abolition of the distinction between plan and non-plan expenditure.

It was also the first Commission after the launch of GST in July 2017 that took away the states' powers of taxation save in a few areas, and conferred those powers upon another consultative Constitutional body, the GST Council. The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Commission were wide-ranging and unique in many respects, like changing the population criteria from 1971 to 2011, which upset most states outside the Hindi heartland as it placed them at a disadvantage for successfully containing their population growth. It also attracted much criticism for being seen as an encroachment upon the states' powers. Finally, division of J&K into the UTs of J and K and Ladakh also generated some complex issues the Commission had to negotiate. However, it tried its best to strike a balance between all these thorny issues, though in the process it might have sacrificed its objectivity at

times.

As per article 280(3) of the Constitution, the primary task of an FC is to make recommendations for the horizontal and vertical sharing of the net proceeds of taxes in the divisible pool between the Union and the States and determine the principles for Central grants-in-aid to the states, besides recommending measures to supplement resources of Local Bodies. Finance Commissions' recommendations broadly follow the three principles of equity, equalisation and efficiency.

While the equity principle is reflected in parameters like population and area of a state, the equalisation principle is reflected in parameters related to distance of per capita income (income distance) or fiscal capacity of a state from the highest one so that disadvantaged states with low income or capacity get more funds than the prosperous states. The efficiency criteria is reflected in parameters like tax effort, fiscal discipline, etc.

For the horizontal inter-state transfers among the states, the 15th FC has assigned 45 per cent weightage to 'income distance', 15 per cent each to the '2011 population' and the 'area' of the state, 12.5 per cent to 'demographic performance' and 2.5 per cent to 'tax effort'. Ten per cent weightage has been allotted to 'forest and ecology', an environment parameter introduced for the first time by the 14th FC. However, the actual shares are influenced by population in many ways which results not only in the rather skewed shares of the states as mentioned earlier, but also produces other anomalies. For example, multiplying the tax effort, defined in terms of the ratio of average per capita tax to average state income (GSDP), by the 2011 population resulted in Bihar's share in terms of tax effort exceeding that of all other states except Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, which may not be the true reflection of its relative tax effort. Similarly, scaling demographic performance, defined as the inverse of fertility ratio, by the 1971 population, resulted in Uttar Pradesh's share in terms of this parameter exceeding that of all other states; even Bihar's share of 5.513 per cent in terms of demographic performance looks quite

respectable compared to, say, Gujarat's 5.043 per cent even though the fertility ratios are vastly different (2.9 and 2.0). The inverse of fertility ratio alone captures the demographic performance adequately, multiplying this with population distorts the picture.

FFC's recommendation for reducing off-budget borrowings and for ensuring the stability of direct tax rates and thresholds has already been implemented in the 2021-22 budget. However, another important recommendation was ignored – at least for the time being – on the rationalisation of the structure of GST by merging the 12 per cent and 18 per cent slabs and converging into a three-rate structure – a merit rate, a standard rate and a demerit rate of around 28-30 per cent. Healthcare also left much to be desired – with grants of Rs 1.07 lakh crore, about 0.1 per cent of the GDP, over the award period being unlikely to achieve the target of 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2025 – given our current low expenditure on health (0.96 per cent of GDP in 2018-19;

0.29 per cent by the states and 0.67 per cent by the Centre). Regarding the Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), the Commission noted that fifteen of the thirty umbrella CSS account for about 90 per cent of the total allocation, many of which include too many schemes too small to create any impact. But except suggesting a re-evaluation of the need to continue such schemes, it did nothing to curtail their numbers. To augment the revenue of states, the Commission has suggested indexing the professional tax, which is levied by 21 states at the 1988 rate with a ceiling of only Rs 2,500 on income from professions etc., for the accumulated inflation since then, which will immediately raise the ceiling to Rs 18,000. There may not be many takers for this, given the disruptions caused by the pandemic which forced the Centre and many states to freeze or curtail wages of employees.

For the Local Bodies the Commission has recommended a grant of Rs. 4.36 lakh crore for the period 2021-26 which will be distributed among the states with a weightage of 90 per cent for population and 10 per cent for area. Of these, 54 per cent will be earmarked for Panchayat Raj

Institutions, 28 per cent for urban local bodies and 16 per cent (Rs 70,051 crore) for fixing the critical gaps in the healthcare systems at the primary level through local governments. But the real issue here is the effective transfer of powers to the local bodies; while functions have been transferred, the same cannot be said about the functionaries and funds.

For defence and internal security needs, the Commission has proposed a dedicated non-lapsable "Modernisation Fund for Defence and Internal Security" (MFDIS), in the Public Account of India to bridge the gap between projected capital requirements and budgetary allocations for modernisation of defence and state police state forces. Apart from the Centre's budgetary allocations, the MFDIS is to be funded by disinvestment proceeds of defence public sector undertakings, proceeds from the monetisation of surplus defence land and arrears of states for use of defence land. For the period 2021-26, the indicative size of fund would be Rs. 2.38 lakh crore, which again is unlikely to be achieved given our recent experiences with monetisation of assets. For the states as well as for the Union, the FFC has also recommended a fiscal roadmap for deficits and borrowing. While for the states, it has suggested a gradual reduction in the limit for net borrowing from 4 to 3 per cent of GSDP over the period 2021-26, for the Union the target suggested is 4 per cent of GDP by 2025-26. These targets also look ambitious at this juncture, given the severe disruptions from which the economy is recovering at slow pace. The FFC has also recognised the need for restructuring of the FRBM Acts of the Union and the States and recommended its examination by a "High-powered Inter-Governmental Group". To help reinforce self-discipline on the fiscal front and better pricing of loans raised by the states from the market, it has suggested introduction of a system of credit rating of the states based on their financial position. This is unlikely to be acceptable to the weaker states as their cost of borrowing will increase substantially. Like the previous Commission, it has also recommended the setting up of an independent Fiscal Council, which is a must for bringing the much-needed transparency and credibility to our budget numbers, but which, like the previous FC's recommendation, is again likely to be ignored.

Politicians are unlikely to give up their absolute control over finances which, in fact, give them all their powers.



Dressed for success

IT'S the Chinese New Year, so it's important we kick off the Year of the Ox with bullish optimism. There are just too many naysayers among us who love to depict the worst of Malaysia and parade those sentiments on social media. Nothing seems to be right and we let politics get in our way. The habit of forwarding every single political message is simply self-sabotage. But I think we can take this happy and auspicious occasion to share some positive vibes. While the world continues to struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic that has also robbed us of the opportunity to visit our families and friends for CNY, I embrace the good news of mass vaccination being planned in most parts of the globe.

In Malaysia, almost the entire population should be covered by the end of next year. With the inoculation exercises imminent roll out, we should be able to stem the tide of contagion and have this virus firmly under control. After all, it's wrecked our lives and livelihoods for long enough. Last week, for the first time in a long time, oil prices soared for a ninth day on Wednesday.

This has been its greatest success in two years, aided by producer supply cuts and the belief that the availability of vaccines will spur the desperate need for economic recovery. Brent crude was up 44 cents, or 0.7 per cent, at US\$61.53 (RM248.74) last week after an encouraging 13-month run of US\$61.61 (RM249.06) earlier in the session. US crude was up 37 cents, or 0.6 per cent, to US\$58.73 (RM237.42), having touched US\$58.76 (RM237.54), registering a high of the same duration. It's been nine sessions in a row for Brent's rise, its longest run of gains since December 2018 to January 2019. The consensus among analysts

The Star
prices have surged beyond the underlying fundamentals, a report revealed. If oil continues to stay at US\$60 (RM242.55) per barrel, it will bring Malaysia additional oil-related revenue of RM5.4bil.

According to a report, higher oil prices would relieve the budget – given its tight fiscal space – and help shore up the government's balance sheet. In fact, on the first day of CNY in New York, the price of Brent crude climbed to US\$62.43 (RM252.37) a barrel. Even though the price of oil has always been volatile, this good showing will help our coffers. Meanwhile, as the price of crude oil continues to climb, the ringgit has also strengthened against the US dollar.

Optimism has surfaced because the market expects production to begin with oil prices moving up since November and governments starting their vaccination drives while installing large stimulus packages to boost economic activity. Of course, the world's top producers kept a lid on supply, too. Former Treasury secretary-general Tan Sri Mohd Sheriff Mohd Kassim noted that commodity prices in general were rising with the hope of world recovery this year.

He added that our manufacturers were feeling confident the global demand for Malaysian-made products would also start picking up soon. "So we can expect 2021 to be the beginning of economic recovery," he predicts. This month and the next, prime exporter Saudi Arabia will be reducing supply, augmenting cuts agreed by other Opec+ (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) members and allies. Supply will fall short of demand this year – that's the belief of some analysts, especially as the world's population progressively gets vaccinated and demand for travel and office work resumes.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Amit Shah upsets Nizam's family

SIR, The news item 'Amit Shah's remark upsets Nizam's family' and the self-proclaimed Nawab, Najaf Ali Khan's claim of his grandfather Mir Osman Ali Khan's "immense services towards his subjects" tempts me to add a few instances related to the late ruler of Hyderabad, Asaf Jah Muzaffar-Ul-Mulk Nizam-Ul-Mulk Nizam-ud-Dowlah Nawab Mir Sir Osman Ali Khan Fateh Jung (6.4.1886-24.2.1967) took over as Nizam in 1911. Kindly forgive me for not pre-fixing HEH – His Exalted Highness – for, I do not know for what achievement he was allowed that privilege.

Lord Hardinge, who was the Viceroy in India during 1910-16, would often recall the activities of the

Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan ~ I stayed with him twice at Hyderabad and he visited me twice at Simla. He wanted on one occasion to bring fifteen wives with him to Simla, but I protested and they were left in a camp at the foot of the hills.' (*My Indian Years 1910-1916*, Pp. 41-42)

During the Second World War he placed his palace in Delhi at the disposal of the Government of India for housing some of

the offices. Besides, he committed Rs 150,000 per month for maintenance of his troops outside his State, in active service with British forces. Further, he contributed 100,000 pounds to the Air Ministry. This was equal to his contribution in 1917 for submarine warfare.

Nizam, and his people additionally met the cost of a destroyer named the HMS *Nizam*. He paid 50,000 pounds for the maintenance of two Royal Air Force squad-

rons bearing his name. Additionally, he contributed to Britain's War Fund. What the killer-brigades named *Rajakars* did with the majority of the state's population by mass-killing, estimated at between 27 and 40,000 Hindus, he had wanted to join Pakistan or emerge as an independent state's ruler. Details are shrouded in mystery. There was a covert link between the Nizam and Kasim Rizvi who organised the *Razakars*. The ambitious

and recalcitrant Nizam had to be subdued by the Indian Army to end the anarchy and anti-Hindu carnage a year after India gained independence on 15 August 1947. But he continued to enjoy the fruits of treachery and treason. He emerged financially victorious after his defeat in 1948 commanding tons of precious metal and gems and assets in billions, in addition, an annual Privy Purse of five million rupees as reward for

high treason. No eye-brows were raised as to why they were treated so sumptuously by those who succeeded the British to 'rule' India post-1947. The billions of rupees worth of cash and ornaments clandestinely shifted to England a century back are now blocked. With Pakistan claiming its pound of flesh, these are likely to go the *Kohinoor* way, courtesy the British Government.

Yours, etc., B Mondal, Kolkata, December.



ENGLISH FOR TEACHING

SIR, It is about the article, published in your paper on 3rd January, where the writer Dilip K Sarkar, argued very clearly why English should be the medium of teaching in IITs, NITs in our country. Then, as a follow up, one alumnus of Kharagpur IIT of 1963 batch, Amar Biswas, wrote superbly, suffering Mr Sarkar's views about, why English should be the teaching medium in all the IITs, NITs and Engg Colleges of our country.

A few years back the students from some Bengali medium schools of Kolkata, cleared JEE Exams, with flying colours. They got admitted in BE College and Jadavpur Engg Colleges.

Yours, etc., Minati Roy Choudhury, Kolkata, 11 January.

ABHIROOP CHOWDHURY AND ARMIN ROSENCRANZ

The Chamoli disaster is the current call for policy makers to prioritise environmental conservation over non-green developmental projects and admit the reality of climate change and global warming impacts.

A section of Nanda Devi glacier collapses on the morning of Sunday, 7th February, at Chamoli district of Uttarakhand, causing enormous damage. About 150 people are missing and the glacier as well as landslide have caused massive damage to the two dams on Rishi Ganga and Dhauli Ganga.

This disaster is not a sudden event, rather can be linked with the developmental activities in the biodiversity rich Western Himalayan heartland. Chamoli had already been in focus on 29 March 1999 due to the devastating 6.8 Richter earthquake that had resulted in the death of over a hundred people. Geologically this region is under severe risk due to the undergoing crustal shortening along the 2400 km long northern edge of the Indian plate. So, the whole Himalayan region is under earthquake risk. Being in an earthquake prone zone as well as in the biodiversity rich western Himalayan eco-region, these mountain tracks and valleys must be excluded from developmental plans.

The evergreen broadleaf forest of Western Himalayas is under serious risk of climate change and ever increasing anthropogenic foot print. This ecosystem is dominated by oaks. It is the home of endangered fauna such as the Asiatic black bear, leopard, the Himalayan tahr, and Himalayan serow. Around 315 species of birds inhabit these forests - notable amongst them are the white-cheeked tit, white-throated tit, spectacled finch, Kashmir flycatcher, Tytler's leaf-warbler, orange bullfinch and Kashmir nuthatch. The Himalayan quail is now debated to be extinct from this region.

Glacier melting is the major impact of global warming caused by climate change. The global land and ocean temperature is rising by 0.18 degree Celsius per decade since 1981. A National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), USA report predicts that the global surface temperature will be 0.5°C warmer than the 1986-2005 average. Globally, this rise in temperature trends is melting the glaciers and ice caps. US National Snow and Ice Data Center reported that the Arctic ice sheet has melted down drastically over the decade and now only 3.74 million square kilometers remains. Greenland glaciers lost a record 532 billion metric tons of ice in 2019. The Antarctic ice sheet also got a record blow from global warm-

Chamoli a warning for Himalayan planners



ing with an ice mass loss of around 252 Gigatonnes per year between 2009 and 2017.

Climate change induced global warming is also the major reason behind massive melting of Himalayan glaciers. A 2008 report indicates that the Gangotri glacier, the lifeblood of the Ganges river system, has receded 1,500 metres in the last 70 years. Nanda Devi glacier, the reason behind the current predicament, has shrunk 217 per cent in 2017 compared to its size in 1970. Reduction of these glaciers not only foretells an environmental catastrophe but also indicates a looming shadow on the food security of the nation. Ganges basin accounts for only 26 per cent of India's land area but supports about 43 per cent of the country's population.

With all these major indications of environmental failures, the nation's developmental machine has not refrained from exploring the biodiversity rich Himalayan region. The commissioning of two hydro-electric power plants in the earthquake-prone and environmentally sensitive Chamoli region is debatable. India ranks fifth in the world in terms of its hydroelectric power generation capacity, but this accounts for only 12 per cent of nation's power production. But exploiting the hydro electric potential always comes with a note of caution because it can result in tremendous damage to the environment. A 2018 report indicated that the state of Uttarakhand has 37 operational hydroelectric power projects while 87 more are going to be com-

missioned in future.

Stone quarrying, blasting of mountains and construction activity near the Rishi Ganga and Dhauli Ganga may be the triggering point for the recent disaster at Chamoli. With recent EIA, 2020 amendment draft, small scale hydro electric projects can escape environmental clearance regulations. This can have negative impact in this region as more and more such projects can be commissioned without any environmental impact studies.

Development is taking a huge toll on the environment worldwide. In the context of the Western Himalaya, sustainable eco-friendly developmental models need to be adopted as compared to resource exploitative methods.

Yet, another disaster in the risk-prone Chamoli region is the wake-up call for policy makers to revisit their priorities for development in this biodiversity rich eco-region. Nature needs to be preserved in the pristine Western Himalayan ecosystem. Climate change is a reality and the extreme weather events across the globe are a testament to this fact. Western Himalaya needs protection and eco-friendly sustainable development rather than building hydro-electric power generation units, promoting mining or stone quarrying. Only then can recurrence of these disasters be averted.

The writers are, respectively, Assistant Professor and Dean at Jindal School of Environment & Sustainability, O.P. Jindal Global University, Haryana, India.

Assessing development sans GDP

WAHIDUDDIN MAHMUD

Economic development can be viewed from different perspectives, but the overriding theme is one of improving human well-being. Although economic development is commonly measured by growth in the gross domestic product or GDP, its shortcomings in representing the well-being of a nation are well-known. GDP ignores non-income aspects of well-being, it does not take into account the environmental damage caused by economic activities, and it tends to ignore or undervalue things that contribute to the quality of life but are not amenable to valuation in monetary terms. The estimation of GDP is based on market prices that reflect society's preferences only at the given distribution of purchasing power in the economy, which is often highly unequal.

The most striking example of market prices not doing a good job is perhaps provided by such precious metals as gold or diamond, which not only happen to be perhaps the least useful among all minerals, but also the mining of which causes huge environmental damage. The idea of gauging economic development by indicators other than GDP, such as the Human Development Index, or other measures that reflect footprints of environmental damage, has grown out of the dissatisfaction with GDP.

When a visitor from a less devel-

oped country arrives at an affluent, or a relatively more advanced country, he can see the difference instantly from casual observation; he does not have to check with publications of the World Bank or the UNDP to find the relative ranking of that country in terms of per capita GDP or the Human Development Index. Knowing what those apparently visible signs of development are may sometimes help one to have a reality check on the claims of his government regarding economic development and may also reveal some missing elements of development in his own country.

So, is it possible to list some readily visible indicators of development in a way that a scoring system based on those indicators can reasonably correspond to the degree of development across countries? After all, a student of economics, doing elaborate statistical exercises in measuring and comparing economic development across countries, should not be accused of missing things which even the untrained eyes of a visitor can easily spot. Leaving aside a visitor's first general impression about how orderly the immigration procedures are at the entry airport, the signs of development will be obviously more detectable in metropolitan areas since that is where economic development has the most impact.

The following could perhaps

serve as a tentative list: (1) The quality of public transport - whether a time schedule is maintained and passengers get in and out at fixed stops and not in the middle of the road, and the very look of the vehicles; (2) How orderly is the traffic - adherence to traffic rules and the extent of sound pollution through honking, whether roads are well maintained and there are not many potholes, how much priority is given to pedestrian facilities, and the extent to which the sidewalks of main roads are crowded by hawkers, vendors and make-shift shops; (3) The quality of tap water, the efficacy of the waste management system and the availability of public toilets; (4) The availability and quality of public libraries; and (5) The aesthetic beauty of the main riverside or the lakeside that grows naturally with the development of urban amenities, as distinct from any artificial beautification projects that give a lacklustre look because of poor maintenance.

There may be other candidates for inclusion in the list, but there is also no point of lengthening the list if a single indicator can represent many other hidden indicators. Notice that we have not included such indicators like the degree of air pollution or the number of pavement dwellers, since there may not be a regular pattern to match with economic development (the San Francisco area in the US may have more pavement dwellers than in

many cities in poor countries). If the visitor happens to venture into the countryside, there may be a few visible signs of development, such as the outward look of the homesteads, the availability of power supply, or the nature of agricultural implements on farming land.

A visiting economist will, however, be interested to delve deeper, possibly by staying longer in the country he is visiting. What signs will he be looking for to assess the stage of development, and the quality of governance that goes with it? The Nobel laureate economist Douglas North once noted that an economic expert arriving in a developing country should refrain from providing policy advice to the government until he has spent at least six months in that country.

A discerning economist will note how much time, trouble and speed money (that is, bribe) it takes to get even a simple thing done, like getting a permit to stay longer than originally permitted by his visa. Are things done more through personal connections or according to impersonal rules that do not discriminate between the elite and the ordinary citizens? He may be trying to assess the quality of human resources and the education system as reflected, say, in the number of expatriates in technical and managerial positions, and in the quality of the college and university graduates; do many of these educated young seek a

job abroad, which may be a sign that the education they have received has not contributed much to their employability at home, and also may indicate their lack of confidence in the country's economic future?

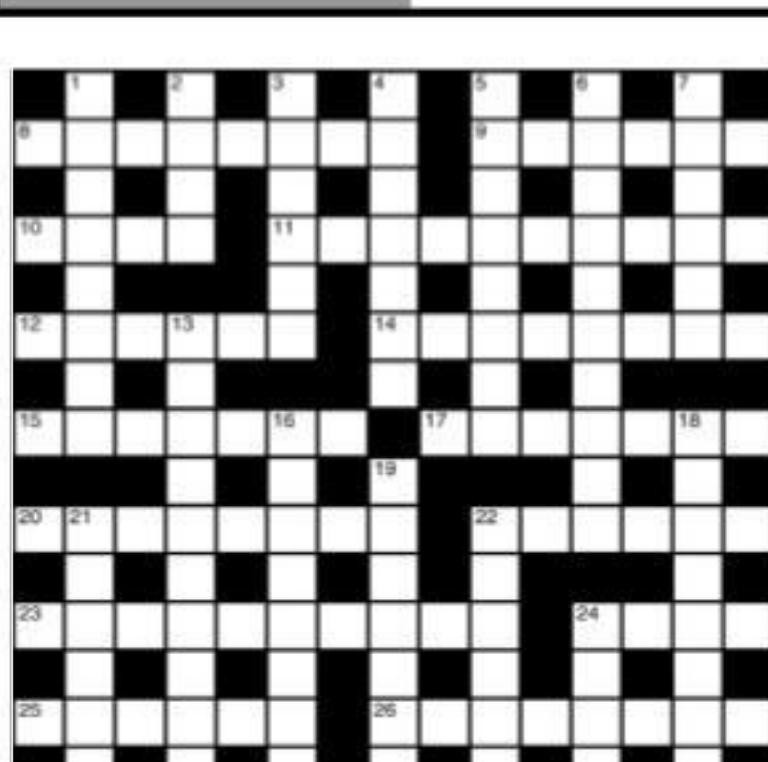
Are there many large-scale infrastructure projects of only "prestige value" but not well-planned to serve their purpose? Even amid a general environment of deficient governance, do there still exist at least some government agencies that are well-resourced, professionally competent and able to work out solutions and act promptly? Such dynamic agencies can potentially set examples for the work culture in other agencies, or at least can act as agents of change in their spheres of activity.

Overall, one may be looking for a system of governance in which there are vertical mechanisms for accountability of the government functionaries at each layer of administration, as well as horizontal coordination across various government agencies. The opposite extreme is perhaps an unwieldy Leviathan-like governance structure in which even the well-meaning and honest actors feel alienated; although aware of the pitfalls of the system, they are unable to do anything about it on their own, like the characters in Kafka's novels.

The writer is a former professor of economics at the University of Dhaka, and is currently chairman of the Economic Research Group, Dhaka. This is an extract from his forthcoming book *Markets, Morals and Economic Development*. The Daily Star/ANN.

NO 28828

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

L	E	G	O	V	E	R	L	A	M	B	D	A	S
G	F	P	D	M	O	S							
U	G	L	A	C	U	T	E	A	N	G	L	E	N
A	U	C	E	E	A	H	O						
E	N	A	M	E	L	H	A	R	D	C	O	P	Y
D	E	E	H	E	H	O							
A	S	K	A	N	T	S	E	N					
P	M	T	S	E	N	T							
S	O	M	B	R	E	O							
B	M	R	E	O	A	P							
O	U	F	B	E									
E	N	O	L	A	G								
R	A	U	O	E	R								
D	Y	N	L	A	R	U							
C	C	A	K	Z	L	S							
E	M	E	R	G	B	E							
M	E	R	G	E	N	E							

ACROSS

- 1 Indulging in fantasies to win over party on left (13)
- 2 Person who disses rapper? (7)
- 3 Cause friction again with hot parts (7)
- 4 Part of shirt collar, perhaps (4)
- 5 Duchess eats half of rare meat, which is a blow (6,4)
- 6 Germany's current period of overindulgence (5)
- 7 Clue for mystery solver on TV (6-3)
- 8 Paving chaps to stuff when it may be lunch time (9)
- 9 Sailors seizing princess on stage twirling bottom (5)
- 10 Showy Kafka work keeps a chapter apart (10)

DOWN

- 22 It demands attention in extremely pompous way (4)
- 23 Fulminating in a bad way, Republican takes lead (7)
- 25 Nothing is mutable in these organs (7)
- 26 Softly dancing in dressy pink clothes, they've no costumes (6-7)
- 27 Switch positions? I'm not sure it's available (2,5)
- 28 Religious book very fortunate to lose its covers (4)
- 29 A number welcoming opening of tennis courts (5)
- 30 The euro struggles to maintain rating in this area (9)
- 31 Showy Kafka work keeps a chapter apart (10)
- 32 Hearing papal take on sex, I hold

- 7 Vagrant in hedge made a beastly sound (7)
- 8 Stops doing more acid to provide impetus (4-7)
- 10 He dispensed treatment in Post Office Boxes (11)
- 13 Dull-witted American president's thrown outside (10)
- 15 Decent trousers in golf, it appears (9)
- 17 Funny bloke is something to see in Paris (7)
- 19 Record covered by Erasure is so damn uplifting! (7)
- 21 Fighter catches Greek priestess dressing (5)
- 23 Inclination to put butter on starter of pancakes (4)

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2021

07

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

Judging from the Budget which has been laid before the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, the Reforms have not been productive of much alteration in the form or manner in which the yearly provincial financial statement is presented. The Budget still exhibits an imposing array of colossal totals, and it is gratifying to observe that, as a result of the spirited protest registered by the Local Government against the financial proposals of the Montagu-Chelmsford report, Mr. Le Mesurier is in a position to show a small surplus of current revenue over expenditure. Sir Walter Mande's statement as to the cost of general administration is interesting as giving some idea of the increased cost of the reforms. It is not surprising to find the revised estimate considerably outstripping the original one, which was Rs 15,87,000, as against Rs 19,08,000 now budgeted for. Except for the inevitable increase in the size of the Budget, and for the fact that several of the departmental heads are dealt with by the new Ministers in charge, the Bihar Budget appears to move on lines dissimilar to those of pre-Reform days. The difference may, perhaps, be more marked when the statement comes to be discussed, and when the Legislative Council proceeds to exercise its right of modifying its provisions.

NEWS ITEMS

TRAGEDY AT RAILWAY STATION

Lahore, Feb 16

Two private soldiers of an ammunition column about to proceed as part of an escort to ammunition from Campbellpur to Rawalpindi by the evening goods train on February 14, on being placed by the Warrant Officer under arrest for concealing beer in the wagon, began firing at random from the shelter of the wagon about 8 P.M. The station staff and the few passengers about took cover, but unfortunately a passenger who was crossing the line was shot dead a few yards from the wagon. A railway menial servant was slightly injured in the head. Military aid arrived from the cantonment and the men were disarmed and confined. A British soldier got a bullet through his cap in making the arrest.

EUROPEAN HEADMASTERS CONFER

Jubbulpore, Feb 16

The First Annual Conference of Headmasters of European Schools in India was held at Jubbulpore when a representative body discussed and passed many resolutions. A Headmasters' Association was formally constituted of which Mr. W.H. Hammond, of the Cathedral High School, Bombay, was elected hon. secretary and treasurer. It was decided to represent to the Government that the central control of European education would improve the position of European schools and prevent a great deal of waste of effort, money brain power, and that inspectors should be recruited from the teaching profession. This would improve the profession and make it more attractive. It was also decided to take immediate steps to found a university college for Europeans and Anglo-Indians, which should be both residential and tutorial.

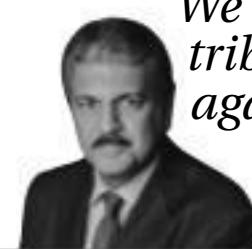
THE NEW CHURCH AT KANCHARAPARA

The dedication service at St. George's Church, Kancharapara, supplied a happy practical expression of the world wide desire for the unity of the churches. The Metropolitan and Dr. Watt, Principal of the Scottish Churches College, Calcutta, occupied chairs within the sanctuary during the service. The Bishop preached the sermon and took part of the actual dedication, Dr. Watt offered the Dedicatory Prayer, the Rev. K.W. Young, Secretary of the Bible Society and a Free Church Minister read the Special Litany, and the Rev. W. Wright, Scotch Church Chaplain of Barrackpore read the special lessons. The Church was built by the Engineering Department of the Eastern Bengal Railway, and the cost has been met by a grant of 26,569 from Imperial Funds and the balances from local subscriptions.

LABOUR UNREST

About 3,000 men of the Union Jute mills at Beliaghata, went on strike on Tuesday. It is stated that on Monday last the men of the weaving department hurled some bobbins at Manager who had pointed out to the men that the rate of output was very slow. The men said that the material supplied to them was of inferior quality and necessarily the output was not up to the mark. The same day the men piled up bobbins in front of the Manager's quarters and on the following day the whole lot struck work. The strikers assembled yesterday morning in front of the mills' office to receive the weekly wages, which were paid. The Deputy Commissioner of Police arrived in the afternoon and posted police guards at the gate.

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



We need to harness the private sector's capability to scale up distribution rapidly. Widespread vaccination is our main hope against any new waves which are now a serious threat.

ANAND MAHINDRA
CEO, MAHINDRA GROUP

THUMBNAILS

ACKO aims double biz: Digital insurance provider ACKO aims to double its business to Rs 1,500 crore in the next fiscal, with focus on retail business around auto, health and small ticket insurance products. The company did a business of about Rs 370 crore in the last fiscal year and this year also, despite the pandemic, there has been a growth. PTI

BMW India launches SportX petrol variant: German luxury carmaker BMW on Tuesday launched the 'SportX' petrol variant of its SUV model X3 in India at an introductory price of Rs 56.5 lakh. Produced at the BMW Group plant in Chennai, the X3 xDrive30i SportX can be booked online before February 28 mid-night and customers will enjoy early-bird benefits. PTI

Crude oil futures decline on low demand: Crude oil futures on Tuesday fell 0.14 per cent to Rs 4,363 per barrel as participants cut their positions due to low demand. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for the February delivery eased by Rs 6, or 0.14 per cent, to Rs 4,363 per barrel with a business volume of 3,385 lots. PTI

GE T&D India appoints new chairman: GE T&D India Ltd, a leading player in the power transmission on Tuesday announced the appointment of Mahesh Palashkar as the Chairman of the Board, with effect from March 1, 2021. He succeeds Vishal Wanchoo. PTI

Utkarsh Small Finance Bank ties up with Mastercard: Utkarsh Small Finance Bank Ltd (USFBL) announced the launch of a debit card with Mastercard. The card will offer international benefits and features to Utkarsh Small Finance Bank's customers and will provide shopping and dining privileges. The collaboration will bring together Mastercard's technological expertise and innovation to Utkarsh Small Finance Bank's strong customer base, said the Press release. SNS

Bank privatisation: Govt to tweak acts

The Budget session is scheduled to take up 38 Bills including Finance Bill 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

To facilitate privatisation of public sector banks, the government is likely to bring amendments to two legislations later this year.

Amendments would be required in the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1970 and the Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Act, 1980 for privatisation, sources said.

These Acts led to nationalisation of banks in two phases and provisions of these laws have to be changed for privatisation of banks, they said.

As the government has already announced the list of legislative business for the Budget session, these amendments may be introduced in the Monsoon session or later during the year, sources added.

The ongoing Budget session is scheduled to take up as many as 38 Bills including the Finance Bill 2021, Supplementary Demands for



Grants for 2020-21 and related Appropriation Bill, National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NabFID) Bill, 2021, and Cryptocurrency and Regulation of Official Digital Currency Bill, 2021.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting Budget 2021-22 earlier this month had announced privatisation of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) as part of disinvestment drive to garner Rs 1.75 lakh crore.

"Other than IDBI Bank,

we propose to take up the privatisation of two Public Sector Banks and one General Insurance company in the year 2021-22," she had said.

Later in one of the post-Budget interactions, the Finance Minister had said the government will work with the Reserve Bank for execution of the bank privatisation plan announced in the Union Budget 2021-22.

"The details are being worked out. I have made the announcement but we are working together with the

RBI," she had said, when asked about the proposal.

The government last year consolidated 10 public sector banks into four and as a result the total number of PSBs came down to 12 from 27 in March 2017.

As per the amalgamation plan, United Bank of India and Oriental Bank of Commerce were merged with Punjab National Bank, making the proposed entity the second largest PSB.

Syndicate Bank was merged with Canara Bank, while Allahabad Bank was subsumed in Indian Bank, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank were amalgamated with Union Bank of India.

In a first three-way merger, Bank of Baroda merged Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with itself in 2019.

SBI had merged five of its associate banks - State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Bihar and Jaipur, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Travancore and State Bank of Hyderabad and also Bharatiya Mahila Bank effective April 2017.

Sitharaman addresses RBI board, explains priorities of government

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday explained the government's priorities to the Reserve Bank of India's central board during their first meeting after presentation of the Union Budget 2021-22.

As per the tradition, the finance minister holds customary meeting with the board members of the RBI and the SEBI after Budget presentation every year.

Sitharaman addressed the 587th RBI central board meeting and informed the members about the key initiatives in the Budget and the priorities of the government, RBI said.

"Complimenting the finance minister on the budget, the board members made various suggestions for consideration of the government," it added.

At its first meeting after the presentation of the Budget for 2021-22, the central board of directors also reviewed the current economic situation. "The board in its meeting reviewed the current economic situation, global and domestic challenges and various areas of operations of the Reserve



Bank, including ways for strengthening of grievance redress mechanism in banks," it said.

The meeting was chaired by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das through video conferencing.

The government's nominee directors on the board - Financial Services Secretary Debasish Panda and Economic Affairs Secretary Tarun Bajaj - also attended the meeting.

Apart from Sitharaman, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur, Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey and Department of Investment and Public Asset Management Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey were also present.

Earlier this month, the finance minister presented a

Rs 34.5 lakh crore-budget for 2021-22 in the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic.

The budget has laid emphasis on increasing capital expenditure, raising allocation for healthcare capacity building and development of agriculture infrastructure, among others, which are expected to have a multiplier effect on the economy.

Hit hard by the pandemic, fiscal deficit - the excess of government expenditure over its revenues - is estimated to hit a record high of 9.5 per cent of the GDP in the current fiscal ending March 31.

For the next 2021-22 fiscal, the deficit has been pegged at 6.8 per cent of GDP, which will be further lowered to 4.5 per cent by the fiscal ending 31 March, 2026.

'Indian economy on track for recovery'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday said Indian economy is on track for a recovery in the next fiscal year beginning 1 April, as consistent good performance of the farm sector, flattening COVID-19 infection curve, and a pickup in government spending are all supporting the economy.

Stating that India needs many things to be right for its recovery to continue, S&P said the country needs to quickly and thoroughly vaccinate most of its 1.4 billion people.

"The emergence of yet more contagious COVID-19 variants with the potential to evade vaccine-derived immunity present a major risk to this recovery. As does the possibility of early with-

drawal of global fiscal stimulus," S&P said in a report titled 'Cross-sector outlook: India's escape from COVID'. It said the budget for fiscal 2021-22 will also support the recovery, with higher than expected expenditures. India's improving growth prospects are critical to its ability to sustain the higher deficits associated with its more aggressive fiscal stance.

The economy still faces important risks as it transitions from stabilisation to recovery. We estimate that India faces a permanent loss of output versus its pre-pandemic path, suggesting a long-term production deficit equivalent to about 10 per cent of GDP, S&P said. "In our view, India's banking system's performance is likely to start improving materially in fiscal 2023," S&P said.

'India's high priority for now should be to grow at 7-8 per cent'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Describing the Budget 2021-22 as "extremely good", former RBI governor Bimal Jalan on Tuesday said that India's high priority for now should be to grow at 7-8 per cent, and then give a "great preference" for employment rather than only investment.

Jalan further said it does not seem that India will be able to achieve a \$5 trillion economy target by 2024-25.

"This year's Budget is extremely good. I think the rate of growth in India should be 7-8 per cent," he said.

The Economic Survey 2020-21 has projected an 11 per cent growth for 2021-22, aided by V-shaped recovery and a 7.7 per cent contraction for the current year.

"That is the high priority (7-8 per cent growth rate). Once you have 7-8 per cent growth then there are issues

about employment, and we should give a great preference for employment rather than only investment," Jalan said.

The former Reserve Bank of India governor said in the next 18 months, India's economic growth will hopefully bounce back to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Asked whether India will be able to achieve a \$5 trillion economy target by 2024-25, he said, "We are in 2021. So, four years are there and as of now, it does not seem that we will be able to reach that target."

The former RBI governor also said he does not think it is essential to fix a target.

"We can do it year by year,

we can fix a target for the next year. But, I do not believe that we can fix a target for the next five years in numerical terms," he noted.

Jalan observed that India after independence is one of the countries that has done best in democratic terms.

"And that it has responded to people's policy desires and so on," he said adding that the country's main priority in the next 4-5 years should be poverty alleviation and providing jobs.

Jalan noted that India has not made as much progress as the country should have in providing employment.

Replying to a question on the farmers' agitation mainly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the former RBI governor said he thinks there has been a failure of communication.

"But, one has to respond to what the farmers want, and it is quite easy to have

farmers' policy desires to be executed by the government," he added.

Thousands of farmers from Punjab, Haryana, UP and some other states are protesting against the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce Act, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act. Enacted in September, the three farm laws have been projected by the central government as major reforms in the agriculture sector that will remove the middlemen and allow farmers to sell anywhere in the country.

However, the protesting farmers have expressed apprehension that the new laws would pave the way for eliminating the safety cushion of Minimum Support Price and do away with the mandi system, leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

EPFO likely to declare rate of interest on EPF deposits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Retirement fund body EPFO is likely to announce the rate of interest on provident fund deposits for financial year 2020-21, on 4 March, when its Central Board of Trustees will meet at Srinagar.

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) is likely to take up the proposal to announce rate of interest for 2020-21 at its Central Board of Trustees (CBT) meeting scheduled on 4 March, source said.

An EPFO trustee said that on Monday he received the intimation that the next CBT meeting is scheduled to be held on 4 March, at Srinagar and that the agenda papers are likely to be sent soon, KE Raghunathan said.

He said that there is no mention about discussion on interest rate for 2020-21 in the inti-

Axis Bank & United India Insurance settle cases with Sebi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Axis Bank and its promoter United India Insurance Company have settled with regulator Sebi cases of alleged disclosure lapses and have paid more than Rs 51.5 lakh as total settlement amount.

The matter pertained to alleged lapses in disclosures with respect to change in promoter's shareholding in the private lender. The entities were alleged to have violated Prohibition of Insider Trading (PIT) norms, as per two separate settlement orders passed on Monday.

An investigation by Sebi found that during October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018 period, the value of trades by United India Insurance Company in the securities of Axis Bank on each trading day was more than

Rs 10 lakh. The promoter was required to make disclosures about such transactions to the private lender within two working days as required under PIT norms.

However, in five instances, the said disclosures were made by United India Insurance Company to the lender with a delay of 10-17 days, Sebi noted.

Besides, Axis Bank was required to disclose the same to the stock exchanges within two trading days of the receipt of the disclosure

from the promoter.

"However, the same was disclosed by the applicant to the stock exchange only on October 16, 2020, only with a delay of 1,072-1,080 days," Sebi said.

In December 2020, the regulator had issued notices of summary settlement to the entities, intimating that the proceedings may be settled on filing of settlement applications and remittance of settlement amounts of Rs 41,43,750 by Axis Bank and Rs 10,13,906 by United India Insurance Company.

Accordingly, the entities filed settlement applications with the regulator proposing to settle without admitting or denying the findings of fact and conclusions of law.

The entities remitted their respective settlement charges on January 27, 2021.

SAT stays SEBI's order banning Kishore Biyani, other Future promoters from markets

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) has stayed the order passed by market regulator SEBI, that had put a one-year ban on Future Retail Chairperson Kishore Biyani and some other promoters from the securities market for one year for indulging in insider trading in the shares of the company.

SAT has also directed the Future Group promoters to deposit a sum of Rs 11 crore as an interim measure.

"In a hearing held on February 15, 2021, the Securities Appellate Tribunal has stayed the effect and operation of SEBI's order accusing the promoters of the Future Group of insider trading in the context of purchases of Future Retail shares made in March 2017," Future Corporate Resources Private Limited (FCRPL) said in a statement.

The case will now come up on April 12, 2021 before SAT

for the next hearing.

Earlier on February 3, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had barred Kishore Biyani and certain other promoters of Future Retail from the securities market for one year for indulging in insider trading in the shares of the company.

In addition, the regulator had imposed a fine of Rs 1 crore each on Kishore Biyani, Anil Biyani and Future Corporate Resources. Besides, they have been asked to disgorge Rs 17.78 crore for the wrongful gains made by them.

The development comes at a time when Future Group is locked in a bitter legal battle with e-commerce giant Amazon over the former's Rs 44,713-crore deal with Reliance.

In August last year, Future group had entered into a deal with billionaire Mukesh Ambani's RIL to sell its retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing units.

According to FCRPL, restructuring of the home furnishing businesses in the Future Group (with the physical store format of Future Retail and online store format of Future Enterprises being demerged into a new company) had been well known in the public since 2016. Future Group counsel Somasekhar Sundaresan argued that the actual terms of the restructuring were initiated only in April 2017, while the purchases were made in March to avail of the creeping acquisition limits under the takeover regulations, FCRPL said in a statement.

Besides, the home furnishing business of Future Retail was a minuscule component of Future's business and was hardly material for price discovery for shares of Future Retail, he argued.

Amazon to start device manufacturing line in India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 FEBRUARY

Amazon on Tuesday said it will begin manufacturing Amazon Devices, including Fire TV sticks, in Chennai later this year in partnership with Foxconn's subsidiary, Cloud Network Technology.</p



Killings have strengthened Turkey's will to form a secure zone along its border in N Iraq to protect Turkey's frontiers from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers

TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN
VOWS TO EXPAND ANTI-PKK OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN IRAQ

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2021

09

Myanmar coup: Suu Kyi faces new charge

New charge was for breaking a law that has been used to prosecute people who have violated coronavirus restrictions

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YANGON, 16 FEBRUARY

Police in Myanmar filed a new charge against ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, her lawyer said on Tuesday, in a move that may allow her to be held indefinitely without trial as part of an intensifying crackdown by authorities who seized power in a coup.

Suu Kyi, who was deposed and detained in the military takeover on 1 February, already faced a charge of illegally possessing walkie-talkies, an apparent attempt to provide a legal veneer for her house arrest.

The new charge was for breaking a law that has been used to prosecute people who have violated coronavirus restrictions, lawyer Khin Maung Zaw told reporters after meeting with a judge in a court in the capital, Naypyitaw. It carries a maximum punishment of three years in prison. But, perhaps more



Demonstrators display pictures of detained Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi during a protest against the military coup in Mandalay, Myanmar on Tuesday.

worryingly, because of changes to the Penal Code instituted by the junta last week, it could allow her to be detained indefinitely without court permission. The legal maneuver comes two weeks after the military seized power in a coup that shocked many in the international community who had been hopeful that Myanmar was taking steps toward

democracy. Since then, the junta has escalated the pressure on protesters resisting the takeover, including violently breaking up some demonstrations and ordering internet access blocked.

On Monday, security forces pointed guns at a group of 1,000 demonstrators and attacked them with slingshots and sticks in the city of Mandalay.

Myanmar army guarantees new election

AGENCIES

YANGON, 16 FEBRUARY

Myanmar's military junta guaranteed on Tuesday that it would hold an election and hand over power, denied its ouster of an elected government was a coup or that its leaders were detained, and accused protesters of violence and intimidation. The junta's defence of its 1 February seizure of power and arrest of government leader Aug San Suu Kyi and others came as protesters again took to the streets and as China dismissed rumours spreading on social media that it had helped with the coup.

"Our objective is to hold an election and hand power

to the winning party," Brigadier General Zaw Min Tun, spokesman for the ruling council, told the junta's first news conference since overthrowing Suu Kyi's government.

The military has not given a date for a new election but has imposed a state of emergency for one year. Zaw Min Tun said the military would not hold power for long.

"We guarantee... that the election will be held," he told the nearly two-hour news conference, which the military broadcast from the capital, Naypyitaw, live over Facebook, a platform it has banned. Asked about the detention of Nobel prize winner Suu Kyi and the president,

Zaw Min Tun dismissed the suggestion they were in detention, saying they were in their homes for their security while the law took its course. He also said Myanmar's foreign policy would not change, it remained open for business and deals would be upheld.

The military will be hoping its reassurances will dampen the campaign of daily opposition to its rule and to the ousting Suu Kyi and her government. As well as the demonstrations in towns and cities across the ethnically diverse country, a civil disobedience movement has brought strikes that are crippling many functions of government.

seize money from it. Buddhist monks demonstrated outside the UN's local office in the city. Around 3,000 demonstrators mainly students returned to the streets of Mandalay.

The protests are taking place in defiance of an order banning gatherings of five or more people.

Suu Kyi's lawyer told reporters he did not arrive at the court in time to see a videoconference the judge said had been held with her. That videoconference had not been expected, the lawyer said, adding that he has not yet seen his client. State media have been acknowledging the protest movement only indirectly.

The Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper reported about a meeting of the State Administration Council, the new top governing body, and quoted its chief, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, saying the authorities are handling the ongoing problems with care.

2 plead guilty as leading HK activists go on trial

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG, 16 FEBRUARY

Two former Hong Kong lawmakers pleaded guilty to illegal assembly charges Tuesday, as a trial opened for them and seven other prominent democracy activists in what is seen as a crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

The activists are charged with organizing and participating in an illegal assembly during massive anti-government protests in 2019.

The activists are charged with organizing and participating in an illegal assembly during massive anti-government protests in 2019.

instrument of political suppression. It is very sad to witness the deterioration of the rule of law in Hong Kong into a rule by fear, he said.

Hong Kong was rocked by months of protests in the second half of 2019, sparked by a government bill that would have allowed criminal suspects to be extradited to mainland China for trial. The bill was withdrawn, but the protests expanded to include full democracy and other demands and grew increasingly violent.

The nine who appeared in court Tuesday are the first to go on trial among about 15 well-known activists who were arrested in April of last year. The arrests were condemned by the United States and other countries, which have grown increasingly at odds with China over its Hong Kong policy.

China's legislature then approved a national security law for Hong Kong in June that further clamped down on dissent. The Chinese government said the law was needed to restore order to the city after the previous year's protests. It views foreign criticism as interference in the country's internal affairs.

No Americans killed in Iraq rocket attack: US-led coalition

BAGHDAD, 16 FEBRUARY

The contractor with the US-led coalition who was killed after a barrage of rockets struck near an airport in northern Iraq was not an American national, a coalition spokesman said on Tuesday, hours after the attack sparked fears of renewed hostilities in the region.

Over a dozen rockets hit areas between the civilian international airport in the city of Irbil in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish-run region and the nearby base hosting U.S. troops late on Monday.

Initially, Iraqi security officials said three rockets had hit close to the airport. A little-known Shiite militant group calling itself Saraya Ayyiya al-Dam, Arabic for Guardians of Blood Brigade, claimed responsibility for Monday's attack.

Shortly after the attack, U.S. Army Col. Wayne Marotto said a civilian contractor with the coalition was killed. On Tuesday, Marotto did not provide further details about the citizenship of the killed contractor. He also said eight civilian contractors and a U.S. military serviceman were wounded in the attack.

The coalition confirmed that 107 mm rockets, a total of 14, were launched, with three impacting an airbase hosting U.S. troops.

Five sentenced to death for Bangla blogger murder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DHAKA, 16 FEBRUARY

A special anti-terrorism tribunal on Tuesday sentenced five members of a banned Islamist militant group, including a fugitive army major, to death and a sixth man to life in prison for the killing of prominent Bangladeshi-American atheist blogger Avijit Roy in 2015. Roy, a 42-year-old Bangladeshi-born US citizen, was hacked to death by Islamist militants just after he left a book fair at the Dhaka University on February 26, 2015. His wife Rafida Ahmed

was also injured in the attack. Roy was an outspoken critic of religious fundamentalism. Judge Mojibur Rahman of Dhaka's Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal court sentenced five militants, including fugitive army major Sayed Ziaul Haq, to death in the Roy murder case, bdnews24 reported.

Another convict, Sufiur Rahman Farabi, was jailed for life. Four of the five convicts who received capital punishment are Md Moazzammel Hussain alias Simon alias Shahriar, Md Abu Siddiq Sohel alias Sakib alias Sajid alias Sha-

hab, Md Arafat Rahman and Akram Hossain alias Abir. Besides sacked Major Haque, Abir is also on the run.

The judge also fined these convicts Tk 50,000 each, besides handing capital punishment to them. Tuesday's verdict came nearly a week after Judge Rahman on Wednesday sentenced to death eight Islamic militants, including sacked Major Haque, for killing Roy's publisher Faisal Arefin Dipon.

Dipon, the owner of Jagriti Publishers, was hacked to death at his office at central Dhaka's Shahbagh area on

November 31, 2015 months after the killing of Roy. Six of eight convicts belonged to outlawed Ansar Al Islam terrorist group, also known as Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT). The ABT was banned in May 2015 when one of its leaders was arrested and two members were sentenced to death for the murder of an atheist blogger in 2013. The prosecution submitted CCTV footage of the killing of Roy, video statements of the accused, their confessional statements and copies of SMS from their mobile phones to the court as evidence.

Zinc, vitamin C supplements not effective in treating COVID-19: Study

PTI

WASHINGTON, 16 FEBRUARY

Taking zinc or vitamin C supplements does not significantly decrease the severity or duration of symptoms in COVID-19 patients, when compared to standard care, according to a study.

Researchers at Cleveland Clinic in the US noted that zinc is known to be important for immune function, with a role in antibody and white blood cell production and fighting infections.

Vitamin C, an antioxidant, can help reduce damage to cells, and has shown to be immune-boosting, they said.

The COVIDAtz clinical trial enrolled 214 adult patients with a confirmed COVID-19 infection.

The participants either received 10 days of zinc gluconate (50 mg), vitamin C (8000 mg), both agents, or standard of care from April 2020 to October 2020.

The study, published in the journal JAMA Open Network, found no significant difference among the four groups.

At 50 per cent reduction in symptoms, the study showed no significant difference between the usual care, vitamin C, zinc gluconate or the group receiving both vitamin C and zinc gluconate.

"When we began this trial, there was no research to support supplemental therapy for the prevention or treatment of patients with COVID-19," said Milind Desai, from Cleveland Clinic's HeartVascular &

Thoracic Institute and co-principal investigator of the study.

"As we watched the pandemic spread across the globe, infecting and killing millions, the medical community and consumers alike scrambled to try supplements that they believed could possibly prevent infection, or ease COVID-

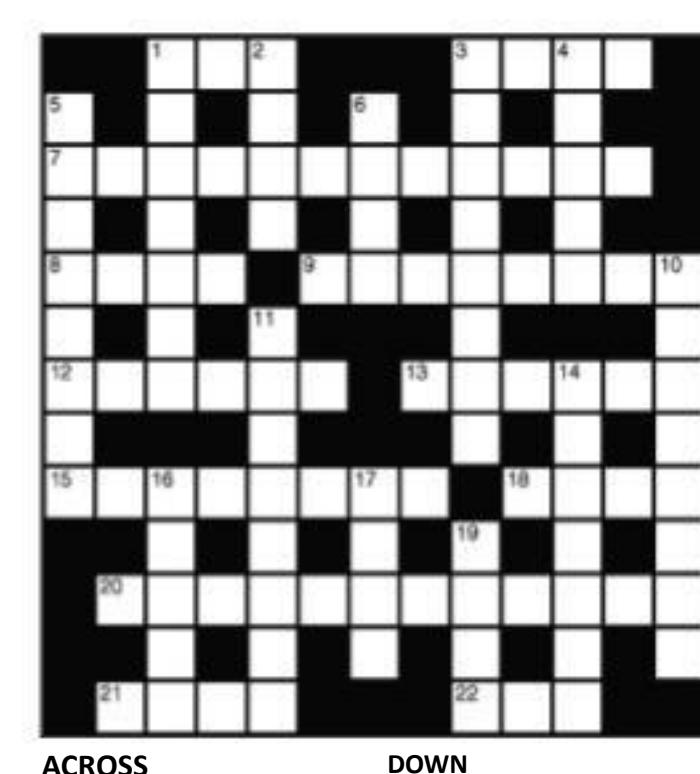
19 symptoms, but the research is just now catching up," Desai said.

"While vitamin C and zinc proved ineffective as a treatment when clinically compared to standard care, the study of other therapeutics continues," he said.

The patients enrolled in this study were not hospitalised,

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Affirmative vote (3)
- Wail (4)
- Cringeworthy (12)
- Compassion (4)
- Languid (8)
- 12 Menace (6)
- 13 Signal fire (6)
- 15 Shipwrecked person (8)
- 18 Coagulate (4)
- 20 Area of NW England (4,8)
- 21 Opening (4)
- 22 Concert (3)

DOWN

- Referee (7)
- Noblemen (4)
- Strongly infatuated (8)
- Flinch (5)
- Tyrannical (8)
- Indian dress (4)
- Small parrot (8)
- Vocation (7)
- Frighten (5)
- Dry (4)
- Male deer (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

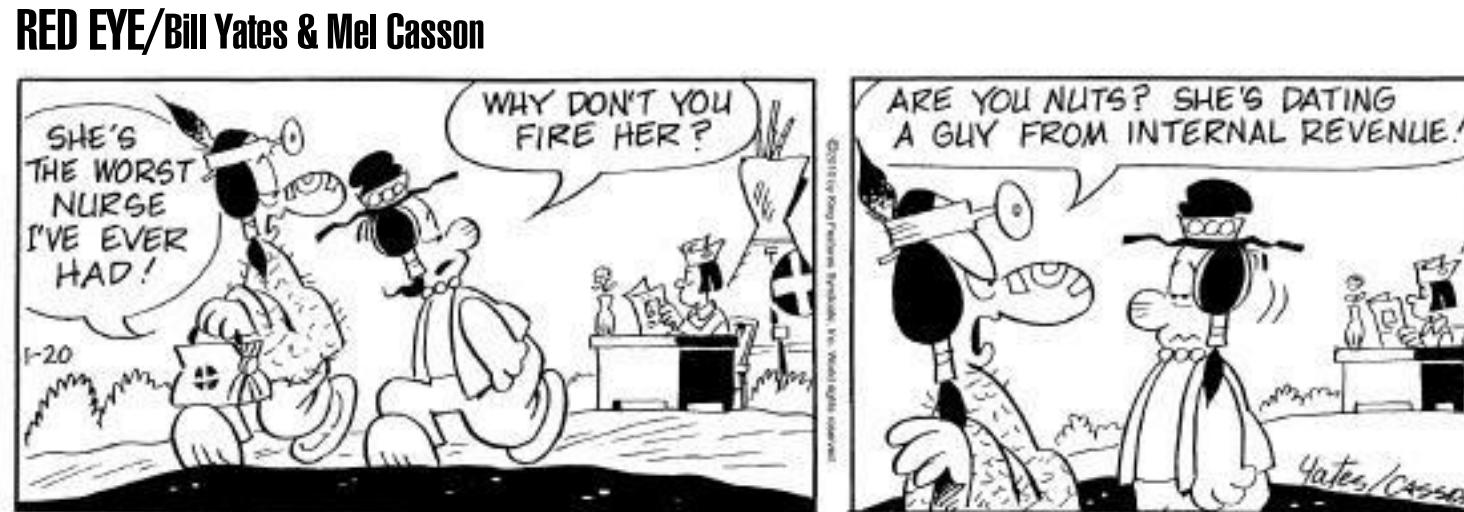
- Estate, 17 Light-hearted, 1 Prig, 16 Decade, 15 Acerbic, 19 Feud.
- ed, 2 Rallied, 18 Gauze, 19 Feud.
- 3 Fissures, 20 Crumb, 4 Indeed, 5 Self-assured, 6 Sorcerer, 9 Retractable, 12 Implicit,
- (Pearls), 21 Audible, 22 Teetered, 23 Acidic.
- 8 Ill-bred, 11 Little-tattle, 13 Madcap, 14

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

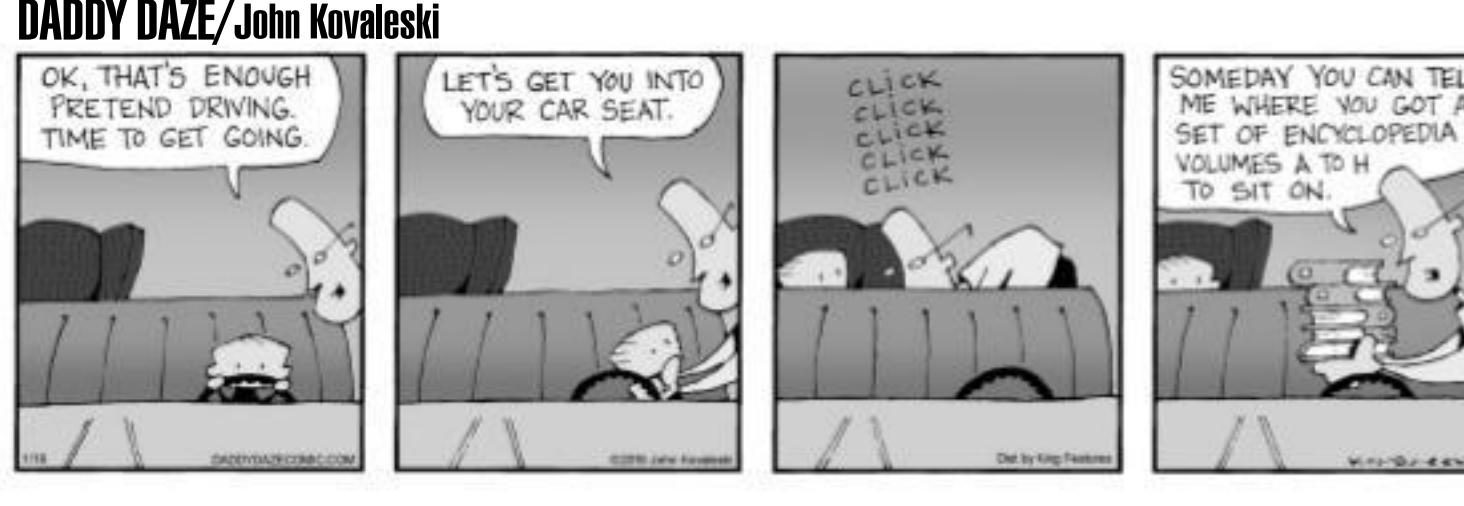
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511, 54959, 5676747
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 26924300, 26924304, 29958747
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry: 23860500, 23860526
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511, 54959, 5676747
- U.P. Railways 23868709

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 09001383383, 18001803838, 43513186; Indigo Airlines 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport)
- Air Canada Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09901383383, 18001803838, 43513186; Indigo Airlines 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport)

FLIGHT INQUIRY

- Port 011-25671580; Terminal I B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838
- ET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111
- EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 3373377
- Air France Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport)
- Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

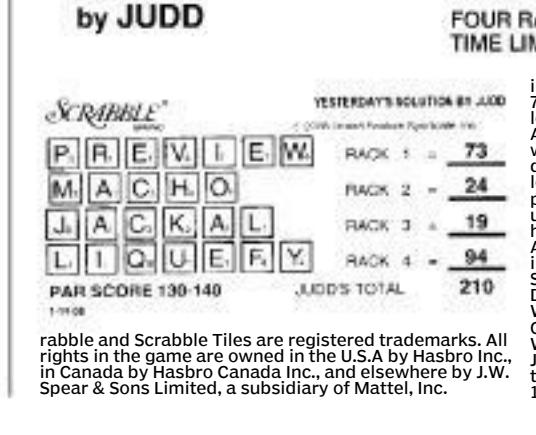
SCRABBLE BRAND



PAR SCORE 130-140

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN



SCRABBLE

© 2012 Mattel Inc.

Scrabble and Scrabble Tiles are registered trademarks. All rights in the game are owned in the U.S.A. by Hasbro Inc., and elsewhere by J.W. Spear & Sons Limited, a subsidiary of Mattel, Inc.

Scrabble is a trademark of Hasbro Inc.

Scrabble is a registered trademark of Hasbro Inc.

Scrab



The efforts are also needed to protect French values like gender equality and secularism from encroaching fundamentalism in some communities

FRANCE PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON

FRANCE VOTES ON ANTI-RADICALISM BILL THAT WORRIES MUSLIMS

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	18°C	12°C CL
LONDON	17°C	09°C S
DUBAI	22°C	15°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	09°C	04°C C H
NEW YORK	06°C	02°C C S
MOSCOW	-12°C	-09°C H

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

THUMBNAILS



Snow and ice coat tree branches on Tuesday, at Tiscornia Park in St. Joseph, Mich.

Salsa idol dies at 85: Salsa idol Johnny Pacheco (85), who was a co-founder of Fania Records, Eddie Palmieri's bandmate and backer of music stars such as Ruben Blades, Willie Colon and Celia Cruz, died on Monday. He had been hospitalised in New York a few days earlier for pneumonia; his wife, Maria Elena Cuqui Pacheco, said on the Facebook account. AP

Spain rapper held: A 24-hour standoff between police and a rapper barricaded with dozens of his supporters in a university ended on Tuesday with anti-riot officers arresting the artist. Pablo Hasil was escorted by police out of Lleida University's rectorate building, in Catalonia, where he and over 50 supporters had locked themselves in since Monday. AP

Turkey detains IS militant: Three New Zealand citizens were detained while attempting to illegally cross into Turkey from Syria, Turkey's Defence Ministry said. The three were caught by border security units while trying to sneak into the town of Reyhanli, the ministry said. AP

Oprah to interview Prince Harry, Meghan:

LOS ANGELES, 16 FEBRUARY

Veteran talk show host Oprah Winfrey will interview Prince Harry and wife Meghan Markle, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, for a CBS primetime special.

The announcement of the comes on the heels of the couple announcing that Meghan is pregnant with their second child. Their son, Archie, is 21 months old. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the special is titled "Oprah With Meghan and Harry" and it will air on the network on 7 March.

It will be Prince Harry and former actor Meghan's first sit-down interview since their engagement in 2017. The 90-minute programme will see the couple discuss their marriage, philanthropic efforts and their move away from Britain's royal family with Oprah, who also attended their wedding in 2018.

In early 2020, Meghan and Harry announced they would "step back" from their positions as senior members of the British royal family and moved to North America, citing what they said were the unbearable intrusions and racist attitudes of the British media. They recently bought a house in Santa Barbara, California.

Since then, the couple have signed an overall deal with Netflix to produce programming for the streamer and a podcast deal at Spotify. Oprah, is also teaming up with Harry for a mental health documentaries for Apple TV Plus. Winfrey's Harpo Productions is producing the CBS special. Terry Wood and Tara Montgomery are attached to executive produce, with Brian Piotrowicz as co-executive producer. PTI

Dozens charged in Capitol violence

In at least 59 other cases, authorities link defendants to violent or extremist rhetoric, conspiracy theories on social media

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLLEGE PARK, 16 FEBRUARY

In a text message, a radicalized Trump supporter suggested getting a boat to ferry "heavy weapons" across the Potomac River into the waiting arms of their members in time for Jan. 6, court papers say.

It wasn't just idle talk, authorities say. Investigators found invoices for more than \$750 worth of live ammunition and for a firearm designed to look like a cellphone at the Virginia home of Thomas Caldwell, who's charged with conspiring with members of the far-right Oath Keepers militia group in one of the most sinister plots in the U.S. Capitol siege. Right-wing extremists, blessed by Donald Trump, were unleashed last month, and their menacing presence has reignited the debate over domestic extremism and how law enforcement should be handling these groups.

Their talk of civil war, traitors and revolution mirrored fighting words echoed by right-wing social media personalities and websites for months as Trump spread bogus claims about a rigged presidential election.

In nearly half of the more than 200 federal cases stemming from the attack on the Capitol, authorities have cited evidence that an insurrectionist appeared to be inspired by conspiracy theories or extremist ideologies, according to an Associated Press review of court records.

The FBI has linked at least 40 defendants to extremist groups or movements, including at least 16 members or associates of the neo-fascist Proud Boys and at least five connected to the anti-government Oath Keepers. FBI agents also explicitly tied at least 10 defendants to QAnon, a pro-Trump conspiracy theory that has

House Speaker Pelosi proposes 9/11-type commission to probe siege

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, 16 FEBRUARY



US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi has proposed a 9/11-type independent commission to investigate the storming of the Capitol by supporters of former president Donald Trump on January 6, which is seen as one of the darkest days in the history of America's democracy.

Pelosi said this in a Dear Colleague letter on Monday, less than 50 hours after the Senate -- the upper chamber of US Congress -- acquitted Trump following an impeachment trial on charges of inciting his supporters to storm the Capitol hill, putting at risk the lives of hundreds of law-

makers.

It is clear from his findings and from the impeachment trial that we must get to the truth of how this happened, she said in a letter to her Democratic colleagues in the House of Representatives. To protect our security, our next step will be to establish an outside, independent 9/11-type Commission to investigate and report on

the facts and causes relating to the January 6, 2021 domestic terrorist attack upon the United States Capitol Complex and relating to the interference with the peaceful transfer of power, including facts and causes relating to the preparedness and response of the United States Capitol Police and other Federal, State, and local law enforcement in the National Capitol Region, Pelosi wrote.

Her letter follows similar demands being made by lawmakers on both sides of the aisle. Three Republican congressmen -- Rodney Davis, John Katko and James Comer -- have proposed a bill that would create a bipartisan commission.

push a baseless belief that Trump is a secret warrior fighting to expose a cabal of Satan-worshipping bureaucrats and celebrities who traffic children. On Saturday, the Senate acquitted Trump in his second impeachment trial. A leading liberal advocacy group is urging its supporters to call on attorney general nominee Merrick Garland to "investigate and prosecute Trump and his entire criminal network for law-breaking."

The U.S. attorney's office in Washington has assigned a special task force of prosecutors examining whether to bring sedition charges against some of the rioters, as prosecutors and federal agents across the country develop more cases against extremists who plotted to attack the Capitol. Prosecutors have another task force examining attacks targeting journalists.

And dozens of the alleged rioters echoed words used by QAnon supporters, who

pushed a baseless belief that Trump is a secret warrior fighting to expose a cabal of Satan-worshipping bureaucrats and celebrities who traffic children. On Saturday, the Senate acquitted Trump in his second impeachment trial. A leading liberal advocacy group is urging its supporters to call on attorney general nominee Merrick Garland to "investigate and prosecute Trump and his entire criminal network for law-breaking."

President Joe Biden, in office not yet a month, has already ordered law enforcement and intelligence officials to investigate domestic terrorism. But increased enforcement is not so simple. Much of the inflammatory rhetoric is protected by the First Amendment.

And some civil rights groups have expressed hesitation over any expansion by law enforcement, because Black and Latino communities have borne the brunt of security scrutiny and they fear new tools to target extremism will end up tracking them.

Meanwhile, Parler posts containing the word "revolution" grew by five times as much as the overall rate of message traffic after the election, the analysis found.

About 84 per cent of posts referring to the hashtag "#1776" occurred on or after Election

Day, according to AP's analysis. Post-election references to "treason" and the QAnon slogan "trust the plan" both increased by about 10 times the overall rate, the data showed.

From 6 January through 8 January the terms "civil war," "trust the plan" and "hold the line" were mentioned more than 250,000 times across online media, including Twitter, Reddit and Instagram, according to an analysis by media intelligence firm Zig-

nals Labs.

As well, Trump supporters who flooded the Capitol were quick to co-opt flags from the American Revolution and the nation's founding documents to paint themselves as patriots instead of extremists. In the federal cases, the FBI quotes at least 11 defendants referring to "we the people," at least 10 referring to "1776," at least nine using "revolution" and at least eight using some variation of "traitor" or "treason."

"Everybody in there is a treasonous traitor," defendant Peter Stager, a resident of Arkansas, said of the Capitol, on a video posted on Twitter. "Death is the only remedy for what's in that building." A lawyer for Stager did not respond to a request for comment.

A Georgia lawyer's Parler posts became increasingly paranoid and angry after the presidential election began to shift to Biden's favor. William Calhoun of Americus, Georgia, posted about storming the Capitol on the eve of the insurrection, warned of an impending "civil war" and threatened to "slaughter" Democrats.

"For my part, I'll be sling-ing enough hot lead to stack you commies up like cordwood," he wrote.

Calhoun returned home after the siege and resumed representing clients at court

and responded to a request for comment.

A Georgia lawyer's Parler posts became increasingly paranoid and angry after the presidential election began to shift to Biden's favor. William Calhoun of Americus, Georgia, posted about storming the Capitol on the eve of the insurrection, warned of an impending "civil war" and threatened to "slaughter" Democrats.

"For my part, I'll be sling-ing enough hot lead to stack you commies up like cordwood," he wrote.

Calhoun returned home after the siege and resumed representing clients at court

Winter storm cripples life in Texas

HOUSTON, 16 FEBRUARY

Houstonians woke up to heaps of snow outside their homes Monday morning, with brutally cold wind chill dipping temperatures into the teens and no electricity in most areas.

The entire state of Texas is under a winter storm warning. National Weather Service forecasters have extended the winter storm warning for the Houston area to 6 a.m. Thursday, as cold weather and the threat of more rain -- freezing or otherwise -- remain. President Joe Biden approved Texas' emergency disaster proclamation Sunday. The declaration orders federal assistance to supplement state and local storm response efforts, according to a statement from the White House.

Governor Greg Abbott elevated the amount of resources available to local officials, as the state faced potentially deadly power outages to hundreds of thousands of homes.

"Many power companies have been unable to generate power, whether it's from coal, natural gas, or wind power," Abbott said in a release.

"ERCOT and the PUC are working non-stop to restore power supply. The state has also deployed resources to assist Texans without power and to help essential workers continue to carry out their jobs. In the meantime, I encourage all Texans to continue to stay off the roads, and conserve energy as state agencies work with private providers to restore power as quickly as possible."

"The Electric Reliability Council of Texas, the agency that oversees the state's electric grid, has declared Texas at its highest energy emergency level. This means it has started rolling outages across the state," it said. AP

No moment to relax: Johnson over lockdown



A coach delivers passengers to the Radisson Blu Edwardian Hotel, near Heathrow Airport, London, where they will remain during a 10 day quarantine period after returning to England from one of 33 "red list" countries.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 16 FEBRUARY

rent lockdown would be the last ever. "I'm very hopeful that we'll be able to go ahead and open things up, but to say I can give an absolute cast iron guarantee that we won't face further difficulties and have to think harder and deeper about some problems, no at this stage I can't," he warned.

The government hopes to start reopening schools as the first step to lifting lockdown restrictions, with March 8 a tentative date for the reopening. For the devolved nations, Northern Ireland is following a similar timeline, with Scotland to set out its schools plans this week and Wales to begin the process of reopening next Monday. The UK recorded another 9,765 new coronavirus infections on Monday, the first time the daily cases figure has been under 10,000 since 2 October.

During a Downing Street briefing on Monday evening, Johnson said he can't offer any cast iron guarantees because while infections are falling, there are still more Covid patients in hospitals than the peak of the pandemic in April 2020. He hailed the "astonishing efforts" of everyone involved in the delivery of jobs after the government met its target of offering a first dose to 15 million of the most vulnerable this week and expanded the rollout further to over 65s.

The UK PM praised the "unprecedented national achievement", but said now was "no moment to relax".

"Next week I'll be setting out a roadmap saying as much as we possibly can about the route to normality, even though some things are very uncertain," Johnson said, in reference to the February 22 date he has previously set for laying out an unlocking plan in Parliament.

"Because we want this lockdown to be the last and we want progress to be cautious but also irreversible. So please continue to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives," he said.

The prime minister said while he was "increasingly optimistic" about the possibility of easing restrictions, he couldn't guarantee the cur-

No new cases raise hopes NZ will end lockdown

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WELLINGTON, 16 FEBRUARY

For a second consecutive day, New Zealand reported no new community cases of the coronavirus on Tuesday, raising hopes that a lockdown in Auckland will be lifted Wednesday.

Just how three family members contracted the disease remains a mystery. After the cases were found, top lawmakers hurriedly placed New Zealand's largest city into a three-day lockdown, the nation's first in

six months. Covid Response Minister Chris Hipkins said the final decision by lawmakers on whether to lift the restrictions will depend on any new information or cases that crop up over the next 24 hours.

A day when we get zero positive test results is always a good day, Hipkins said. Health officials have been ramping up testing since the outbreak.

On Monday, they administered more than 15,000 tests and processed the results of nearly 6,000.

have signed up for the UN-backed COVAX effort, which aims to deliver vaccines to the world's most vulnerable people.

EU says Moderna to fill vaccine gap by March: The European Commission says it expects Moderna to make up a shortfall in deliveries of its vaccine by next month.

EU Commission spokeswoman Vivian Loonella told reporters that Moderna told EU authorities about delays in vaccine deliveries for this month, but that's likely the US company will be caught up in March. Spanish media reported on Tuesday that Spain will be receiving just under half of the 400,000 Moderna doses it was expecting this week. The Spanish Health Ministry told the AP that a similar reduction has been announced across Europe.

Fauci wins \$1 mn Dan David Prize: Dr Anthony Fauci has won the \$1 million Dan David Prize for defending science and advocating for vaccines now being administered to protect people from the coronavirus.

The Israel-based Dan David Foundation on Monday named President Joe Biden's chief medical adviser as the winner of one of three prizes. It said he had earned the recognition over a lifetime of leadership on HIV research and AIDS relief, as well as his advocacy for the vaccines against COVID-19. AP

Chinese vaccine arrives in Hungary, a first in the EU

BUDAPEST, 16 FEBRUARY

A shipment of Covid vaccines produced in China arrived in Hungary on Tuesday, making it the first of the European Union's 27 nations to receive a Chinese vaccine.

A jet carrying 550,000 vaccines developed by the Chinese state-owned company Sinopharm landed at Budapest's international airport after flying in from Beijing. The shipment is enough to treat 275,000 people with the two-dose jab, Dr Agnes Galgoczy of the National Public Health Centre. Hungarian health authorities were the first in the EU to approve the Sinopharm jab for emergency use on January 29. The country expects to receive 5 million total doses of the Sinopharm vaccine over the next four months, enough to treat 2.5 million people in the country of nearly 10 million. AP

With this vaccine, five different types are now available in Hungary so that we may get as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible, Galgoczy said, adding that vaccine shots won't begin until the shipment is evaluated by the National Public Health Centre. Hungarian health authorities were the first in the EU to approve the Sinopharm jab for emergency use on January 29. The country expects to receive 5 million total doses of the Sinopharm vaccine over the next four months, enough to treat 2.5 million people in the country of nearly 10 million. AP

YOUNG DEVOTEES



A Nepalese devotee



COME WHAT MAY

Jurgen Klopp (in photo, left) has played down rumours that he could step down as Liverpool coach amid a poor run of form and a difficult period in his personal life. The Premier League champions have lost five of their last seven games across all competitions, with Klopp also having to deal with the death of his mother last week.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Fist bumps: Fifa chief Gianni Infantino has hit back at reports he told female referees not to greet a Qatari delegate during the Club World Cup medal ceremony as "false rumours." The girls did not receive the fist bumps from sheikh he gave to their male counterparts.

Betting row: Football clubs will be banned from promoting gambling when tough new rules come into force. Arsenal drew criticism after the club's social media account had promoted their "official betting partner" before their FA Cup tie with Southampton last month.

Bayern battle: Bayern Munich had to battle back from two goals down to get a 3-3 draw against Arminia Bielefeld on Monday and had their lead at the top of the Bundesliga cut to five points, four days after lifting the Club World Cup for a sixth title in nine months.

Loss reported: Celtic revealed a pre-tax loss of almost £6m and a decrease in revenue of almost 24 per cent in the club's half-year financial report. Keeping Neil Lennon's squad intact and the adverse impact of Covid-19 were the "two key factors" in the money slump.

Alonso discharged: Fernando Alonso has been discharged from hospital after he suffered a fractured jaw in a road cycling accident. The double world champion, 39, underwent surgery following a collision with a car at a supermarket last week in Switzerland.

Mercedes' target: Red Bull team principal Christian Horner believes Mercedes will target Max Verstappen as Lewis Hamilton's replacement. Hamilton recently agreed on a one-year contract extension, but Mercedes are having to consider life after their star driver.

F1 self-reliance: Red Bull will make their own engines from 2022 after agreeing to take over Honda's Formula One operation. Honda are leaving the sport at the end of the year, but the new deal allows Red Bull to continue using the Japanese manufacturer's technology.

Miller held: Scott Miller, a former Olympic swimmer who won a silver medal for Australia was arrested on Tuesday and charged with running a syndicate trafficking in the drug "ice," police said. Miller and an accomplice were arrested in police raids in two Sydney suburbs.

Games chief: The panel charged with finding a new Tokyo Olympics chief was to begin talks on Tuesday as campaigners called for more transparency. Yoshiro Mori resigned on Friday after his claims that women talk too much in meetings sparked widespread outrage.

Doubt deepens: Over half of Japanese firms believe the Tokyo Olympic Games should be cancelled or postponed, a survey showed on Monday, casting further doubt over the fate of the troubled Games. Japan has long been struggling to contain the coronavirus.

India demolish England by 317 runs to level series 1-1

AGENCIES

CHENNAI, 16 FEBRUARY

India's previous biggest win margin by run was in 1986, when Kapil Dev's team defeated England at Headingly, Leeds by 279 runs. The win takes India to the second spot on the World Test Championship points table.



Tuesday, Moeen Ali was the top scorer with an 18-ball 43, though it came when everything was lost for England. Captain Joe Root's dogged 92-ball 33 was the next best score.

Earlier, India, after captain Virat Kohli won the toss, had scored 329 in their first innings, thanks to Rohit Sharma's century. Ashwin then captured five wickets to bundle out England for a mere 134, to help India take a huge 195-run lead. In the second innings, Ashwin shone with the bat, too, as he hammered his fifth century in India's second-innings' 286, which set a gigantic task for Root's team.

England had won the first Test at the same venue on February 9. The third day-night Test begins in Ahmedabad on February 24. The fourth Test will also be played there.

Ashwin was the hero of India's win as he scored a century and captured eight wickets, including a five-wicket haul in the first innings.

On Tuesday, Patel dismissed England captain Joe Root (33 off 92 balls) early in the second session on Tuesday to all but end the visitors' negligible chances of saving the Test in more than two days' play left.

While all-rounder Moeen Ali put up a quickfire 38-run stand with Stuart Broad (5 not out) for the last wicket, he eventually fell to Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav, who ended England's second-innings with two wickets. Moeen hit three fours and five sixes in his 18-ball 43.

SCOREBOARD

India 1st Innings: 329
England 1st Innings: 134
India 2nd Innings: 286
England 2nd Innings: (Overnight 53/3)
Rory Burns c V Kohli b R Ashwin 25
Dan Sibley lbw b a Patel 3
Dan Lawrence st R Pant b Patel 12
Jack Leach c R Sharma b a Patel 0
Joe Root c A Rahane b a Patel 33
Ben Stokes c V Kohli b R Ashwin 8
Ollie Pope c J Sharma b a Patel 12
Ben Foakes c A Patel b K Yadav 2

Moeen Ali st R Pant b K Yadav 43
Ollie Stone lbw b K Yadav 0
Stuart Broad not out 5
Extras: (B-6, LB-1) 7
Total: (all out in 54.2 overs) 164
Fall of wickets: 1-17, 2-49, 3-50, 4-66, 5-90, 6-110, 7-116, 8-116, 9-126.
Bowling: Ishant Sharma 6-3-13-0, Axar Patel 21-5-65, Ravichandran Ashwin 18-5-53, Mohammed Siraj 3-1-6, Kuldeep Yadav 6.2-1-25-2.

Axar Patel 6th Indian spinner to bag 5-wicket haul on Test debut



AGENCIES
CHENNAI, 16 FEBRUARY

five-wicket hauls in both innings (8/61 and 8/75) against the West Indies, also at same venue in Chennai, in 1987-88, to help India win by 255 runs. And leg-spinner Amit Mishra bagged a five (5/71) on debut against Australia in Mohali in 2008-09, before Ashwin's feat in Delhi. India won by 320 runs.

Ahmedabad pink ball Test sold out: Ganguly

A delighted BCCI President Sourav Ganguly on Tuesday announced that all tickets for the pink ball Day/Night Test between India and England in Ahmedabad have been "sold out," adding that call on entry of spectators in the upcoming IPL will also be taken shortly.

"Ahmedabad is completely sold out. Happy to see normalcy back," Ganguly told Star Sports in an interview.

"I spoke to Jay Shah and he's very keen on these Test matches. Just for him also cricket is coming back to Ahmedabad after six-seven years because they built the new stadium," former India captain said.

Moeen Ali pulls out of last two Tests, Bairstow returns to England squad

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 16 FEBRUARY

Hopefully he feels better," said skipper Joe Root after the match while speaking to the media.

The off-spinner tested positive for Covid-19 on arrival in Sri Lanka and had to miss the two Test matches there. He was available for the first Test against India but England decided to keep Dom Bess, who had done well against Sri Lanka.

Moeen was picked ahead of Bess for the second Test and although he picked eight wickets in the Test he was expensive and thrashed by Rohit Sharma in the first innings.

England, as per their rotation policy, also allow players to go out of the bubble. They have that option. It is important that we stand by that. That decision has been made.

Anderson was rested for the second Test after leading the visitors to victory in the first. The decision to not include Bairstow was especially criticised by the likes of former England captains Kevin Pietersen and Michael Vaughan after the 31-year-old right-handed batsman finished England's preceding two-Test series against Sri Lanka as their second highest run-scorer. England 17-man squad for the third Test and although he picked eight wickets in the Test he was expensive and thrashed by Rohit Sharma in the first innings.

England, as per their rotation policy, also allow players to go out of the bubble. They have that option. It is important that we stand by that. That decision has been made.

Turn alone did not give me wickets, pace and guile did: Ashwin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 16 FEBRUARY



India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin on Tuesday asserted that more than the turning Chepauk pitch, it was the "mind of the England batsmen" that helped his team dominate the second Test here, crediting his "pace and guile" for getting the maximum out of the track.

The quality of the pitch became a subject of intense debate and former England players like Michael Vaughan and Kevin Pietersen mocked it for being a dust bowl. England assistant coach Graham Thorpe had termed it "challenging".

Ashwin, who was named man-of-the-match for his match figures of 8 for 96 and a brilliant century in India's second innings, played down the talk

surrounding the pitch. England were bowled out for 164 in pursuit of 482 on Tuesday.

"As much as people were predicting things from the outside, I thought the ball was doing much wasn't getting wickets. It was the mind of the batsmen that got us wickets," Ashwin said but did not elaborate on his comment on the rival batsmen.

"I have been playing for years over here now and it

takes pace and guile to do it. Keeping intent was very important," he said after India's massive 317-run win to level the four-match series 1-1. Ashwin said he enjoyed his game in front of the home crowd as he is "aware" of the home conditions.

Root refuses to blame rotation policy

England captain Joe Root (in photo) on Tuesday refused to blame their rotation policy and team selection for the crushing 317-run defeat to India in the second Test here, saying he has a very capable group of players at his disposal.

Indian spinners Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin ran through the England second innings to pave the way for the team's series-leveelling win.

"My job is to manage the squad of players that we have here, and trying to do that to the best of my ability. I think we've got some wonderful players and a squad of players that is more than capable of winning here," Root said at the post-match press conference.

"As soon our squad is passed over, it's my responsibility to try and get the best out and try to win as many games as we can."

England's rotations policy, which saw them rest influential players such as James Anderson and Jos Buttler, has been slammed by many former players of the game.

Root said it is the best they could have asked for under the current circumstances, brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Djokovic beats Zverev, enters into Australian Open semis

AGENCIES
MELBOURNE, 16 FEBRUARY



in a positive direction, Djokovic said in his on-court interview in Rod Laver Arena about the way he mangled his equipment by hitting it against the court three times after netting a backhand return at 3-1 in the third set.

Serena tops Halep

As well as she played at the start of her Australian Open quarterfinal, Serena Williams suddenly was struggling early in the second set.

After one mistake against No. 2 seed Simona Halep who won the last time they played each other Williams pointed at her racket strings and made a sour face, as if to make clear it wasn't truly her own fault. After

Williams got into an argument with the chair umpire after her coach was caught trying to relay a signal that's not allowed in Grand Slam play and wound up being docked a game.

another, Williams looked up at her guest box with palms up and asked, What is happening?

That dismay did not last long.

Williams claimed the last five

games and beat Halep 6-3, 6-

3 on Tuesday to return to the

final four at Melbourne Park for

the first time since she won the

tournament in 2017.

Seeking a record-tying 24th

Grand Slam title, Williams set

up a showdown against No. 3

Naomi Osaka, who will carry

a 19-match winning streak into Thursday's semifinals.

She's Serena, Osaka said.

Williams got into an argument

with the chair umpire after her

coach was caught trying to

relay a signal that's not allowed

in Grand Slam play and wound

up being docked a game.

for free, have arguably been confirmed.

Barcelona appear neither

ready to win the biggest trophies

immediately nor able to spend

what is needed to do it. As it

stands, Koeman's team sit third

in La Liga, eight points behind

Atletico Madrid.

They were beaten by Athletic

during the Covid-19 pandemic. Speaking after captaining South Africa to a home Test series win against Sri Lanka, De Kock questioned the sustainability of "bubble" life which he described as "unsettling." He said then that he had mixed feelings about touring Pakistan because of the frustrations of being confined to a bio-secure environment. South Africa's director of cricket Graeme Smith said earlier on Monday

that all of the country's contracted players would play in the T20 tournament, as well as the remaining matches in a four-day competition. But it later emerged that De Kock and Faf du Plessis were not in the squads announced by the country's six franchises

DELHI GOVERNMENT SETS A PRECEDENT IN COVID MANAGEMENT

Several exemplary initiatives and steps by the Delhi government made the fight against Corona in Delhi easier

There have been various instances of good governance and great governments throughout history. But such recognition does not come without its own trials and tribulations. They are especially tested on their ability and skill in handling disasters or challenges faced by the countries across the world. Perhaps the most formidable challenge to humanity at present is Coronavirus, which has impacted the entire world. There are very few governments in the world that have faced this unprecedented crisis with great skill, sincerity and patience. While the impact and fear of this pandemic is diminishing today, India is being praised all over the world for its handling of the pandemic. And in this concerted effort of the nation, the contribution of Delhi government is unforgettable. The sudden lockdown announced in the last week of March, not only impacted the health sector, but also challenged the governments on all fronts of everyday life. The attention of the entire country and the world was focused on Delhi, which with its dense population of nearly 2 crore people was especially vulnerable to the pandemic. In this dire situation, the Arvind Kejriwal led Delhi government courageously confronted and skilfully handled the combined onslaught of challenges like Coronavirus transmission, migration, hunger, unemployment and education. Each new initiative and scheme launched by the Delhi government to combat each challenge during lockdown became a precedent for the entire world. As the impact of the pandemic first began being felt in Delhi, the government started implementing ideas for the poor and destitute. The Delhi government immediately began providing free cooked food to nearly a million people during the lockdown. Not only this, the Kejriwal led government distributed dry rations free of charge, to millions of people trapped



within the confines of their homes during lockdown. For those who were impoverished but did not have ration cards, a new scheme was launched to register them online so that they could avail free ration. Financial assistance was provided to those employed in the public transportation sector as well as to construction workers. The biggest challenge was handling the mass migration of workers from Delhi. People come to Delhi to work from all over the country and with transportation closed, it became an especially onerous task to send them back to their homes. The entire nation was looking towards Delhi, but the earnestness and systematic manner with which the Delhi government overcame this challenge sets a wonderful example for good governance.

In times of crisis, the public looked up to the government, and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal must be applauded as he never let the public feel disheartened during the pandemic. Perhaps this is the reason that in that era of great turmoil, when news of tragedy and misery was pouring in from across the country, the Delhi Government was gearing up to meet the challenges ahead.

The Delhi government skillfully handled the combined onslaught of challenges like coronavirus transmission, migration, hunger, unemployment and education

Delhi has conducted the highest number of COVID testing, equivalent to more than half the population of Delhi being tested

This is an excellent illustration of the Delhi government's foresightedness. While even the governments of developed countries were unable to comprehend how to fight against Corona, the Delhi government launched several brilliant and effective initiatives during this period. The country's largest COVID care center was established in the capital. Many new hospitals were also opened in this period. Delhi was the first in the country to successfully deploy home isolation. The help of various agencies was taken to

ensure that such patients living in their homes did not have any problem with doctors or other medical facilities. Free oximeters were also provided to each patient. Delhi's home isolation model even received tremendous praise from the Central government. Similarly, when the rest of the governments were in a dilemma about plasma therapy, the Delhi government started it immediately after getting assurances from doctors and experts. Plasma banks were also established. There was a time when an entire area was sealed off whenever a patient was infected. Delhi demonstrated for the first time that it is unnecessary to seal the entire city for fear of infection. In November, a record eight and a half thousand patients were found infected on a single day. But the Delhi government overcame this critical situation very efficiently.

First, the speed of testing was accelerated. Presently, 1 crore tests have been conducted in Delhi which is equivalent to more than half the population of the state. It is the highest in the country. The 4-T measures initiated by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal were also later adopted in other states.



LAUNCH OF 'SWITCH DELHI' CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Delhi government is amongst the first state governments in India to notify an electric vehicle policy

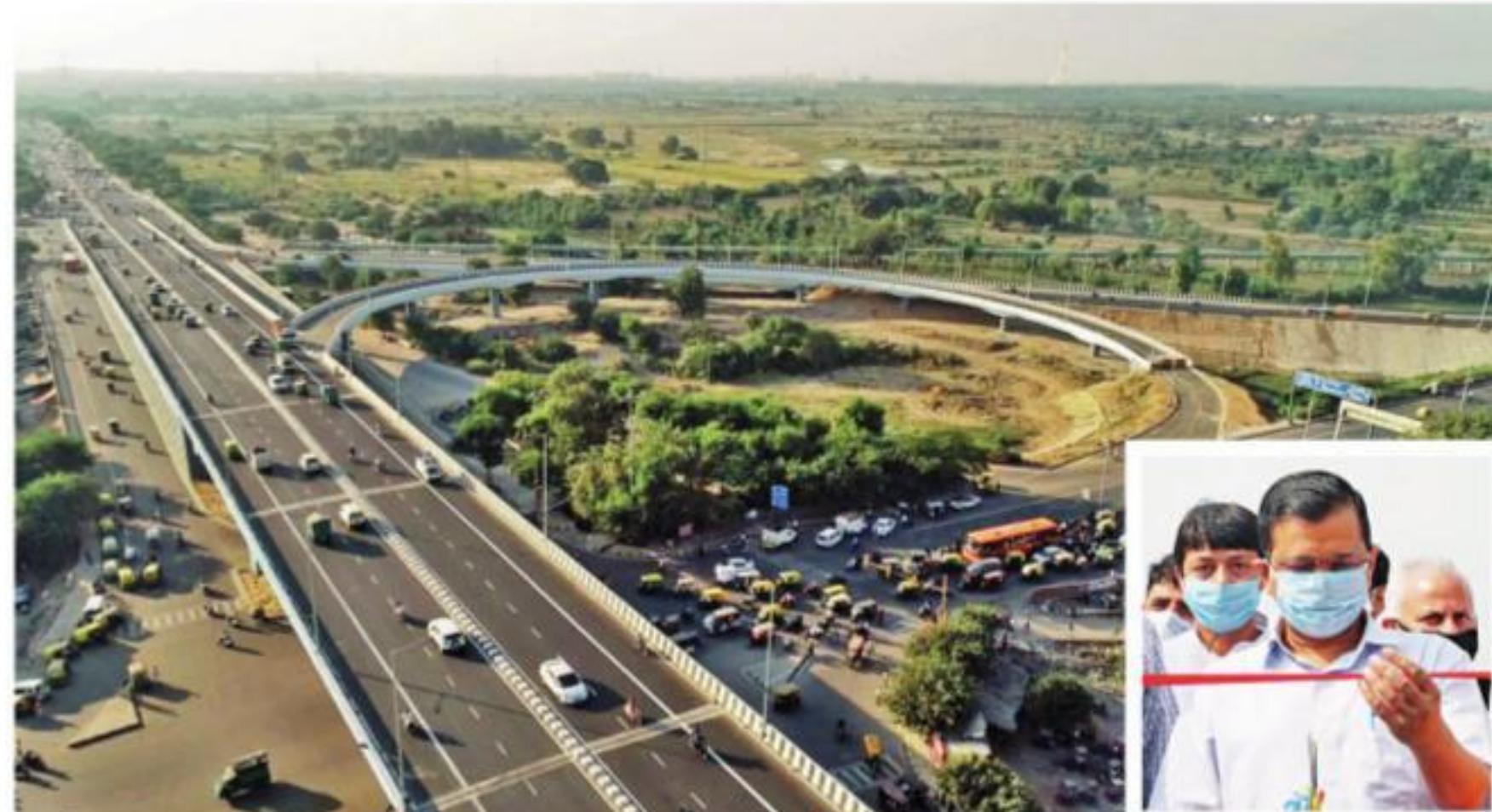
The Delhi government's focus has been on establishing connectivity in every part of Delhi along with bringing an environment-friendly transport system. To fulfill this, Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government became one of the first state governments to draft an ambitious Electric Vehicle Policy and then in August 2020 the government notified this. The Delhi government launched the Electric Vehicle Policy under which it aims to waive off the registration fee, road tax, and provides an incentive of upto 1.5 lakh for new cars. Through this policy, the government aims to generate employment to give a boost to Delhi's economy and reduce pollution levels in the national capital. The Delhi EV policy envisages that 25% of all new vehicle registrations should be Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) by 2024. Under this policy, the Delhi government will give an incentive of up to Rs 30,000 for two-wheelers, autos, e-rickshaws and freight vehicles while for cars, it will provide an incentive of up to Rs 1.5 lakh. To expedite electric vehicle adoption, CM Arvind Kejriwal launched 'Switch Delhi' campaign on February 5. The CM appealed to people to buy electric vehicles to combat pollution in the city. The Delhi

government has also planned to hire only electric vehicles for governmental purposes in the next six months. The Delhi government asked delivery chains and big companies, resident welfare associations, market associations, malls and cinema halls to promote electric vehicles and set up charging stations at their premises. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also appealed to

CM Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government asked delivery chains and big companies, resident welfare associations, market associations, malls and cinema halls to promote electric vehicles and set up charging stations at their premises

In the 'Switch Delhi' campaign, awareness will be created about the benefits of electric vehicles and how it can contribute to making Delhi clean and pollution-free

clean and pollution-free. Appeal was made to the people to take part in the campaign to promote the replacement of polluting petrol and diesel vehicles with electric vehicles and make a contribution towards a pollution-free Delhi. The Delhi government has been combating the menace of air pollution through multiple measures. In the first week of two-thirds of all vehicles in Delhi and cause maximum pollution. Incentives up to Rs 30,000 can be availed upon the purchase of two-wheelers listed under the policy along with scrapping incentives. Under Delhi's EV policy, 23 two-wheeler models are available and eligible for purchase and scrapping incentives across seven manufacturers. By switching to electric two-wheelers which have very low operating costs, an individual can make an annual saving of approximately Rs 22,000 as compared to using petrol scooter and Rs 20,000 as compared to a petrol bike. An average electric two-wheeler provides a lifetime savings of 1.98 tonnes of carbon emissions as compared to an average petrol two-wheeler, which is equivalent to planting eleven trees. The Delhi government has launched social media handles for its latest campaign "Switch Delhi". The DDC will be leading the social media outreach programme for the campaign on various social media platforms like on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram, said an official statement. This will help the Delhi government to better connect with the citizens of Delhi.



DELHI GOVERNMENT SAVES CRORES IN BUILDING OF FLYOVERS

To make commuting of Delhi residents faster, the Delhi government has built new flyovers and underpasses in record time

Estimated at Rs 78 crores will also be completed in a year's time. The elevated corridor of Rao Tula Ram flyover, built on the outer ring road, will help decongest the area and prove a boon for people commuting towards the IGI airport from south Delhi and Noida.

Delhi government led by CM Arvind Kejriwal completed two flyovers (Shastri Park and Seelampur) in record time and saved Rs 53 crores in the construction cost

The two flyovers will significantly reduce travel time between Shahdara in East Delhi to Kashmere Gate Interstate Bus Terminus (ISBT)



Delhi becomes the only Indian city to get featured in the list of the World's Best Cities for 2021

Under Arvind Kejriwal, Delhi has experienced rapid development in the past 6 years



Delhi got featured in the list of World's Best Cities for 2021 making our Delhi the only Indian city to rank among the 100 best cities across the world. Delhi, the national capital of India, secured the 62nd position in this prestigious list. Last year, Delhi was at the 81st position and has significantly improved its ranking this year. The continuous development work of CM Arvind Kejriwal has brought only great news for the citizens of Delhi. The ranking was done by Resonance Consultancy Limited which is based out of Vancouver and specialises in destination development, branding, marketing, design, tourism, data, and travel reports. Some of the other cities that have been featured in the list include Amsterdam, Rome, Washington DC, Toronto, Prague, and St Petersburg. CM Arvind Kejriwal said, "Such good news for all Dilliwalas. All dilliwalas have worked so hard in the last six

years to make it happen. The world is noticing the positive changes happening in Delhi." Deputy Chief Minister Shri Manish Sisodia said, "Congratulations to all the proud people of Delhi and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for the leadership. Our beloved Delhi is ranked 62

in World's Best cities. The only Indian city in the list. There is a significant improvement from the past ranking i.e. 81." This ranking has given the national capital 62nd position, making it the only Indian city to feature in the list. Reportedly, the ranks have been given to 100 cities from across the world with a population of over 10 lakh. The ranking was based on the basis of diverse factors, including online hashtags, number of check-ins, diversity, tourist attractions, weather and more. It also included factors like Covid-19 infections in July, income incongruity and unemployment. While Rome (Italy), Chicago (United States), Toronto (Canada), San Francisco (USA), Amsterdam (Netherlands), Berlin (Germany), Prague (Czech Republic) and Washington DC (United States) took the new few spots, Delhi in India was ranked 62 on the list, the only Indian city to have been featured on the list.