



Everyone will have to work for the party

KANHAIYALAL AGARWAL, PRESIDENT, TMC, NORTH DINAJPUR

ON THREATS BY PARTY WORKERS THAT THEY WILL NOT WORK IF SOME CANDIDATES WERE NOT CHANGED

BJP, Cong slam AAP govt Budget: 'Visionless, directionless, hollow'

PTI

NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

Opposition BJP and Congress slammed the Delhi government's budget presented in Assembly on Tuesday, alleging it lacks vision and makes hollow promises to the people of Delhi.

The budget 2021-22 is silent on present and short-term planning for Delhi, but sells "dreams and hollow promises of Delhi of 2047, city BJP president Adesh Gupta said in a press conference.

The Delhi government presented a Rs 69,000-crore budget themed on "patriotism" on Tuesday under which installation of 500 flag masts and programmes on the lives of freedom fighters are planned across the city, and announced free COVID-19 vaccination for all its hospitals in the coming days.

Senior Congress leaders addressed a joint press conference where they termed the Kejriwal government's budget visionless and directionless.

It lacks a financial package to bail out small scale, household industries, shopkeepers and traders affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they party leader said.

BJP MLAs, numbering eight in the 70-member Delhi Assembly, staged a walkout after the budget was presented by Deputy Chief Min-

'It lacks a financial package to bail out small scale, household industries, shopkeepers and traders affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic'

ister Manish Sisodia, alleging corruption in bus procurement by the government.

The Delhi BJP president charged that the AAP government used the budget not for development but electoral benefit.

Every year, the Kejriwal government claims to be presenting a historic budget, but it fails to utilize the budgetary allocations for education, health, pollution and transport, he alleged.

"This must be the first state budget in the country which shows dreams to people about 26 years later, but is silent on deteriorating pollution and public transport situation in Delhi," Sisodia has talked of making Delhi like Singapore by 2047 and holding Olympic Games in Delhi while a few days ago the government talked of making Delhi like London and make Yamuna river as clean as the River Thames," Gupta said.

BJP MLA and Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh

Bidhuri said the budget had nothing for the field of health, transport, pollution control and social welfare.

The Delhi Congress leaders said that Deshbhakti Budget of the Aam Aadmi Party government was a visionless, directionless and hollow budget.

They said it was a pointless exercise to sell a distant dream that Delhi's quality of living will be like that in Singapore in 2047 instead of addressing the existing issues in the city.

"Reduction in the capital expenditure from 34 percent to 24 percent will impact infrastructure development like creation of new flyovers, schools, hospitals, roads and other such facilities in the city. The allocation of Rs 50 crore for COVID-19 vaccination in government hospitals is peanuts, said a Delhi Congress statement.

Although the Kejriwal government presented a Rs 69,000 crore budget, a Rs 4000 crore jump from last year's Rs 65,000 crore estimates, the ground reality was different, said Delhi Congress leaders.

An amount of Rs 6000 crore from last year's budget remained unspent which was a clear indication of purposeless governance, they alleged, adding Delhi's fiscal deficit was one of the worst in the country.

Delhi govt presents ₹69K crore 'Deshbhakti Budget' for '21-22

Sisodia presents AAP govt's Budget in the Assembly for 7th consecutive time; Budget makes major allocations for education & health, announces mega celebrations for India's 75th Independence Day

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

The AAP-led Delhi government today presented a Rs 69,000-crore Budget for the financial year 2021-22 in the state Assembly in the lingering shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, which declared free Covid vaccination for all in its hospitals.

It was projected as a "Deshbhakti" (patriotism)-themed Budget under which installation of 500 flag masts and programmes on the lives of freedom fighters are planned across the city.

It was the Arvind Kejriwal government's first paperless Budget which deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, who also holds the finance portfolio, read out from a tablet computer in the Assembly.

Presenting the Delhi Budget for the seventh consecutive time in the House, Sisodia said that there will be a "deshbhakti period" in the city schools.

In the 2021-22 Budget, education, health and transport have received higher allocations.

Sisodia proposed to allocate Rs 16,377 crore, one-



Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia presents Delhi's first paperless Budget in Vidhan Sabha on Tuesday. SNS

fourth of the total Budget outlay, for the education sector, while the health sector got Rs 9,934 crore or 14 per cent of the Budget.

He said the Kejriwal-led Delhi government will celebrate the country's 75th Independence Day and organise various programmes for 75 weeks starting 12 March in the run-up to the mega event.

The AAP government has proposed to allocate Rs 45 crore to install high masts to hoist the national flag at 500 places across Delhi.

Grand events under "Fes-

tivals of India" and "Indian Classical Music Festival" were among the major highlights of the 75-week-long celebration, to be held from this Friday till 15 August 2022.

Sisodia also announced that the Covid vaccine will be administered to people for free at the hospitals run by the Delhi government in the coming phases of the inoculation drive.

He said an allocation of Rs 50 crore has been made under the "Aam Aadmi Nishulk Covid Vaccine Yojana" in this regard.

Currently, vaccination at the hospitals run by the Centre and the Delhi government is free for senior citizens and those in the 45-59 age group with comorbidities, while an amount of Rs 250 is being charged at private hospitals.

"Learning from our Covid-19 management, an amount of Rs 1,293 crore has been set aside for the expansion of healthcare services, including for opening new hospitals, renovating old ones and augmenting beds," Sisodia said.

He also announced that special "Mahila Mohalla Clinics" will be opened in Delhi from next year and 100 such clinics will come up in the first phase.

The AAP government plans to increase Delhi's per capita income to the level of Singapore by 2047, Sisodia said, pointing out that the total outlay of the Budget was 6.1 per cent more than the budget presented for the financial year 2020-21.

He said smart health cards will be issued to every citizen in Delhi, adding that a health information management system is being implemented.

Sisodia also said 100 specialised schools of excellence will be set up across the national capital and a virtual model school will be set up to promote and adopt technology.

"The Delhi government will also start universities for teacher training and law studies," he said.

One Sainik school was proposed in Delhi in the Budget. Besides, the AAP government has also decided to provide yoga instructors in colonies for which an amount of Rs 25 crore has been allocated in it.

CM Kejriwal said that "deshbhakti" is the "defining feature" of this Budget as it pays tributes to freedom fighters and hopes to work towards building the capital and the country as envisioned by them.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF

MS. MANJUJA WADHWA

Additional District Judge-02

Shahdara District,

Room No. 52

Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

GP No. 02/2021

1. Smt. Maya, w/o Shri Babu Lal

2. Shri Balu Lal, s/o Shri Nanu Ram, r/o H. No. 254/6, Gali No. 2, Idgaha Road, Bhola Nath Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110093.

— Petitioners

Versus

1. The State, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Through its Chief Secretary, Secretary, Office of Secretariat, I.P.S., Estate, New Delhi-110002.

— Respondent

CITATION FOR PUBLICATION OF PETITION U/S 7, 8 & 10 OF GUARDIANS & WARDS ACT, 1890 FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIANS OF THE MINORS NAMELY PRIYANKA, ARUSHI AND MAYANK

AND MAYANK

Whereas the 01-05-2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case, notice is hereby given that the minor having interest in the said petition concerned may if he/she desire appear in this court of the said 01-05-2021 and see the proceedings.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 05-03-2021.

Additional District Judge, 02

Shahdara District,

Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT

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

In the Court of

Ms. Manjusha Wadhwaa

Addl. District Judge-02

District Shahdara,

Room No. 52

Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

CS - 676/2020

Sunita

Versus

Sanjiv Kumar & Ors.

To,

1. Sh. Sanjiv Kumar, s/o Late Shri Nathu Singh,

2. Sh. Narendra Kumar, s/o Late Sh. Nathu Singh, both r/o H. No. 5/33, Gali No. 5, Jagannagar, Rohtak Nagar, Delhi-110032.

The Defendant abovenamed.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 28th day of April, 2021, the day fixed for the final hearing will be heard and determined ex-parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 5th day of March, 2021.

Addl. District Judge-02

District Shahdara,

Karkardooma Courts, 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. Virender Singh

ACJ-cum-CCJ-cum-ARC,

Rohini Court, Delhi

CS No. 34534/2016

Vinod Kumar Bansal — Plaintiff

R. N. Singh — Defendant

(For Publication for General Public)

Lrs. of Sh. R. N. Singh, s/o Sh. Subedar Singh :-

1. Smt. Asha Singh, w/o Lt. Sh. R. N. Singh

2. Sh. Mahesh Singh, s/o Lt. Sh. R. N. Singh

3. Sh. Vikas Singh, s/o Lt. Sh. R. N. Singh

All r/o H-157, M.P. Enclave, Pitampura, N. Delhi.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 18th day of March, 2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard

KOLKATA

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4, Chowringhee Square

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BANGALORE

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50, Residency Road, Bangalore-

560025.

Tel: 080-22229129, 080-22234813

SILIGURI

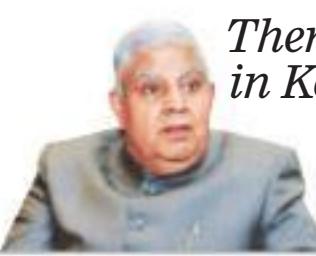
13A, Dabgram Industrial Growth

Centre,

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

All other stations in India - Re. 1

It is made clear



There is a need for modernisation of fire and municipal services in Kolkata, which is a major city in the country and the world.

WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR JAGDEEP DHANKHAR
AFTER VISITING THE NEW KOLLAGHAT BUILDING

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH 2021

03

Haryana govt to set up university in Nuh

Manohar Lal Khattar-led Haryana govt is also going to create a separate cadre of specialist doctors

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 9 MARCH

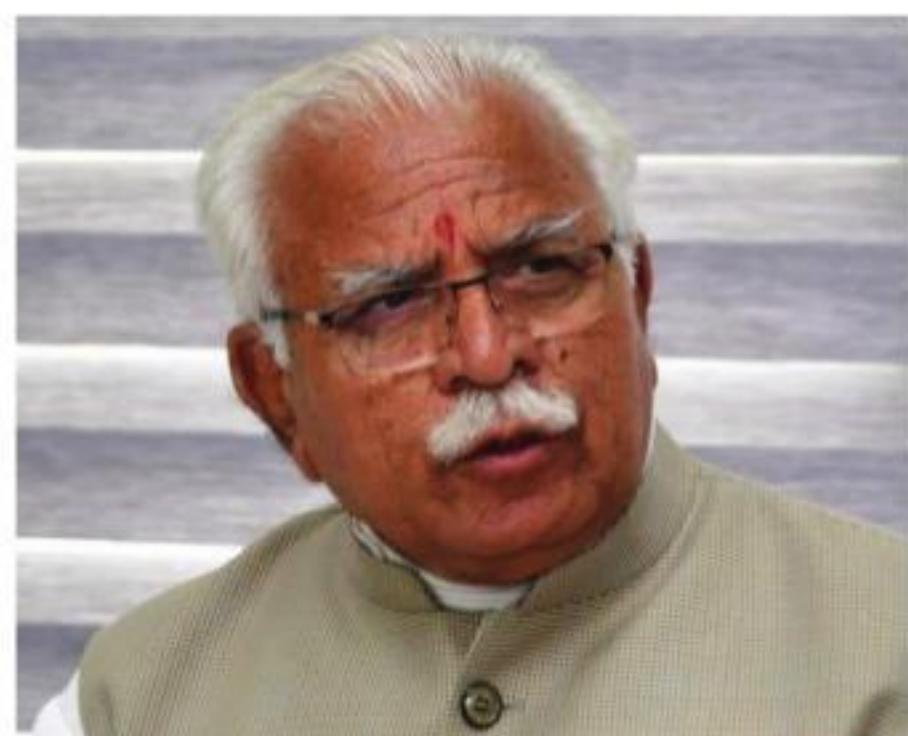
The Manohar Lal Khattar-led Haryana government is going to create a separate cadre of specialist doctors in the state.

The Khattar government will also set up a state university in Nuh district soon.

Haryana health minister Anil Vij today told the state Assembly that in a bid to overcome the shortage of specialist doctors in the state, a separate cadre of these doctors will be created.

While responding to a question asked during the ongoing budget session of the Assembly, Vij said that the state government will soon recruit 400 to 500 doctors, to overcome the shortage of doctors in all the hospitals of the state.

He said that there are about 4,800 sanctioned posts of doctors in the state, out of which 1,141 posts are currently vacant. Of these, around 200



doctors are working in Chandigarh.

The minister said directions have been given to the officers concerned for separately sanctioning the posts of doctors working in Chandigarh so that the shortage of doctors who are sent to Chandigarh in the ratio of 40:60 can be overcome.

Vij said that after the year

2014, there has been a extensive improvement in the healthcare system in Haryana, due to which the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in the state has decreased from 127 to 91 now, Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) has decreased from 26 to 22, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) has decreased to 30 from 41 as compared to 2014. Apart from this, the sex

ratio in the state has also improved and has increased from 868 to 918.

He said the proposal for renovation of the building of Primary Health Centre, Hasanpur, Hodal is under process. He said that 14.75 acres of land has been provided by Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran for the construction of 200-bed hospital in Fatehabad city.

The drawing of this hospital has been approved. After completion of all departmental formalities in this regard, construction work of the new building will be started in Sector 9, Fatehabad.

The health minister further informed the House that 55 posts of Medical Officers have been approved in District Civil Hospital, Ambala City, out of which doctors have been appointed on 46 posts. In addition, seven medical officers are working on deputation outside the District Civil Hospital, Ambala City.

Haryana education minister Kanwar Pal told the

House that a state university will soon be opened in Nuh district.

Responding to a question, he said the Haryana government is committed to increase educational facilities in Nuh district of south Haryana.

The education minister said the previous governments were responsible for not bringing in the required reforms in the education sector in Nuh district.

A proposal to establish a state university in Nuh is under consideration. Identification of land for the proposed university is going on. For this, the deputy commissioner has been directed to submit a report regarding availability of land.

The higher education council is exploring its feasibility. Once feasibility is ascertained, further action will be implemented, said Pal.

The minister informed the House that at present, 21 state universities and one Central university are in Haryana.

'181' helpline launched for women, children, senior citizens in Punjab

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 9 MARCH

Women, children and senior citizens in Punjab can now call up '181' to report any case of crime, harassment or domestic violence with ease, with Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh launching his government's unique 'Saanjh Shakti' initiative (community policing programme).

The CM had on Monday virtually launched Punjab Police's Saanjh Shakti Help Desks in all the 382 police stations of the state and Saanjh Shakti Helpline '181', exclusively for women, children and senior citizens, as part of a slew of initiatives to mark the International Women's Day.

These initiatives will help

women, children and senior citizens in sharing their concerns and grievances with the police in a confidential and conducive environment, said the Chief Minister, lauding the Punjab Police, led by Director General of Police (DGP) Dinkar Gupta, for the 'exemplary' project to empower and protect the vulnerable sections of the society.

DGP Gupta later said that of the total 382 helpdesks, 266 are functioning from Saanjh Kendras — separate stand-alone buildings located in close vicinity to the Police Stations, while the remaining 116 help desks have been set up in the Police Stations as Saanjh Kendra buildings have not been constructed so far.

The Saanjh Kendras have also got new design and furnishing to provide visitors comfortable seating and privacy, while they interact with Punjab Police Mahila Mittar (PPMM) or Woman Police Friend posted in these centres to assist the women, children and senior citizens in dealing with their complaints, recording their statements and preparing the action taken reports. Each Helpdesk will have two women PPMMs, who will get the statement recorded and provide a Unique Identification Number to the complainant for reference. Every complaint will be monitored by ADGP Community Affairs Division and Women & Child Affairs, and the complainants will also be provided with the facility to track the progress of their complaints.

Giving details of the '181' helpline, the DGP said it will be linked with all the help desks for providing dignified access to support services and legal action. Besides reporting domestic violence, eve teasing or harassment etc to the police on this helpline, the complainant can also report cybercrime, including morphing of pictures, creation of profiles of women, or cyberstalking and other forms of harassment on social media, Internet or email, which cases will be referred to the state cyber crime cell for further investigation.

Jai Ram calls on Shah

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 9 MARCH

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Tuesday called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi. It was described as a 'courtesy call'.

The Chief Minister discussed various issues pertaining to HP with the Union Home Minister in a long hour-long meeting.

Jai Ram thanked Shah for 'cooperation' extended by him during the 'forest clearances hurdle' that 'hampered'

the progress of developmental projects in the state. Shah assured the CM that he will

extend all possible support for the developmental needs of the state.

11 Himachal Corporations, 1 Board running in losses

HRTC's accumulated losses mount to ₹ 1533.70 cr

Thakur said the highest expenditure of Rs 56,75,777 was incurred on the Vice Chairman of HRTC in the last three years till 31 July, 2020, followed by that on Vice Chairman of HP State Forest Development Corporation (Rs 30,16,970).

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 9 MARCH

tions into profit.

Congress member Jagat Singh Negi asked why Vice Chairmen are appointed in the Boards and Corporations, which have Chairmen. He said despite them being in losses, the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen are being appointed. He asked the government whether the Boards and the Corporations running in losses would be closed.

In reply to a question by Congress member, Asha Kumari, Health and Family Welfare minister Rajiv Saizal said the PET Scan facility would be provided in the Indira Gandhi Medical College (IGMC) hospital soon. He said CT Scan machines would be installed in other medical colleges. He said CT Scan machines are being installed in Bilaspur, Nahan, Solan and Hamirpur on Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode within a month.

In reply to a question by Congress member from Nalagarh, Lakhvinder Rana, the Health and Family Welfare minister said the Central government has given nod to open level-3 trauma centre in Nalagarh, Una and Kotkhai. He said in Nalagarh the trauma centre would be opened in Covid make-shift hospital.

He said when the Covid cases in Nalagarh would decrease, the make-shift hospital would be used as a trauma centre.

He said 4000 posts would be filled up in the health department, including those of doctors, staff nurses, and paramedical staff. Out of these, Nalagarh hospital would also be provided staff.

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY
TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI

4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building,
Parliament Street, New Delhi - 110001

PUBLICATION NOTICE
in OA No. 211/2019

State Bank of India (Applicant)

VS

Mrs. Reeta Devi & Ors. (Respondent)

To,

DEFENDENTS

1. Ms. Manju J. Homes India Ltd. (Defendant No. 03)

through its Managing Director having its Regd. Office At- C-294, 1st Floor, Vivek Vihar, New Delhi-110095.

Email:- contact@manjuhomes.com

info@manjuhomes.com

Also at:- C-10, Rama Prasha, Ghazabadi, U.P.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 20,18,477.00 (Rupees Twenty Lacs Eighteen Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Six Only) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that, it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Hon'ble Tribunal on 07.04.2021 at 10.30 A.M. (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.drtbndl.gov.in Phone Number: 011-23748473).

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

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-

(i)All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application.

(ii)"Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date hearing can be taken by Registrar/Recovery Officer-I and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "d2r2t.gov.in" under the Public Notice Head.

(iii) In any exigency you that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748473.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on 25 February of 2021.

By Order of the Tribunal
For Registrar, DRT-I, DELHI



PARLIAMENT OF INDIA
RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI 110001

RAJYA SABHA RESEARCH AND STUDY (RSRS) SCHEME

DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN CHAIR, RAJYA SABHA FELLOWSHIPS, RAJYA SABHA STUDENT ENGAGEMENT INTERNSHIPS

Applications are invited for Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Chair, four (4) Rajya Sabha Fellowships from eminent scholars and academic of repute with relevant experience and suitable qualification.

Applications are also invited for ten (10) Rajya Sabha Student Engagement Internships from students pursuing Graduation and Post Graduation studies in any discipline to provide them an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the working of Indian Parliament, especially the Rajya Sabha.

The detailed terms and conditions for the Chair, Fellowship and Internship and the respective Application Forms and proformas are available on the Rajya Sabha website: <http://rajyasabha.nic.in> under the head "Rajya Sabha Research and Study Scheme".

Duly filled in applications along with duly filled in proformas for Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Chair and Rajya Sabha Fellowships may be sent through e-mail at rksahoo.rs@sansad.nic.in and for Rajya Sabha Student Engagement Internships at rssei.rss@sansad.nic.in on or before 31st March, 2021.

davp 31202/11/0006/2021



He said all these Corporations or Board are not in losses only now. "They have been in losses for a long time in the past. Every government appoints Chairmen or Vice Chairmen in these Boards and Corporations," he said.

Thakur said the Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Boards and Corporation did not take 30 per cent salary in the Covid crisis.

He said the government is putting in efforts to bring all the Boards and Corporations

to fill up in the health department, including those of doctors, staff nurses, and paramedical staff. Out of these, Nalagarh hospital would also be provided staff.

He said 4000 posts would be filled up in the health department, including those of doctors, staff nurses, and paramedical staff. Out of these, Nalagarh hospital would also be provided staff.

Himachal Guv stresses on innovation, new techs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 9 MARCH

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya on Tuesday stressed on innovation and new technology and said only those countries in the world are progressing which are giving priorities to emerging technologies.

He was addressing the third convocation ceremony of Himachal Pradesh Technical University (HPTU), Hamirpur where he awarded degrees to 162 students and 43 medals to meritosis students including 22 gold and 21 silver medals.

Dattatreya said changes in areas such as artificial intelligence, block chain technology, big data analytics, machine learning, biotechnology and robotics were challenging traditional methods of engineering.

"We have a golden opportunity to take the country to a new level by adopting and making full use of these technologies.

Demographic advantage can only be achieved when maximum youth are provided with the best education, knowledge and skills.

For this, universities should work on a creative basis with modern technology," he said, while appealing the students to work on innovation and move towards entrepreneurship.

He further stated that India was emerging as a knowledge economy and hoped that our qualified manpower would become the cornerstone of this new era.

HPTU will play a leading role in the new competitive technology, working knowledge and intelligence with enthusiasm and vigilance.

"Quality, affordability and accessibility should be the main elements of the higher education system and it



HP Governor Bandaru Dattatreya addressing third convocation ceremony of HP Technical University, Hamirpur, on Tuesday. SNS

should not allow for much regional difference. Higher education including technical education should be taken to the doorsteps of the people by innovating in the delivery system," he added.

The Governor said the duly launched Higher Education Policy-2020 would help in accomplishing this goal, which needs to be made aware of.

He also appreciated the efforts of HPTU to work in this regard and said the credit of implementation of National Education Policy -2020 also goes to Technical University Hamirpur.

Dattatreya said there were immense opportunities for a student who always develops his knowledge, skills and intelligence with enthusiasm and vigilance.

He added that many Indian youth have achieved world class successes through modern technology only on the basis of their skills and several steps

have been taken by the Central and State Governments to promote self-employment.

"Using these opportunities properly, students like you can become job providers and not job seekers.

HPTU Hamirpur, in its short term has made valuable contributions to the education sector through training, research, innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable programmes.

As a result, the university has also been in the forefront in finding solutions to global challenges and to suit the changing needs of society and economy.

Through training and research, the university has also set up high standards," he added.

State Technical Education Minister Dr. Ram Lal Markandey, HPTU Vice Chancellor S P Bansal, Hamirpur MLA and Governing Body member Narendra Thakur were also present on the occasion among others.

Attention LIC Policyholders

- Please contact your servicing Branch with details
- Provide Bank Account (NEFT) details. NEFT Mandate form is available in all offices or can be downloaded from LIC Web site www.licindia.in under "Download Form" link
- Submit claim discharge forms and policy document
- Submit KYC and Update – Residential Address, Phone



By collecting tax indiscriminately on LPG-petrol-diesel from the people the Central govt is waiving the taxes and debts of its 'friends'

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

ATTACK THE GOVERNMENT OVER RISE IN FUEL PRICES

India

THUMBNAILS



DMK president MK Stalin receives his first dose of Covid-19 vaccine, in Chennai on Tuesday. AGENCIES

BJP MLA Som freed of charges: BJP MLA from Sardhana, Sangeet Som, is free of charges of involvement in 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots as a special court accepted the closure report submitted by SIT in the case in which he was charged of uploading a controversial video on social media that reportedly led to the riots, claiming more than 50 lives. SNS

Kumbh Sandesh Yatra: Renowned scientist, Uhnath Bharath Abhiyan (UBA) and Vigyan Bharathi Chairman, Nalanda University Chancellor and Padma Bushan Vijay Pandurang Bhatkar lauds Kumbh Sandesh Yatra. As the yatra aware the people about ancient culture and traditions, Bhatkar said, "Nation-building through village empowerment is UBA's aim of linking Indian educational institutions for village empowerment." The 40 days yatra is being organised by the Gramodaya Chamber of Commerce and Technology (GCOT). SNS

Multi-cornered contest in TN pols

DMDK walks out of alliance after seat-sharing talks failed

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 9 MARCH



Tamil Nadu election is expected to witness a multi-cornered contest with more fronts emerging everyday.

Along with main contenders, AIADMK-led ruling coalition and DMK-led Opposition front, the Makkal Neethi Miam (MNM)-led front, which include Sarath Kumar's All India Samatha Makkal Katchi (AISMK) and TR Pachamuthu's Indhiya Jananayaka Katchi (IJK), and AMMK-led front which include Owaissi's AIMIM are jostling for the 234 Assembly seats in the southern state.

The ruling AIADMK's ally DMDK on Tuesday walked out of the alliance following failure of seat-sharing talks for the 6 April Assembly elections with just days left for the nominations to open.

After three-rounds of protracted negotiations with the AIADMK that failed to fructify, the DMDK led by actor-turned politician Vijayakanth said it was moving out of the alliance, that also has the PML and BJP as partners.

If Vijayakanth's DMDK ally with smaller parties the contest will become five-cornered in Tamil Nadu. DMDK chief, however, has not revealed the party's next course of action and it is not yet known if the party will join another alliance or face the polls alone.

MNM chief Kamal Haasan quickly invited the DMDK to the front led by him and welcomed other like-minded parties as well. The alliance led

(MMK) were not too comfortable with Owaissi's party joining the DMK alliance. This resulted in the DMK snubbing AIMIM. Muslim dominated Vaniyambadi, Krishnagiri and Sankarapuram are the constituencies AIMIM is contesting.

Wooing women

Meanwhile on women's Day, AIADMK announced that Rs 1,500 would be given to the women heads of the family (as per the ration card) in every household in Tamil Nadu, as part of its poll promises for the Assembly elections. In addition to this, the party has promised six cooking gas cylinders per year to every family in the state.

Chief minister Edappadi Palaniswami has further stated that other announcements will be part of the manifesto, which is likely to be released this week.

Palaniswami's announcements come a day after DMK launched its 'Vision Document' for the next 10 years for Tamil Nadu in which Stalin announced that if voted to power, every household that procures food grains from ration shops in the state will be given Rs 1,000 each transferred to the bank account of the woman in the household.

Meanwhile, MNM chief Kamal Haasan accused the DMK of copying his party's promises regarding honourarium for women. MNM had, months ago, proposed an honourarium for homemakers if the party if voted to power in the upcoming elections in Tamil Nadu.

Sex tapes: Political conspiracy against me, claims Jarkiholi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, 9 MARCH

Former state water resources minister, Ramesh Jarkiholi, 60, who was forced to resign following allegations of sexual harassment involving a woman job aspirant, earlier this week, claimed today that the charges against him were politically motivated.

He told newsmen here that the plot against him was hatched four months ago in the state capital; even claiming that a "big leader" was behind the conspiracy to finish him off politically.

"I knew about the compact disks four months ago. Had discussed the issue with my brother, Balachandra Jarkiholi. I have done nothing wrong. This is not me at all," he asserted. He went on to claim that the unidentified woman in the clips was offered with her family also facing repeated harassment now.

C M B S Yediyurappa and the BJP central leadership had put pressure on Jarkiholi to resign, if only to protect the image of the party while assuring him of all possible help in finding out the truth behind the controversial clips.

Significantly, his family members had also claimed earlier that the former minister was a victim of a plot and the video clips concerned were originally released from Russia. They had even alleged that the conspirators had spent over Rs 20 crore to embarrass the

powerful MLA from Gokak.

The former minister's claims add to the twists and turns that the case has been witnessing. Social activist, Dinesh Kallalai, who had lodged the complaint against him at a local police station, had even sought to withdraw it. The activist had alleged that the unidentified woman in the video was exploited with her family also facing repeated harassment now. The video clips were also shown on some local television channels, leading to Opposition members mounting an attack on BJP government.

C M B S Yediyurappa and the BJP central leadership had put pressure on Jarkiholi to resign, if only to protect the image of the party while assuring him of all possible help in finding out the truth behind the controversial clips.

While expressing gratitude to Yediyurappa and former CM and JDS leader, H D Kumaraswamy, Jarkiholi said they stood by him in difficult times.

Vowing to nail the conspirators he said that they would not be spared as his family's honour had been damaged.

Guj HC mints end to social ban of menstruating women

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 9 MARCH

In a landmark decision, the Gujarat High Court has issued guidelines to the state government for prohibiting social exclusion of women during menstruation.

Responding to a PIL on the matter, a division bench of the High Court headed by Justice J B Pardiwalla has proposed a nine-point guideline seeking to prohibit social exclusion of women at all places on the basis of their menstrual status.

The PIL was filed in the High Court by social activists in the wake of stripping of 68 girls last year in the hostel of Shree Sahajanand Girls Institute in Bhuj to check who among them was menstruating but didn't shift to the basement for next three days, as is mandatory there.

During the last hearing, the government had assured the High Court that it would soon be informed about the steps proposed to be taken to end discrimination against menstruating women at public and private institutions.

The High Court also issued notices to the Centre, Shree Sahajanand Girls Institute and the Swaminarayan sect that runs the college in Bhuj.

The nine-point guidelines proposed by the bench said that the state government should prohibit all educational institutions, hostels and other living spaces for women, private or public, from following social exclusion of women on the basis of their menstrual status in any manner.

The bench also proposed that the state government should spread awareness among health workers, adolescent girls and parents regarding social exclusion of women on the basis of their menstrual status through various media and including it in school curriculum.

The bench sought to know opinions of state government and the Centre regarding the nine-point guidelines proposed for prohibition of social exclusion.

IMF: India at forefront in fighting Covid, stands out in terms of vaccine policy



No shortage of Covid vaccine in Raj: Health min

NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

The Centre Tuesday rejected reports about impending shortage of Covid-19 vaccine doses in Rajasthan saying it regularly monitors the availability of vaccine supply in all states and union territories, and provides doses according to their requirement and consumption pattern.

Rajasthan has been supplied 37.61 lakh doses and has consumed only 24.28 lakh doses till Monday night, the union health ministry clarified.

"The central government is regularly monitoring availability of vaccine supply in all states and union territories, and providing the doses as per their requirement and consumption pattern," it added.

world in a regular year and has been manufacturing the Covid-19 vaccine doses that are delivered to Covax and then distributed to countries around the world.

India has been at the forefront in fighting this pandemic and "really stands out in terms of its vaccine policy, IMF's Chief Economist Gita Gopinath (*in photo*) has said, as she praised the country for playing a very important role during the crisis by manufacturing and shipping the Covid-19 vaccines to several nations.

The top Indian-American economist made the comments in an interactive session during the inaugural Dr Hansa Mehta Lecture on the occasion of International Women's Day on Monday.

Also want to mention that India really stands out in terms of its vaccine policy. If you look at where exactly is one manufacturing hub for vaccines in the world - that will be India, Gopinath said.

Gopinath lauded the Serum Institute of India, saying it produces the most number of vaccines in the

world in a regular year and has been manufacturing the Covid-19 vaccine doses that are delivered to Covax and then distributed to countries around the world.

India has been at the forefront in fighting this pandemic, she said, noting that India has been providing vaccines through grants to several of its neighbours, including Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar, and through commercial arrangements as well.

The country has been playing a very important role in helping the world in the global health crisis through its vaccination policies, she said.

TENDER

HP JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG PRESS NOTICE FOR TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division, Solan invites tender notice on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors/firms for the following work through offline process:

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest Money	Time of Completion	Cost of form	Last date of sale of tender form	Divisional office upto:
1.	Providing WSS to various villages in Kasauli constituency from Giri River in Tehsil Kasauli Distt: Solan H.P. (SH:- Detail Survey and preparation of all drawings related to Storage tanks and distribution Networks).	4,95,000/-	9,900/-	One month	250/-	12.03.2021 up to 5.00 P.M.	
2.	Providing WSS to various villages in Kasauli constituency from Giri River in Tehsil Kasauli Distt: Solan H.P. (SH:- Detail Survey and preparation of all drawings related to WTP and Pump House).	4,96,000/-	9,950/-	One month	250/-	-do-	
3.	Providing LIS to Village Tikkey: Barati Basti, Tanjan Ghatech, Bharog and Kalyana from Giri River in GP Hirmer Tehsil Kandaghat Distt. Solan H.P. Under PMKSY (SH:- Survey investigation of various LIS scheme under JS Division Solan).	3,27,580/-	2,000/-	One month	250/-	-do-	
4.	R/R of LWSS to Solan Town from Ashwan Khad (SH:- Deployment of labour for water distribution work for six months) Job No. 2.	1,26,720/-	2,550/-	Six months	250/-	-do-	
5.	R/R of LWSS Parag Salatkha (SH:- Supply & erection of induction motor coupled with existing pump set).	2,64,000/-	5,280/-	15 days	250/-	-do-	
6.	R/R of LWSS Saltron Bhagun in GP Braganj Tehsil Kasauli Distt: Solan H.P. (SH:- C/O RCC storage tank capacity 15000 liters capacity including protection work).	2,77,085/-	5,550/-	Three months	250/-	-do-	
7.	Restoration of rain damages LIS Satrol Kanshi Patta in GP Satrol Tehsil Kandaghat Distt: Solan H.P. (SH:- C/O outlets, laying & jointing of HDPE pipe, repair of sump well, removal of slips, P/F water opening gate & repair of RCC joints).	3,35,719/-	6,700/-	Two month	250/-	-do-	
8.	Providing LWSS Tundal Basha in GP Tundal Tehsil Kandaghat Distt: Solan H.P. (SH:- Laying & jointing of GI pipe for various dia) Under CRF.	1,74,598/-	3,500/-	Three months	250/-	-do-	
9.	R/R of LWSS Behri Chatri Tensil Kasauli Distt: Solan H.P. (SH:- Supply & erection of centrifugal pump to be coupled with existing motor of 30HP).	3,21,600/-	6,450/-	One month	250/-	-do-	
10.	Improvement and upgradation of DWSS to Solan from Giri River (SH:- Making bye pass arrangement).	3,75,727/-	7,500/-	One month	250/-	-do-	
11.	C/O Irrigation facility to water body Chhob in GP Dhanegeel Tehsil Kandaghat Distt: Solan H.P. (SH:- C/O RCC work in base etc.). Part-I.	4,79,011/-	9,600/-	One month	250/-	-do-	
12.	A/R & M/O drinking water supply scheme to Solan Town from Giri River (SH:- Rewinding of 85HP motor set No. 3 at Raw water stage, Protection of pump etc.).	3,13,800/-	6,300/-	One month	250/-	-do-	
13.	Improvement & upgradation of DWSS to Solan Town from Giri River (SH:- Providing/supplying of computer for Division office Solan).	1,84,000/-	3,700/-	15 days	250/-	-do-	
14.	Stock storage (SH:- Protection work at Jatoli store Solan in G.P. Sanhote Tehsil & Distt: Solan H.P.)	4,31,409/-	8,628/-	One month	250/-	-do-	
15.	Providing LWSS Tundal Basha in GP Tundal Tehsil Kandaghat Distt: Solan H.P. (SH:- Laying & jointing of GI pipe for various dia).	1,54,987/-	3,100/-	Three months	250/-	-do-	

The tenders forms and other detailed can be obtained from website <http://www.hpphp.gov.in>

Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti Division, Solan

6390/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT "SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER"

Sealed item rate tenders on forms 6 & 8 are invited by the Executive Engineer H.P.P.W.D., Baijnath for the below mentioned work from the approved and eligible contractors/Firms as per enlistment rule -2015 in H.P.P.W.D., so as to reach in his office on or before 30.03.2021 up to 10.30 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender forms can be had from his office against cash payment (Non refundable) up to 11.30 A.M. on 27.03.2021. The application for issue of tender forms shall be received up to 12.00 Noon on 26.03.2020. The Contractor enlisted in appropriate class can tender for his own class as well as one step below as per rule 8.1 of enlistment contract Rule 2015. The earnest money in the shape of National Saving certificate/Time Deposit accounts in any Post Office/Bank in H.P. duly pledged in favour of the XEN H.P.P.W.D., Baijnath must be accompanied with the tender documents. Conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money as mentioned above will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days. The XEN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders or to drop the proposal of the tender without assigning any reasons.

Work No.1. Construction of Harer to Phather via Taras road Km. 0/0 to 2/120 (SH: C/O R/Wall above Cement Concrete Pusta at Km. 1/612 to 1/631)..Estimated Cost Rs.4,83,431/-Earnest Money Rs.9900/- Time limit :- Two Months. Cost of Tender Form Rs. 350/-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

- The contractor should be registered as dealer under H.P. GST Tax Act. 2018 and also produce the Tin number, H.P. GST clearance certificate and Pan card.
- The contractor will have to produce the attested copy of his/their enlistment/renewal at the time of submitting application for issue of tender form failing which their application will not be entertained.
- The application form should accompany the earnest money in shape of FDR duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, PWD Baijnath otherwise no forms will be issued.
- Tender not received on prescribed form and manner shall not be considered and will be liable for rejection straightway.
- The contractor shall be responsible for rectifying defects noticed within One year from the date of completion of the work and the portion of security deposit relating to as phaltic Work shall be refunded after the expiry of this period.
- The contractor shall have all required machinery such as Truck/ Tipper , Mixture, water tanker Vibr



यह पर्व है पूर्ण राज्यत्व की स्वर्ण जयंती का... हिमाचल की प्रगति व उन्नति का...

स्वर्णम् यात्रा

प्रदेश वासियों
को
हार्दिक शुभकामनाएं

38,470
कि.मी.
2020
↑
7,370
कि.मी.
1971

15551
संख्या
2020
↑
4945
संख्या
1971

4118
संख्या
2020
↑
587
संख्या
1971

17855
(शत-प्रतिशत)
2020
↑
3249
1971

2,33,098
हैक्टेयर
2020
↑
45,240
हैक्टेयर
1971

86%
2020
↑
32%
1971

₹1,95,255
2020
↑
₹651
1971

प्रति व्यक्ति आय

जनमंच

- जनता से किया सीधा संवाद
- 68 विधानसभा क्षेत्रों में 200 जनमंच आयोजित

सामाजिक सुरक्षा पेंशन

- 3,90,916 वृद्धजनों का मिल रही 1500 रु. मासिक पेंशन
- सामाजिक सुरक्षा पेंशन पर 642.58 करोड़ रु. खर्च

सहारा योजना

- गम्भीर बीमारियों से पीड़ित आर्थिक रूप से कमज़ोर मरीज़ों को प्रतिमाह मिल रही 3000 रु. सहायता राशि
- 11,186 लाभार्थियों को 13 करोड़ रु. वितरित

आयुष्मान भारत

- 3.36 लाख परिवारों के गोल्डन कार्ड बनाए गए
- 78579 लाभार्थियों का 82.39 करोड़ रु. खर्च कर किया निःशुल्क इलाज

हिमकेयर योजना

- 4.63 लाख परिवार पंजीकृत
- 1.33 लाख लाभार्थियों का 131.33 करोड़ रु. का निःशुल्क इलाज

प्राकृतिक खेती-खुशहाल किसान

- 99,349 किसानों ने अपनायी प्राकृतिक खेती
- 31 करोड़ रु. खर्च, 5095 हैक्टेयर क्षेत्र प्राकृतिक खेती के तहत लाया गया

अटल टनल रोहतांग

- 10 हज़ार फट की ऊँचाई पर 3200 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से निर्मित 9.02 कि.मी. लम्बी सामरिक दूष्टि से महत्वपूर्ण राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग सुरंग राष्ट्र को समर्पित

स्मार्ट सिटी मिशन

- शिमला व धर्मशाला स्मार्ट सिटी मिशन के तहत चयनित

हिमाचल गृहिणी सुविधा योजना

- 2.91 लाख परिवारों को निःशुल्क गैस कनेक्शन प्रदान, 105 करोड़ रु. खर्च
- 1.67 लाख लाभार्थियों को दिया एक अतिरिक्त गैस रिफिल

प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना

- ग्रामीण एवं शहरी क्षेत्रों में 8561 आवास निर्मित

मुख्यमंत्री आवास योजना

- 4417 आवास किए निर्मित, 60 करोड़ रु. खर्च

प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना

- 4900 करोड़ रु. की लागत से 16786 कि.मी. सड़क का निर्माण

प्रधानमंत्री किसान सम्मान निधि योजना

- राज्य के 873,838 किसानों को मार्च 2020 में पीएम किसान सम्मान निधि योजना के तहत लगभग 174 करोड़ रु. प्रदान

जल जीवन मिशन

- 2,15,509 घरों में नल से पहुंचाया जल
- 2896.54 करोड़ रु. की 327 योजनाएं स्वीकृत
- 15,256 फुट की ऊँचाई पर स्थित टशीगंग गांव में भी पहुंचाया नल से जल

स्वच्छ भारत मिशन

- हिमाचल बना देश का दूसरा खुले में शौचमुक्त राज्य, मिशन के तहत 31.46 करोड़ रु. खर्च



Second fiddle

As polls to the state legislatures of West Bengal, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala draw closer, the electoral strategy of the Congress ought to send shivers down spines of party loyalists. These are states where till a decade ago the BJP was a marginal force and the Congress was either in power or the main Opposition. The BJP has grown its footprint in these states in varying degrees, the regional forces are still around and fighting hard. But the Congress has not only been, to use the Simon & Garfunkel lyric, slip slidin' away but has compounded its decline with an approach to the 2021 Assembly elections that has confused even its own cadre. The immediate trigger for the paltry seat allocation to it by 'senior partners' in some states seems to be the Congress' poor performance in last year's Bihar Assembly poll, where it performed well below par in the 74 seats it contested, and the party's failure to retain MLAs in Madhya Pradesh where the Kamal Nath government fell barely 15 months into its five-year term. And it hasn't been that long since the party failed to keep its flock together in Karnataka.

A wary DMK, therefore, has conceded a total of 25 seats to the once Grand Old Party of Indian politics in Tamil Nadu. In West Bengal, the smart money is on the Congress putting in a repeat of its Bihar performance ~ while the party is contesting from a significant 92 seats which the Left Front has allowed it to do in the name of secular unity much like the RJD had done in Bihar. Additionally, the Congress has had to swallow political insults from the fringe Indian Secular Front-AIMIM combine, which too is part of the 'third front' in Bengal, demoralising an already despondent rank and file. In Kerala, opinion polls and political observers are predicting the Left-led LDF coalition will retain power - the first time since 1980 a ruling coalition would win successive terms in office ~ as the Congress-led UDF coalition has been unable to get its house in order and even its urban support base is being chipped away by the BJP. Puducherry, where the Congress still leads a coalition as opposed to being a minor player in one, is a harbinger of depressing news for the party as a bunch of its legislators recently quit leading to the collapse of its government and leaving it staring at an unsure future. In its erstwhile fiefdom of Assam, the Congress has been reduced to aligning with a number of smaller parties including some ideologically vicious ones to try and prevent the BJP's return to power. But such is the predicament it finds itself in as even minor players are unwilling to accept the Congress' prime position in the mahajot that it is yet to announce the number of seats it will contest. Hanging on to others' coattails seems to be only discernible Congress strategy.

A Hurdle Cleared

It would be premature to speculate whether President Joe Biden has won his country's war against coronavirus in part because of his predecessor's remarkably insensitive attitude towards suffering and death. The present occupant of the White House has cleared a legislative hurdle on Saturday with the Senate approving the \$1.9 trillion relief bill which is aimed at helping Americans deal with the pandemic. However, it is a reflection of the political rift within the establishment that every Republican senator voted against the measure. The House of Representatives ~ controlled by Mr Biden's Democrats ~ is expected to approve the Bill when it comes up. Despite the Republican stand, Mr Biden has described the Senate vote as "one more giant step forward" in delivering the promise to help people. Donald Trump hadn't even attempted a baby-step towards helping the people in a country that has recorded the highest death toll on the first anniversary, so to speak, of the virus. It needs to be underlined that America's worst public health crisis in a century has left nearly 523,000 people dead and 29 million infected, and a current unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent.

The virus, therefore, has ruined both life and livelihood as perhaps nowhere else in the world. President Biden's relief package envisages one-off payments of \$1,400 to be sent to most Americans. Such payments could start being distributed later this month. The Republicans appear to have taken umbrage to the enormous fiscal commitment, saying the plan is too costly. Some Democrats have also criticised certain provisions and the party's leadership was forced to make a number of compromises, notably the lowering of federal unemployment benefit from \$400 to \$300 a week. The benefit will be extended till 6 September, according to the terms of the plan.

The Bill takes care of a wide array of public policy, arguably to abide by the Benthamite doctrine of the "greatest good of the greatest number". The American Rescue Plan, so-called, allocates \$350 billion to state and local governments, and some \$130 billion to schools. Aside from benefiting quangos and school education ~ in a wasted year ~ the Bill will provide \$49 billion for expanded Covid-19 testing and research, as well as \$14 billion for vaccine distribution. Thus will the fundamentals of the pandemic be taken care of. The \$1,400 stimulus cheques will be quickly phased out for those with higher incomes ~ at \$75,000 for a single person and for couples making more than \$150,000. Indeed, the extension of jobless benefits until September will mark a major reprieve for millions of "long-term unemployed Americans" whose eligibility for benefits is due to expire in mid-March. There was a marathon 27-hour session before the final vote on Saturday, and the 50-49 tally along party lines was indicative of the widespread Republican opposition. The even split between the parties in the Senate meant that every Democratic senator needed to support the party's plans.

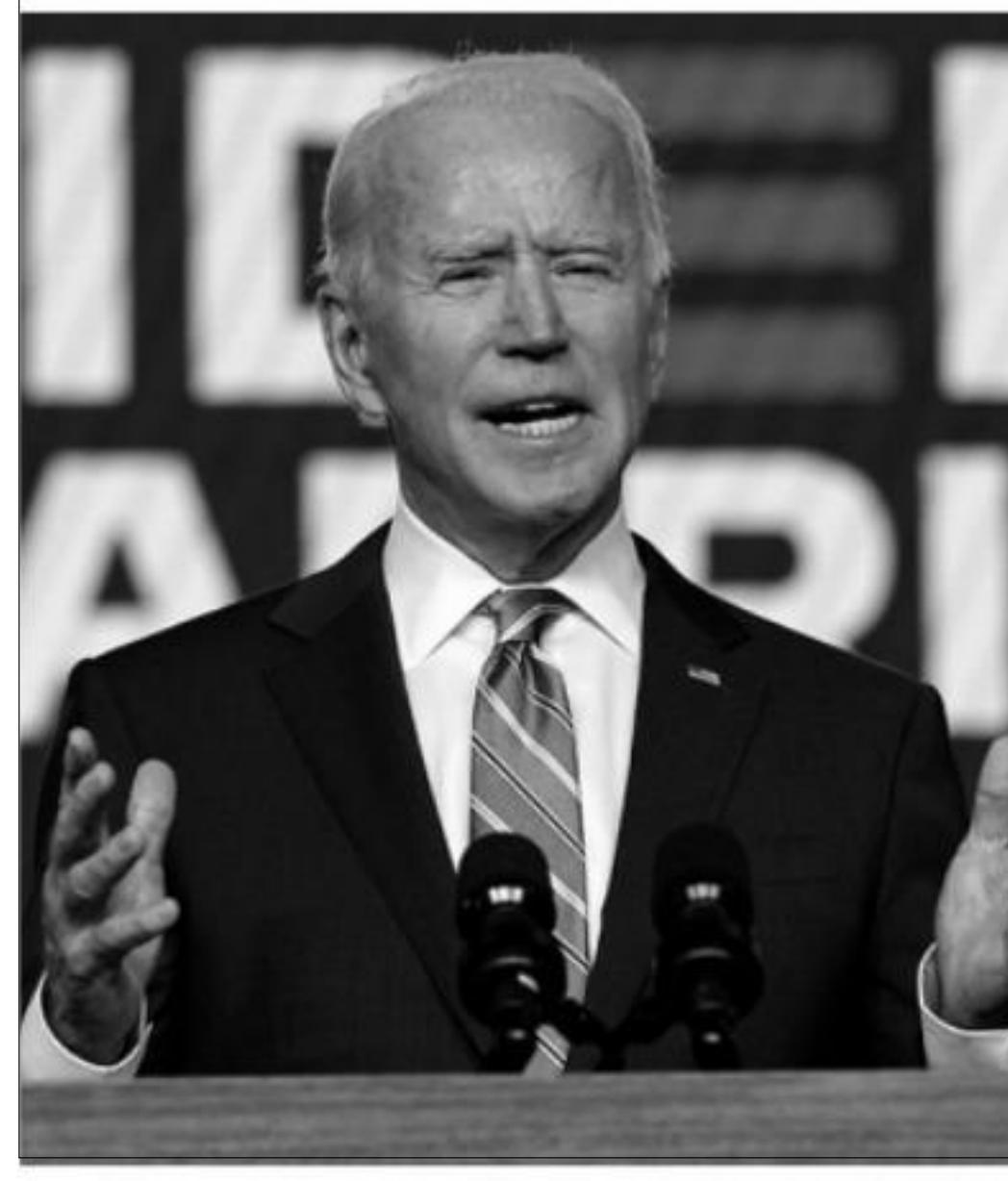
Realpolitik Triumphs

The lesson that emerges is that the US is an avid practitioner of realpolitik and with a consummate artist like President Joe Biden at the helm, we should be prepared for any number of flip-flops in US foreign policy

A major reason for Joe Biden winning the Presidential election was his promise of overturning many of Donald Trump's controversial decisions. Indeed, for this reason, during his election campaign, Biden was often called 'the U-turn candidate'. Joe Biden proved true to his promise; within the first two days of his inauguration as the 46th president of the United States, Biden signed 17 executive orders, more than what most recent presidents had done in their first 100 days. Many of these decisions were extremely important and far-reaching; within the first three days of Biden's Presidency, the USA had re-joined the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Agreement. Additionally, Biden ended the state of national emergency at the border with Mexico and issued an executive order revoking permission for the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline.

Momentous as these decisions were, the radical foreign policy changes that were the bedrock of Biden's presidential campaign have not been visible so far. Rather, most of the foreign policy initiatives of the nascent Biden presidency are turnarounds from his campaign promises apart from being valuable lessons in realpolitik.

For example, during his election campaign Biden promised to make the Saudis pay a price for their role in journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder and talked about redefining the US-Saudi relationship. But, after declassification of the US Intelligence Report titled "Assessing the Saudi Government's Role in the Killing of Jamal Khashoggi," when the American public demanded action against Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman, the White House insisted that punishment of the Crown Prince was never on the table. To explain matters, the Executive Summary of the US Intelligence Report unequivocally states: "We assess that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman approved an operation in Istanbul, Turkey to capture or kill Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi." Such a U-turn was not unexpected; after all Saudi Arabia, a country with almost unlimited oil resources was a US client of long standing, which the USA would not like to antagonise over a mere moral issue. There is also an earlier precedent of the US going an extra mile to preserve its relations with Saudi Arabia. Inquiries into the 9/11 attack on New York had revealed that all nineteen hijackers were Saudi Arabian nationals and there was some evidence of the involvement of Saudi officials in the attack. Yet, President Bush went only after Afghanistan which was pounded into dust. A Joint Congressional Committee conducting an inquiry into the performance of US Intelligence



agencies vis-à-vis the 9/11 bombings, touched upon the possible involvement of Saudi Arabian government officials in the incident. The 832-page report of the Committee was released in December 2002. However, the US administration ensured that 28 pages of the Committee's report were held back. The redacted pages and the unanswered question of Saudi involvement, left the victims' families fuming and demanding an independent inquiry. For long, oil assets of the middle-east, particularly of Iraq, were in the cross-hairs of the US. As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Biden assembled a series of witnesses who gave testimony grossly misrepresenting the intent, history, and status of Saddam Hussein and his secular government, which was an avowed enemy of al-Qaeda, and touted Iraq's fictional possession of weapons of mass destruction that resulted in the US declaring war on Iraq. Here again realpolitik triumphed over morality in international relations. Notably, President Biden was an important player in the manipulated exercise to justify the US invasion of Iraq. Similar examples abound. The lesson that emerges is that the US is an avid practitioner of realpolitik and with a consummate artist like Biden at the helm, we should be prepared for any number of flip-flops in US foreign policy.

Coming to President Biden's outlook in respect of our immediate neighbourhood, despite his

campaign promise of restoring and repairing America's relations with the rest of the world, there has been little effort by the US to improve ties with China or Pakistan. True, President Biden has halted the daily vicious tweets against China but there is no indication that the US is contemplating any roll-back of sanctions and tariffs imposed against China. In his first major address after taking office, Secretary of State, Antony Blinken summarised the Biden administration's policy vis-à-vis China in the following words: "Our relationship with China will be competitive when it should be, collaborative when it can be and adversarial when it must be.

And we will engage China from a position of strength" which is essentially Trump's policy in somewhat more cogent words. Professor Zhu Feng, of Nanjing University wryly commented: "Continuity takes precedence over adjustment and change."

Pakistan expected a re-calibration of its relationship with the US under President Biden, who as Obama's Vice-President, was one of the architects of the Kerry-Lugar Bill which sought to increase civilian aid to Pakistan to \$7.5 billion between 2009 to 2014. Yet, there is no change in the US-Pakistan relationship, which still hinges on US interests in Afghanistan, action against terrorist groups and the Pakistan-China relationship.

However, since inauguration of the Biden Presidency, there has been a sea-change in India's rela-

tions with its neighbours. Suddenly, there has been a thaw in Sino-Indian relations with both sides agreeing to disengage and end the nine-month long military standoff along the LAC in Ladakh. Still more recently, after talks on the hotline, the Indian and Pakistani DGMOS (Director-General of Military Operations) agreed to a ceasefire along the Indo-Pak border, after increasing instances of unprovoked firing since 2014 – there were 5,100 such instances in December 2020, the highest in 18 years, that claimed 36 lives and injured over 130 persons. Surprisingly, there was no overt involvement of the political leadership in both these important foreign policy decisions.

Till now, everyone is flummoxed by the unscheduled descent of peace in our troubled sub-continent. All kinds of speculations are rife about the probable cause of the cessation of hostilities between India and China and between India and Pakistan. Full facts would emerge later but one can say with some degree of certainty that both these developments, probably, have some relationship with the end of the lame duck period of the Trump Presidency and the inauguration of Joe Biden as the US President. A possible explanation may lie in the eternal wisdom of Goswami Tulsidas: "Poison turns to nectar and foes become friends for the one who receives Lord Ram's blessings." (Sri Ramcharitmanas: Sunderkand:4:1)

Needless to say, considerations of realpolitik always lurk in the background of any significant international event. Trade relations between India and China are very important for Indian businesses. Thus, despite the ban on Chinese apps and the proposed boycott of Chinese goods and investment by the Indian Government, it emerges that China upstaged the USA to become India's biggest trading partner in 2020 ~ at the time of conflict along the LAC and rising anti-China sentiments.

Again, realpolitik had probably prompted PM Modi's steadfast refusal to name China as the aggressor in the border conflict between the two countries ~ as also his controversial statement that no one had intruded into our borders.

Brought up on a diet of truth, non-violence and Panchsheel in foreign relations, realpolitik is anathema to most of us. Yet, as India gathers pelf in international affairs, we should be prepared for our country's foreign policy to eschew its earlier moorings, and follow realpolitik instead. As Egon Karl-Heinz Bahr, the creator of Ostpolitik, and the Secretary of State in the erstwhile West Germany had said: "International politics is never about democracy and human rights. It's about the interests of states. Remember that, no matter what you are told in history lessons."

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

An island of Pain and Destruction?

When there are several 'tivus' in the North, why was Iranatiyu selected for Muslim Covid burials? Why select an island with people living there, with Catholic priests, too? Why not an island with no humans at all: Is that so difficult for the Burial Experts in the Covid management?

Looks like the disposal of dead bodies, if they happen to be of Covid-infected Muslims, is the biggest problem Sri Lanka is facing today. This is bigger than any economic issue, or any other aspects of development the country and people may be facing. It looks like there is no possibility for a "Saubhagy Dekma" or Vision of Prosperity & Splendour if any Covid Muslims are buried in this Sinhala Baudha Dupatha.

We tried to send these bodies all the way to the Maldives, on an official request. But failed. This time it is Iranatiyu – and once again a failure. So why not trying at Neduntivu, Sampaltilu, Vidataltilu or any other 'tivu' in the North or East; and till a suitable place is found, keep the dead bodies frozen at taxpayer expenditure?

Now that the US has decided to take some un-Trumpe moves about Saudi Arabia, why does not the former and present US citizens that rule Sri Lanka, think of sending all Covid Muslim corpses to Saudi Arabia, for sacred burials? With the Saudi leaders thinking of new plans for investment, Sri Lanka could become a new target of Saudi funds pouring in. But will this lead to the Sri Lankan Muslims getting any stronger than they are now?

Or, will we wait till we discover or develop a new "Gotatuvu or Nandase-nativu" off Sri Lanka, an Isle of Saubhagy? Are the Indian Aircraft flying in the special 70-year celebrations of the Sri Lanka Air Force an assurance of

The Island

new Indian warmth in Sri Lanka-India relations? Did the power of the Indian Air Force, displayed over Galle Face Green, make the government take a quick pro-Indian decision on the West Container Terminal (WCT) in the Port of Colombo?

Can President Gotabaya or PM Mahinda give any explanation why handing over the development of the WCT to the same Indian company, involved in the ECT, could be any better for Sri Lanka? Apart from the Port Trade Unions that are likely to launch a new protest, will the Weerawansa-Gammalpila-Vasudeva team also carry out protests about the WCT? Or, will they be silenced by the realities of pro-Gotabaya Politics?

Has Gotabaya Team's new position that the Provincial Council elections will be held under the new Constitution, an assurance given to India that the 13th Amendment will remain part of the structure of governance in Sri Lanka? What happened to all those voices of the Pohottuwa political players who had virtually written off the 13A? Have they been silenced by the flight of Indian aircraft in the Air Force celebrations? The Nandasena Gotabaya Team of the Rajavasala had better think of how the yellow robes of sections of the Maha Sangha would react to the WCT deal with India?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

China hacking energy sector

SIR I refer to "China targeted Indian power grid during Ladakh stand-off: NYT report".

Many reports indicate that a hacking campaign is targeting the energy sector in Europe, the US and now India to sabotage national power grids. Cyber-attacks are the new warfare and though every nation is aware and often victim none admit. Many of the companies and nations that have lost data to the hackers also do not admit to it, as it shows their ineptness in preventing such attacks. Inserting "backdoor" access into government agencies, major corporations, the electric grids, nuclear power plants, defence installations and research laboratories active in developing or manufacturing vaccines are the new focus for adversarial nations and hackers. Such Global cyber-attacks have threatened businesses, which in turn could damage global economies. Some suspect that the Coronavirus may belong to this category though unproven. Our foes can do considerable damage without firing a shot, and for very little money. It is scary and alarming to realise that China's tenacity, focus and determination is to infiltrate our country's cyber security and target sensitive installations to prevent or shut them down, permanently. State-sponsored cyber-attacks to autonomous robotic weapons; conflicts are increasingly disembodied and are being now fought in cyberspace and by machines powered by software. The



British Prime Minister Mr. Boris Johnson plans to use the G7 group of nations to form an alliance of democracies to largely counter China. His proposal includes Australia, South Korea and India to be part of this alliance and to distance companies like Huawei and the Chinese Communist Party and reliance on essential medical supplies from China. Such an approach is worthy of consideration and India should seriously consider being part of this alliance.

Yours, etc., H N Ramakrishna, Bangalore, 2 March.

INDO-PAK RELATIONS

SIR, While the sudden change in Pakistan's commitment towards maintaining peace should not lull New Delhi into complacency, the development has, no doubt, come as a welcome surprise. After all, India has always preferred its hand of friendship to all its neighbours, only to be rebuffed time and again by a belligerent Islamabad. One can understand the compulsions of domestic politics behind its contin-

ued hostility towards India over the last several decades and in fomenting cross border terrorism of the most violent form, but what is surprising is that the will towards India, at least since August 2018, has been aided and abetted under the stewardship of Prime Minister Imran Khan who was perceived by most Indians as a popular cricketing icon in this country during his playing heydays. Hence his unexpected turn around was painful, contrary to the belief that relations between the two countries would improve under his leadership. However, Pakistan's latest steps towards peace should be welcomed by all but not at the cost of complacency.

Yours, etc., Bhaskar Roy, New Delhi, 2 March.

CENTRAL VISTA PROJECT

SIR, Even after the decision of the highest court of the land in favour of Central Vista project in New Delhi, still some related criticism occasionally find their places in various media outlets. One such critical article compared this endeavour with the same behind the grandeur architectural wonders of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. Now, in such

MULTIPLICITY OF PHASES

SIR, Doubts have been raised over the motives of the Election Commission in deciding on eight phase polling in West Bengal. The proffered reason is the possibility of violence during the elections. West Bengal may be violence prone but eight phases are too many. The EC's decision is clearly to aid the BJP. There are three phases in a district which is a stronghold of the Trinamul Congress. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has openly accused the Commission of taking the decision at the behest of the BJP. Others have also expressed their apprehensions. During the last Lok Sabha elections, the Commission had invited criticism for deciding on a long poll schedule which would help Prime Minister Narendra Modi to do maximum campaigning. The case for a long poll process and too many phases is weak when the physical and human infrastructure, logistics and communications have vastly improved.

Yours, etc., Shovonlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 3 March.

criticism, the marvellous thoughts, unfathomable days of colossal toil and efforts of thousands of their creators are run down. Those historical architectural edifices in Delhi are pride of India. Without them, we would not have in a position to claim about historical abilities of our architects and masons. Oldest firm architectural evidence of our civilisation in India available are Sanchi Stupa in MP and Mahabodhi Temple in Bihar created around 3rd century BC, at times of Great King Ashok, a disciple of Buddha. No royal palaces of that era in India exists today. But, we know that London Tower, a British castle built in 11th century AD still exists with all its radiant glow. In India, after end of British rule, no significant architectural landmark project was created in our capital Delhi as millennium marked edifice. Central Vista project is an effort to fill that vacant space. Tajmahal created by mughals 500 years back, an enthralling object of world today was made possible at great costs and sacrifices.

Yours, etc., Kunal Kanti Konar, Kolkata, 3 March.

BHARAT DOGRA

One good news that has emerged in recent days is the possibility of tensions and conflicts decreasing on India's borders with China and Pakistan. Well-informed and experienced diplomats have raised questions about the limitations of this breakthrough and pointed out reasons that may continue to worry us, but nevertheless, all things considered, we can nevertheless rejoice in the breakthrough with our two main (and generally hostile) neighbors, despite the limitations of what has been achieved.

The rather unexpected breakthroughs which have followed in quick succession have also raised the question whether these are the result at least partly of some important wider, international developments, or whether there has been some important change in the perception, by China in particular, of the wider world perspective within which it sees relations with India.

Whatever the reasons, if two close allies such as China and Pakistan now see more reason for peace with India, this understanding should be very welcome for India as well as for world peace. After all this understanding is based on the reality that China and Pakistan have much to gain from peace and better relations with India, just as India has much to gain from good relations with them. Good relations among all three is a win-win situation for all three countries, and as long as this wider understanding exists, it should be possible to resolve all pending issues in a much more amicable way to the benefit of all sides. The international community and all peace-loving people will heave sighs of relief once it is known that these three neighboring nuclear weapons nations have learnt to live in peace with each other.

In fact, when three neighboring countries possess both nuclear weapon and a history of hostility of several wars and border intrusions, it is a situation of international concern as this has very serious implications in the context of the threats to life on earth. It is best that the three countries improve the situation on their own to provide basic safety to their people and to set at rest the increasing worries of other concerned people. However the more important question now is - will we be able to use this breakthrough as a stepping stone for more stable and stronger friendship among the three countries, or whether the recent breakthrough will be seen more as a tactical and temporary arrangement which suited all sides for the time being? Clearly, we should try to achieve more durable and stronger gains of genuine friendship and cooperation. This will be to the benefit of people of all three coun-

It is time to improve ties with neighbours



tries in the short-term and even more so in the longer term.

Let us not forget the most significant reality that we have entered the times of climate change. There will be many more reasons and occasions for cooperation to better face the worst impacts of much more adverse and unpredictable weather, as well as to minimize damage from more fearsome disasters. Instead of positioning soldiers to fight each other, we will be better advised to prepare soldiers to rescue people from disaster situations, and to cross the borders not to invade but to rescue endangered people across lines, if and when a disaster situation demands this.

There is also much to gain from closer economic, social and cultural ties. This is true of course not just for China and Pakistan, but for relationships of India with all its nine neig-

bors. It is of course easier to improve friendships with countries with whom we do not have a history of hostility of the kind we have with Pakistan and China.

In the case of Nepal much of the hostility has been of more recent origin, and the narrow-mindedness of Prime Minister Oli should get much of the blame. Leaving this aside, the legacy of friendly relations is much stronger and the reasons for friendship and cooperation are very strong. It is not difficult to work for durable and strong friendly relations with Nepal, particularly when India's relations with China are also on the road to improvement.

Given the strong note of friendship and solidarity on which the relationship of India and Bangladesh started, this should have never been allowed to deteriorate, so it is sad to

see a history of ups and downs. We should always give very high importance to improving relationship with Bangladesh at all levels.

Relationships with Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Maldives should also improve, and the wider context of sustained improved relationship with China can be helpful here too. In the context of Myanmar, there should be more support for the movement for democracy.

While democracy faces a serious threat in Myanmar just now, the truth is that all the 10 countries discussed here, including India of course, badly need better democracy and almost all have suffered a deterioration in overall conditions of democracy. Hence there should be more cooperation also for improving democracy in the entire region.

This means more friendship and

cooperation at the level of not just governments but also at the level of people as the strong foundation of friendship with continuity can only be built at this level. Common people have more yearnings of friendship, even though sometimes they are misled towards hostility.

India has nine neighbors. This is not our misfortune but our good fortune, as this opens opportunities for friendship at so many levels. In fact, we should go beyond nine to reach out to more countries like Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia, where we have ancient ties going back centuries. True, friendship is not always built from one side, but India should always be in a position of saying sincerely that we do try our best.

The writer is a journalist and author. His recent books include *Man Over Machine* and *Protecting Earth for Children*.

Divisive narrative hurts Nepal

ATUL K THAKUR

While reading journalist Sanjay Upadhyaya's book, *Backfire in Nepal: How India Lost the Plot to China* (Vitasta, 2021), one can ascertain the seriousness of the political fault lines in Nepal. From the angle this book is written, it reconfirms how the decision-making processes in Nepal have been made subservient to puzzled tri-lateralism instead of getting shaped independently. Due to the obsession with the positioning of India and China, realpolitik is compelling mass aspirations to get lost in transition. Who should be blamed for this?

It is true that the official establishment in India has its own share of misunderstanding Nepal's political transition that finally paved the way for China to go many steps further from the soft competition, though the bigger concern remains over the Nepali political classes' comfortable posture towards such unwelcoming dynamics. It is the new age politics without accountability that mars promising developmental possibilities for Nepal. The institutional processes are misunderstood, and the political culture has still not developed where the successes or failures of decisions are attributed to no out-

siders. Even with republicanism, secularism and federalism, political beliefs and actions continue to be driven by whims rather than carefully judged thinking. In a bid to make the people believe that existential challenges are not as pressing as keeping 'India & China' in the middle of a crisis from Kathmandu's streets to Parliament, the political leadership in Nepal is doing a big disservice to the country and the people. More than India, the people of Nepal have been defeated in the political quagmire. China's geo-strategic orientation in Nepal clearly found traction with the inability of the top Nepali leaders to differentiate between the matters of home and the world, and thus not opening the turf to a dangerous geostrategic rivalry in the homeland.

Has India lost the plot to China in Nepal? Going deep into it, one really finds it pitiful the way public discourses are being built on it. Ideally, what should be discussed is the precariousness of Nepal as a young democracy with no accountability system in place. It would be wrong to blame KP Sharma Oli alone for an avoidable state of affairs. In fact, he has been just one of the factors besides the political ranks across lines. Over the years, he has made a good fortune for himself and is now so well-placed, even the constitutional processes are belittled before him.

handholding was much needed.

A country with immense possibilities, Nepal, and its people should get development in place of a divisive narrative. In Kathmandu's political theatre, democracy is a misunderstood system where it is continuously confused with favourable electoral figures and no agenda. It would be a mistake to see factionalism merely literally: It is a virtue and escape route for incompetent politicians who are doing the gravest injustice to the people by being in the fray. With the promises made in the middle of the last decade, Nepal was supposed to be on a path of peace and progress. The ground reality is strikingly different when a transitional government is involved with an armed outfit headed by Netra Bikram Chand and is also giving signals for a closer association with the royalists. A juxtaposition of these two images is well sufficient to know how badly the people's aspirations have been killed, and with it, the 'hope' also lost in transition.

The intellectual community in Nepal must speak and write more about the lost opportunities, wasted sacrifices and demolished institutions and cynical political moves to overshadow all these under the garb of playing the India and China cards. In maintaining international relations too, especially in the neighbourhood, due consideration should be given to people diplomacy. Lately,

any systemic transition should not sacrifice only the interest of the masses, along with the art of survival, the discipline of politics also earmarks commitment for a defined territory and people.

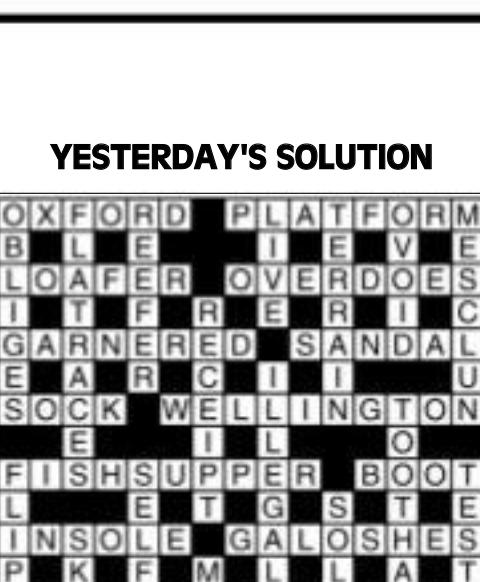
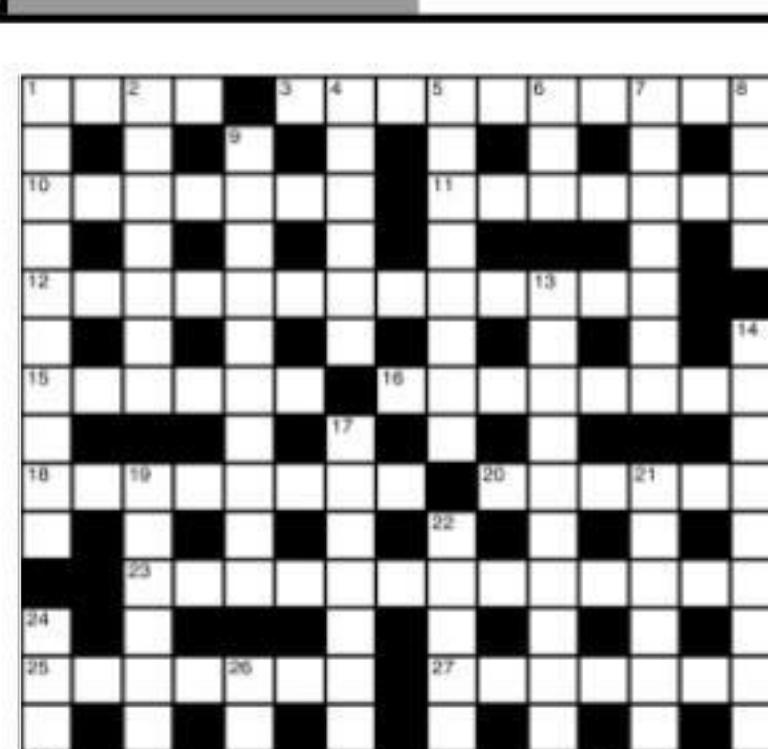
With no king or the institution of monarchy to blame, the movers and shakers of Nepali politics should think about the statecraft that is not doing well in Nepal's own interest. The country's interest lies in down-sizing personification, calibrating all-round prospects of development and making the system participatory. Entering into inclusive developmental processes, giving industrial growth its due and not mixing the policies of the home and the world will help Nepal realize its full potential.

With the present round of chaos, Nepal is again at a crossroads. People have every right to be disenchanted with the kind of democracy they have. Still, there can't be an alternative to democracy. Only time will tell how Oli moves forward under the rising clamour for a constitutional monarchy. As of now, his political reconciliation plan seems to be not a simple plan of action. Of late, what matters is accountability in the system. This is something clearly missing in the present round of painful transition. The lost ground must be recovered.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN

NO 28849

CROSSWORD



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

ACROSS

- 1 Exploit middle class (4)
- 2 Random tests in place leading to arrests (4-6)
- 10 Relatively easy to smile coyly about learner driver (7)
- 11 Unionist politician's anger with southern judges (7)
- 12 Unusual Elgar concert inspires international modern music producer (8,5)
- 15 Talk presented in short order (6)
- 16 Spy reported pancake mixture being used to make bread (8)
- 18 Inform a pretty accommodating Conservative (8)
- 20 Confused, walked like a duck with ducks (6)
- 23 Not intend shag? That's that ruined! (5,5)
- 25 After passing on power to replace American leader, becomes thorough (2-5)
- 27 Prevent individual associated with Tory leader getting title (7)
- 28 "Mum!" I announced loudly at first – after one minute, it's irrelevant (10)
- 29 That is finishing early one day a month (4)
- DOWN
- 1 Spooner's male first aider reveals overall strategy (6,4)
- 2 Brilliant escape by criminal (7)
- 4 Pass instruction on how to make hair curl (6)
- 5 Regularly tied up, shot in the arm of German (8)
- 6 Fruit with it? (3)
- 7 My single bit of trivia: the knob on a deer's antler is a crown (7)
- 8 Help us love moderate (2-2)
- 9 Very fashionable and completely sane to collect silver (3,3,4)
- 13 Try to offer Harry trees, but there aren't many here? (4,6)
- 14 Announced toffee-covered fruit possibilities (10)
- 17 Scramble as the man blocks pincer movement (8)
- 19 Former Queen Mother running inside (7)
- 21 Academic lecturer made money (7)
- 22 Fear of imitation ale, some might say (6)
- 24 National symbol of kingdom in West Indies, originally (4)
- 26 Dropping argument, starting late (3)

A definition of chess by an ancient writer described it as "a dangerous and quarrelsome game, especially to him that getteth not the mate." In these days it becomes a bond of union between all lovers of the game; and, as bonds of union are none too many in India, it is a matter for satisfaction that, in Calcutta at any rate, while other cities have been less fortunate, a Chess Society is still being carried on, despite difficulties. As was pointed out at its annual meeting on Tuesday, this is now the only recognised Chess Society in India affiliated to the British Chess Federation - a matter of pride, it may be, to Calcutta, but of regret to other centres which have allowed their clubs to become defunct. For the matter of that, Calcutta has to admit that it allowed its Staunton Club to come to an end ten or eleven years ago. One advantage of the Calcutta Chess Society is that it is composed largely of Bengali members, and thus affords an opportunity of comparing Indian with European styles of play. Chess is an Oriental pastime, and Indian players, especially Bengalis with their mathematical bent, ought to be second to none. Still the fascination which the king of indoor games has exercised for thousands of years is not likely to be lost, and the provision of more facilities for play would probably result in the discovery that there are more chess players in the community than is imagined.

POLICE STRIKE IN BIHAR

The movement amongst the constables to bring about a general strike on March 5, as an expression of their dissatisfaction with the increase of pay and allowances recently sanctioned for them, resulted in a partial strike of constables in Patna, which began on that day. About 40 constables from Patna city left duty and assembled near the parade ground at the Police lines. Later in the day others arrived from Kotwali police station, the outer cordon of the Government House, Secretariat and High Court, to a number roughly estimated at about 100 men all told. A number of men returned to duty, but the majority took no action, although they still made no move to tender their resignations.

CHARGE AGAINST RAILWAY POLICEMAN

Ramnandan Upadhyaya, an up-country Brahmin constable of the Railway Police at Sealdah, appeared before the Police Magistrate of Sealdah, yesterday charged with culpable homicide not amounting to murder. It was stated that while the accused was on duty on Tuesday morning at Sealdah Station, several males engaged a hackney carriage to convey flowers, brought by rail, to Government House. The accused demanded a piece from Sheik Kochi, the driver of the carriage, who refused to give it to him. As a result of this it was stated that the constable struck the driver on the head with his baton, causing serious injuries. The driver was taken to Government House and afterwards removed to the Campbell Hospital, where he died in the afternoon. The Magistrate refused to grant bail and remanded the accused pending trial.

LIQUOR CONSUMPTION IN BIHAR

Patna, Mar 9
At today's meeting of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, Rai Bahadur Dwarka Nath objected to the demand of Rs 9,37,000 voted for the Excise Department. He stated that though the Minister expressed anxiety to discourage the consumption of liquor it was reported that subordinate officials were encouraging drinking and attempting to increase the shops. He quoted a Calcutta magazine, which published what appeared to be a paragraph from the Excise supplement to the Bihar and Orissa C.I.D. Gazette extolling the benefits of wine and stating that the Police in the province were telling people that drinking was good and it was the Sirkar's hookum that the people should drink.

ACCIDENT ON EAST INDIAN RAILWAY

At 4-58 A.M. No. 82 down parcels express collided with No. 408 down goods train standing outside the Home Signal on the down local line at Saktigarh, resulting in both the up and down mail lines being blocked. The guard of the goods train was injured and removed to the Burdwan Hospital. No other injuries have been reported. Single line working by the up local line was introduced at 6-30 hours and double line working will probably be brought into effect by mid-day. As a result of the accident No. 2 down Punjab mail arrived at Howrah 2 hours and 55 minutes late, and the running of the down Burdwan suburban trains was also disorganized.





Scope for sale of minority stakes in public sector companies has reduced and strategic disinvestment would be the primary mode for disinvestment receipts going forward

ANURAG SINGH THAKUR
MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE

THUMBNAILS

Arcil MD & CEO: Asset Reconstruction Company of India (Arcil) on Tuesday announced the appointment of Pallav Mohapatra, former chief of Central Bank of India, as the company's chief executive officer and managing director. He succeeds Vinayak Bahuguna, whose five-year term ended in June 2020.

ESR Investment: ESR, a leading Asia Pacific-focused logistics real estate platform, on Tuesday said it will develop industrial and logistic facility at Chakan near Pune with an investment of Rs 330 crore. This park is ESR's second development in Chakan. The total investment for this park, spread over 38 acres, is Rs 330 crore.

Amazon: More than 50,000 offline retailers and neighbourhood stores are now part of the "Local Shops on Amazon" programme, according to a Press release from Amazon. Launched in April 2020, the programme has played a key role in helping sellers across the country sustain and grow their business amidst the unprecedented pandemic, the release said.

HDFC Bank: HDFC Bank has announced the launch of SmartUp Unnati, a dedicated programme for mentoring women entrepreneurs by women leaders at the bank. As a part of the programme, over the next one year, senior women leaders from HDFC Bank with expertise spanning domains will mentor women entrepreneurs in helping them achieve their goals, said a Press release from the lender.

Goodyear India pacts HPPI: Goodyear India Limited, as part of its CSR initiative, is supporting government girls primary schools in Faridabad & Ballabhgarh in Haryana, in its aim to enhance the quality and accessibility of education for the girl child. Adopt a school programme was conceptualised by Humanum People to People India (HPPI) in partnership with Goodyear India Limited in November last year, said a Press release.

Literacy India partners OUP: Literacy India and Oxford University Press (OUP) have set up an education and skill development centre for women to make them 'Atmanirbhar'. The education and skill development centre is located at Gheja village Sector-93 Noida (Uttar Pradesh). It will provide different courses for women including education for girl child, said a Press release.

LG Electronics: LG Electronics has opened its 12th Best Shop in Kolkata. The LG Best Shop aims to enhance the shopping experience of today's sophisticated market, and would serve as a one-stop shop for all the digital lifestyle needs of a household, said a release.

Equity MFs witness outflow for eighth straight month

The segment saw withdrawal of ₹4,534 crore in February on profit-booking by investors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

Equity mutual funds continue to witness net outflow for eighth months in a row as the segment saw a withdrawal of ₹4,534 crore in February on profit-booking by investors amid sharp market rally.

However, investors put in ₹1,735 crore in debt mutual funds last month, thanks to the net inflows in liquid, low-duration and money market funds. In January, the segment saw a net outflow of ₹33,409 crore, data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) showed today.

Overall, the mutual fund industry witnessed a net outflow of ₹1,843 crore across all segments during the period under review, compared with ₹35,586 crore in January.

According to the data, outflow from equity and equity-linked open-ended schemes was at ₹4,534 crore in February compared to ₹9,253 crore in January.

FundsIndia Head (research)

MONTH	NET OUTFLOW
FEB 2021	4,534 CR
JAN 2021	9,255 CR
DEC 2020	10,147 CR
NOV 2020	12,917 CR
OCT 2020	2,725 CR
SEP 2020	754 CR
AUG 2020	4,000 CR
JUL 2020	2,480 CR



(Figures in Rs)

Arun Kumar said: "Net equity inflows continue to remain weak as the trend of profit-taking continues, given the sharp market rally and near-term volatility. Many investors have also missed out on the sharp equity rally and are waiting for a market correction to enter back."

With markets touching all-time highs in February, it provided a good profit-booking opportunity for investors.

their first withdrawal in over four years. Prior to this, such schemes had attracted ₹240.55 crore in June.

MyWealthGrowth.com founder Harshad Chetanwala said the mutual fund industry continues to see net outflow in equity funds even in February as redemptions were up by 34 per cent. The fact that stockmarkets are trading near all-time high at present is playing on the mind of investors who would like to exit from few funds as well as continue to book profits.

Another factor is the high return from their equity funds investment in last one year, which is also tempting investors to redeem partially, he added.

Barring multi-cap, large and mid-cap and focussed fund categories, all other equity schemes have seen outflow last month.

The newly created flexi cap category saw the maximum outflow of ₹4,497 crore last month, which was sharply higher than the net outflow of ₹5,934 crore in January.

The large-cap category was also hit hard in February with a net outflow of ₹1,280 crore clearly on the back of profit-booking by investors.

On the other hand, multi-cap fund received the highest net inflow of ₹4,078 crore, which was significantly higher than the net inflow of ₹2,858 crore in January.

"The investment mandate of multi-cap funds provides investors the benefit to capitalise on the investment opportunities arising in all the three segments of the equity markets - large-, mid- and small-caps. With all the three segments performing well, these funds have been attracting investor interest," Morningstar India's Srivastava said.

Within the debt schemes, liquid funds logged the maximum inflow of ₹17,306 crore. Besides, low money market funds also saw inflow to the tune of ₹9,580 crore. However, short-duration funds witnessed an outflow of ₹10,286 crore, followed by corporate bonds (₹6,752 crore).

96% of states' GST shortfall met, says finance ministry

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

The borrowings are being done through this window by the Government of India on behalf of the states and Union Territories.

Under the special window, the government has been borrowing in government stock with tenure of 3 years and 5 years. The borrowing made under each tenure is equally divided among all the states as per their GST compensation shortfall.

In a Press statement, the finance ministry shared that ₹2,103.95 crore has been released to seven states and an amount of ₹0.05 crore has been released to the Union Territory of Puducherry.

"Till now, 96 per cent of the total estimated GST compensation shortfall has been released to the states and UTs with Legislative Assembly. Out of this, an amount of ₹97,242.03 crore has been released to the states and an amount of ₹8,861.97 crore has been released to the 3 UTs with Legislative Assembly," reads the statement issued by the finance ministry.

The amount, the government said, has been borrowed this week at an interest rate of 5.8594 per cent. So far, an amount of ₹1,06,104 crore has been borrowed by the Central government through the special borrowing window at an weighted average interest rate of 4.8842 per cent.

Cairn says it has identified Indian assets for seizing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

"Cairn is extremely confident that satisfaction of the award will be achieved either by negotiated settlement or by enforcement against Indian assets"

British oil firm Cairn Energy Plc today said it has identified Indian sovereign assets overseas, which it can seize in the event of New Delhi failing to return over \$1.7 billion that an international arbitration tribunal has ordered after rescinding a retrospective tax demand.

Cairn is extremely confident that satisfaction of the award will be achieved either by negotiated settlement or by enforcement against Indian assets," the firm said in its 2020 annual earnings statement. The firm has moved courts in nine countries to get the arbitral award registered and recognised.

"The tribunal ruled unanimously that India had

breached its obligations to Cairn under the UK-India Bilateral Investment Treaty and awarded to Cairn damages of \$1.2 billion-plus interest and costs, which immediately became payable. The total due at the year-end was \$1.7 billion," it said.

The firm said it has engaged directly with the Government of India regarding satisfaction of the award, which is also enforceable against Indian-owned assets in more

than 160 countries that have signed and ratified the 1958 New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards.

"Cairn has already taken steps to have the award recognised in certain major jurisdictions in which Indian sovereign assets have been identified," the statement said.

PTI had on 8 March reported that the 21 December award from a three-member tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Netherlands has been recognised and confirmed by courts in the US, the UK, Netherlands, Canada and France. Further, the firm has started the process to register the award in Singapore, Japan, the United Arab Emirates and the Cayman Islands.

Avoid crony lending: CEA to banks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

"I think it is extremely critical now that the financial sector owns up this responsibility of doing high-quality lending, especially on the infrastructure side, and really avoid crony lending... I think that is basically the mantra for the financial sector"

K V SUBRAMANIAN
CHIEF ECONOMIC ADVISER

Chief economic adviser K V Subramanian today exhorted financial institutions to avoid crony lending and focus on high-quality loans for creation of assets that will help the country become a \$5-trillion economy.

Observing that Indian banking sector since the early 1990s faced the problem of poor quality lending especially on large loans, he said, loans were not given to most creditworthy borrowers but to crony capitalists, leading to high distress.

"When the financial sector decides to actually lend to a particular borrower who is more connected even though that borrower may not be the most creditworthy, it means that capital is not being provided. There is an opportunity cost as the capital does not go

to a more creditworthy borrower," he said at an event organised by industry chamber Ficci.

It is the duty of the financial sector to ensure that optimal capital allocation happens in the economy, he added.

It is to be noted that the bad loan problem in the banking sector is largely because of high exposure of banks towards infrastructure which was facing problems on several counts.

"I think it is extremely critical now that the financial

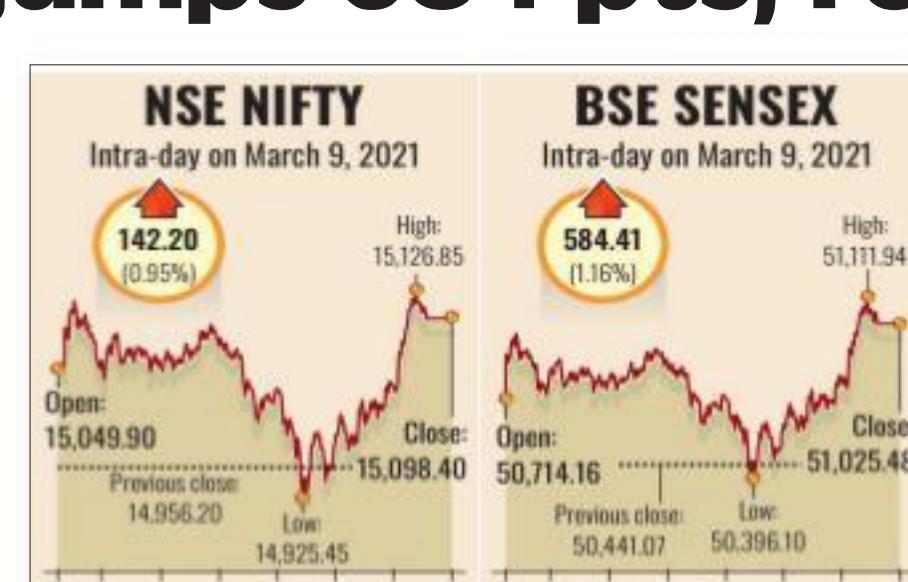
sector owns up this responsibility of doing high-quality lending, especially on the infrastructure side, and really avoid crony lending... I think that is basically the mantra for the financial sector," he advocated.

He also suggested strengthening corporate governance in the financial sector to ensure high-quality lending and linking incentives of senior management to quality lending.

"Incentive mechanisms need to be put in place to pre-

Sensex jumps 584 pts, regains 51K-level

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 9 MARCH



points with 24 of its stocks advancing.

The 50-issue index touched a high of 15,126.85 points and a low of 14,925.45 points in the day trade.

In a volatile day, the Indian market ended with minor positivity amid mixed global cues. Barring private banks, IT and consumer stocks, all other sectors were most impacted. Fall in US bond

yields and stronger US equity futures aided Asian markets to recover from earlier losses," Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Binod Modi, head - strategy at Reliance Securities, commented: "Domestic equities extended gains for the second consecutive day mainly aided by favourable cues from Asian markets. However, it is

financials (ex-PSU banks), which majorly supported the market's rally today. Barring financials and IT, most of the key sectoral indices traded lower."

Among Sensex stocks, Kotak Bank rose the most by 3.35 per cent. HDFC Bank spurted by 2.85 per cent while mortgage major HDFC advanced 2.68 per cent. ICICI Bank rose by 2.8 per cent.

Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Asian Paints, Infosys, HUL and TCS also gained.

On the other hand, PowerGrid, ONGC, NTPC and Dr Reddy's were among the laggards. In the broader market, mid-cap and small-cap indices declined by 0.66 per cent and 0.41 per cent as investors opted to book profit after the recent run-up in these stocks.

Among sectoral indices, BSE bankex, finance, IT, tech, consumer durables and FMCG indices ended with gains, while metal, oil and gas, utili-

ties, realty and power were in the red.

Ajit Mishra, VP - research, Religare Broking said: "Markets traded volatile and managed to settle with decent gains in continuation to the prevailing consolidation phase. We expect the prevailing consolidation phase to end soon.

However, a lot depends on the performance of the global markets."

Meanwhile, the rupee strengthened by 32 paise to end at 72.93 (provisional) against the US dollar today, supported by positive domestic equities and weakening of the American currency in the overseas market.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 73.16 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 72.91 and a low of 73.25.

It finally ended at 72.93 against the American currency, registering a rise of 32 paise over its previous closing.

Trai suspends new messaging norms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India today suspended the newly-implemented norms for commercial text messages for one week, following major disruptions in SMS and OTP deliveries for banking, payment, and other transactions.

The norms that pertain to content template checks and balances for text messages came into effect on Monday. Its temporary suspension now would give commercial entities, sending out messages and OTPs to customers, a reprieve and more time to comply with the stipulated requirements.

The move to suspend the norms would enable the "principal entities" to register the template of SMS so that no inconvenience is faced by the

customers, Trai said in a statement.

"In order to protect the interest of consumers, it has been decided that scrubbing of SMS by telecom service providers shall be suspended temporarily for seven days...."

According to the regulator, telecom operators are being asked to inform their "principal entities" to take immediate necessary action in this regard and facilitate their registration, including SMS template, in a time-bound manner.

The temporary suspension comes after transactions, including banking, credit card payment and certain other services that involve SMS and OTP generation, faced a major outage on Monday, and some estimates pegged the delivery failure and delays of such SMS at 40 per cent.

E-invoice mandatory for biz with over ₹50 cr turnover

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

The government has made it mandatory for businesses with over ₹50 crore turnover to generate e-invoices for B2B transactions from 1 April.

Under goods and services tax (GST) law, e-invoicing for business-to-business (B2B) transactions has been made mandatory for companies with turnover of over ₹500 crore and ₹100 crore from 1 October 2020, and 1 January 2021, respectively.

E-invoicing will be extended to companies with turnover over ₹50 crore from 1 April, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said in a notification.

Passenger vehicle retail sales up 10%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

Commercial vehicle sales also slipped 29.53 per cent to 59,020 units, as against 83,



We are deeply concerned about the changes
Beijing announced in Hong Kong's electoral system.

AMI BER
INDIAN AMERICAN US CONGRESSMAN

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 10 MARCH 2021

09

Sporadic protests in Myanmar after hundreds escape security

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had called for safe release of all protesters without violence

AGENCIES

MANDALAY, 9 MARCH

Myanmar security forces quickly snuffed out sporadic anti-junta protests on Tuesday after hundreds of young activists who had been trapped overnight in a district of its biggest city Yangon were able to get out. Western powers and the United Nations had called on Myanmar's military rulers to allow the youngsters to leave after fears for their safety as troops moved in.

The army takeover and arrest of elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi on 1 February has brought the Southeast Asian nation to a near-standstill. Daily protests are being staged across the country, and security forces are cracking down harshly. More than 60 protesters have been killed and over 1,800 detained, an advocacy group said. Scattered



Anti-coup protesters with makeshift shields take positions in Mandalay.

"There were many free car rides and people welcoming the protesters," Shar Ya Mone said by telephone. She said she would keep demonstrating "until the dictatorship ends."

Another protester posted on social media that they had been able to leave the area at around 5 a.m. after security forces pulled out.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had called for "maximum restraint" and the safe release of all protesters without violence or arrests, a call echoed by the U.S. and British embassies in Myanmar.

An advocacy rights group said around 50 people had been arrested in Sanchaung after police searched houses, though checks were still being made. A junta spokesman did not answer calls requesting comment. State television MRTV said earlier: "The government's patience has run out and while trying to minimise casualties in stopping riots,

most people seek complete stability (and) are calling for more effective measures against riots." The United States criticised the junta after an announcement on Monday that five independent media companies had been stripped of their licences. The five - Mizzima, Myanmar Now, 7-day, DVB and Khi Thit Media - have been active in covering protests against the coup. "We have very strongly condemned the junta for the, in many cases, violent crackdowns on those peacefully taking to the streets and on those who are just doing their jobs, including independent journalists who have been swept up,"

State Department spokesman Ned Price said. In a diplomatic blow to the junta, Myanmar's ambassador in Britain followed its U.N. representative in calling on Monday for the release of Suu Kyi, drawing praise from British foreign minister Dominic Raab.

US presents warring Afghanistan sides with draft peace agreement

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KABUL, 9 MARCH

Frustrated by a stalled peace process and escalating violence, the US has presented an eight-page draft peace agreement to Afghanistan's warring sides for review.

The US told the parties to come to Turkey in the coming weeks ready to move on it, according to Afghans on both sides of the table.

The draft was obtained by The Associated Press on Monday. The document outlines the terms of a cease-fire and its enforcement, calls for the protection of the rights of women, children and minorities and envisions a truth and reconciliation commission aimed at healing 42 years of conflict.

US State Department spokesman Ned Price would not confirm the draft, saying It's often important for our diplomatic efforts that we're able to conduct them in private.

The Taliban received the draft and were reviewing it,



said spokesman Mohammad Naeem.

There was no immediate comment from Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on the draft proposal or a sternly worded letter from US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

In the letter, Blinken said Washington wanted to see progress on peace talks and mentioned the draft peace agreement, which calls for a new, inclusive government which Ghani has resisted. In recent speeches, Ghani has said no interim government would be formed as long as I am alive.

But Blinken was uncompromising in his letter, which was released by Afghanistan's TOLO TV. I am making this clear to you so that you understand the urgency of my tone

regarding collective work, he wrote.

In the letter, Blinken said a 1 May deadline for a final withdrawal of US troops stipulated in a Taliban-US deal last year is still on the table. Even with America's \$4 billion in aid to Afghanistan's National Security Forces, a US withdrawal could mean quick territorial gains for the Taliban.

Ghani's first vice president, Amrullah Saleh, said the president had received the letter and was unmoved by its contents. He said Ghani was not ready to embrace the secretary of state's accelerated pace toward a settlement.

We are neither concerned about the letter nor has it changed our position, Saleh said. He thanked the United States for its sacrifices and financial assistance over the past 20 years but said the Afghan government won't succumb to dictation.

"We will make peace with dignity, but never...an imposed peace," he said at a ceremony on the anniversary of the death of a former defense minister.

EC asks Oli, Prachanda to come up with new name

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, 9 MARCH

Nepal's Election Commission on Tuesday asked the CPN (UML) led by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and the CPN (Maoist Center) led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda to come up with a new name and election symbol within 15 days if they opt for a fresh merger, the paper said.

The CPN (UML) and CPN (Maoist Centre) merged in May 2018 to form a unified Nepal Communist Party following victory of their alliance in the 2017 general elections.

On Sunday, an apex court bench of justices Kumar Regmi and Barn Kumar Shrestha quashed their and granted authenticity of the Nepal Communist Party (NCP) to Rishiram Kattel.

Philippine mayor killed in possible mistake

MANILA, 9 MARCH

Police killed a central Philippine city mayor and two of his aides, while two of the police officers were killed in the latest deadly violence involving the police force, officials said Tuesday.

"I can only assume that this was a mistaken encounter," Brig. Gen. Ronaldo de Jesus, a regional police commander, said based on initial police reports.

"Slowly, slowly, it's improv-

WOMEN'S DAY



Artists of an art squad give a public performance in front of the Pyongyang Indoor Stadium on International Women's Day in Pyongyang, North Korea.

Thai PM ends presser by spraying disinfectant



BANGKOK, 9 MARCH

Politicians are often accused of sanitising the news. On Tuesday, Thailand's prime minister sanitised members of the press.

After fielding a slew of questions from journalists at his weekly news conference in Bangkok, the famously mercurial Prayuth Chan-o-cha sprayed back with disinfectant. Riled by a final question about a possible Cabinet reshuffle, he told reporters to mind their own business, then grabbed a container of alcohol mist and doused the front row before sauntering off.

The quick-tempered former army commander, who overthrew the elected government in a 2014 coup, is known for his unpredictable behaviour. In the past, he's spoken to a media scrum while fondling the ear of one of the reporters and flung a banana peel at camera operators. After an event in 2018 he declined to speak to the media, and instead set up a life-size cutout of himself.

Gilgit House adopts resolution seeking provincial status

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 9 MARCH

The Legislative Assembly of Gilgit-Baltistan on Tuesday unanimously adopted a joint resolution asking the federal Pakistan government to grant it provincial status and provide it with representation in Parliament and other constitutional bodies.

The resolution stated that a bill to amend the Constitution of Pakistan to declare Gilgit-Baltistan a province of Pakistan should be passed by Parliament without causing any damage to the country's stance on the Kashmir issue.

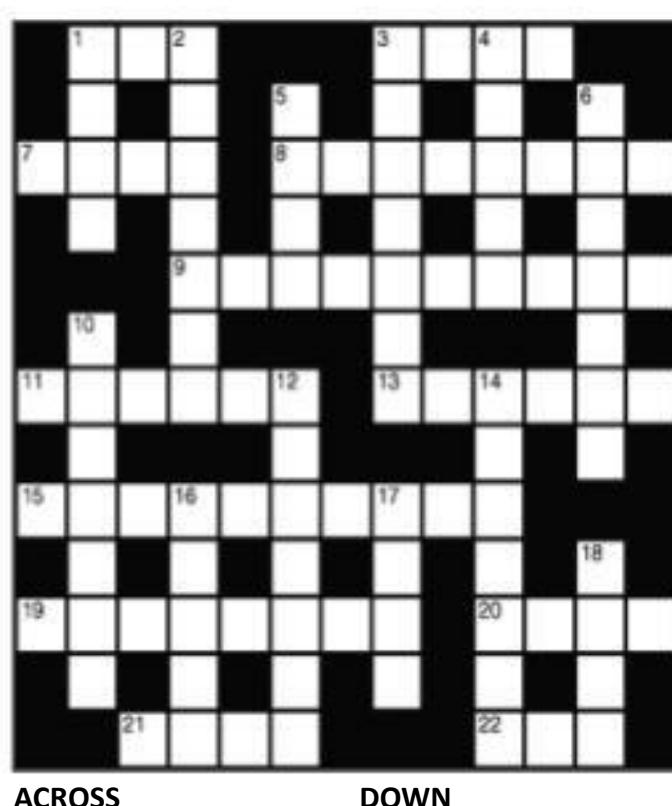
"The demand for constitutional rights is a unanimous demand of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan, not that of an individual party. The unity we've shown on this issue needs to be repeated again at a federal level," Chief Minister Khan said.

In December, Prime Minister Khan constituted a 12-member committee to make recommendations about changing the status of Gilgit-Baltistan.

On 1 November last year, Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Anurag Srivastava said that India "firmly rejects" the attempt by Pakistan to bring material changes to a part of Indian territory which is under Islamabad's "illegal and forcible occupation" and asked it to immediately vacate such areas. He made the remarks in response to a media query about Pakistani Prime Minister Khan's comments about his government's decision to accord "provisional provincial status" to the Gilgit-Baltistan region.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Indicate assent (3)
- Christmas period (4)
- Forbidding (4)
- Evident (8)
- Giving evidence (10)
- Male goose (6)
- Outlying area (6)
- Sanctify (10)
- Living thing (8)
- Simple card game (4)
- Bazaar (4)
- Father (Informal) (3)

DOWN

- Standard (4)
- Given a lower rank (7)
- Affluent young professionals (Informal) (7)
- 4 Duck (5)
- Sea perch (4)
- Catfish (7)
- Not sweet (7)
- Lie back (7)
- Consecrated (7)
- Glide across ice (5)
- Peak (4)
- Stiff paper (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Closet, 13 Exceed, 11 Leeway, 12 Typical, 14 Cheroot, 16 Aroma, 17 50-50, 18 Odds, 19 Illustration, 21 Al, 22 Tip.
- Swami, 2 Nibbles, 3 Deserve, 4 Eight, 5 Odds, 6 Cajole,

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

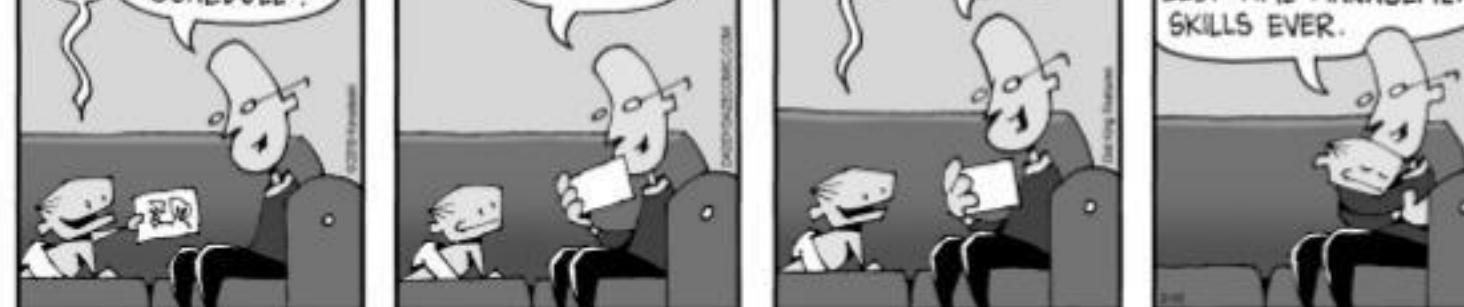
BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23253230

RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Nos. 57886, 549576747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 091312185, Call Centre 09910383333, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

FLIGHT INQUIRY

- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 018001801407
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 091312185, Call Centre 09910383333, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

PORT ROADWAYS

- 23860502, 23860626
- Rajasthan Roadways 23861757, 18001803838
- JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 09841111
- EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 33773377

PORT AIRPORTS

- Port 011-25671580; Terminal 1 B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

PORT HOTELS

- 23864470

PORT BUS STATION

- U.P. Roadways 23868709

PORT AIRPORTS

- 23868740

PORT HOTELS

- 23864470

PORT BUS STATION

- 23868709

PORT AIRPORTS

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PORT AIRPORTS

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PORT BUS STATION

- 23868709

PORT AIRPORTS

- 23868740

PORT HOTELS

- 23864470

I know first hand the sexism and racism institutions and the media use to vilify women & people of colour to minimise us, to break us down ...

WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	28	26 H
HONG KONG	32	28 H
TOKYO	09	04 CL
LONDON	14	10 S
DUBAI	25	15 H
SAN FRANCISCO	09	05 H
NEW YORK	12	10 S
MOSCOW	-12	-08 S

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

THUMBNAILS



Smugglers use rafts to transport migrant families across the Rio Grande into the US in Texas. IANS

Belgium police raids: Belgium's federal prosecutor's office says a police operation of an unprecedented scale targeting organised crime is taking place across the country. About 200 searches mobilising more than 1,200 police officers are being carried out simultaneously throughout the country, the office said. AP

Evacuation in Hawaii: Heavy rains have breached a dam on the Hawaiian island of Maui, and near-by residents in the community of Haiku are being evacuated, county officials said. The National Weather Service reported 13.2 inches of rain fell in Maui's North Coast between 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. AP

France to speed up opening of secret archives on Algeria War

PARIS, 9 MARCH

French President Emmanuel Macron announced a decision on Tuesday to speed up the declassification of secret documents related to Algeria's 1954-62 war of independence from France.

The measure comes amid a series of steps taken by Macron to reconcile France with its colonial past and address its brutal history with Algeria, which had been under French rule for 132 years until its independence in 1962.

The French presidency said in a statement that archive services will now be allowed to use a new procedure to declassify documents from 1970 and earlier that were previously being held secret for national security purposes. This includes archives related to Algeria War, the statement said.

Under French laws, almost all archives of the French state, including on defense and security issues, should be made available to the public after 50 years except information that could compromise some people's security. Yet a complex process was preventing researchers from working on these archives. The new procedure will significantly reduce the delay, the French presidency said. AP

Twitter sues Texas AG, claiming retaliation for Trump ban

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DALLAS, 9 MARCH

Twitter has filed a lawsuit against Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, claiming the Republican used his office to retaliate against it for banning the account of former President Donald Trump following the riot at the US Capitol.

Days after the deadly insurrection, Paxton announced an investigation into Twitter and four other major technology companies for what he called the seemingly coordinated de-platforming of the President. The attorney gen-

eral's office demanded that the companies produce a variety of records related to their content moderation policies and troves of internal communications.

Twitter responded Monday with a federal lawsuit alleging Paxton is seeking to punish it for taking Trump's account offline a decision the social media company says is protected free speech. It asks a judge to declare the decision to be under the gambit of the First Amendment and to, in essence, halt Paxton's investigation. Paxton made clear that he will use the full weight

GOP politicians in roughly two dozen states have also introduced bills that would allow for civil lawsuits against platforms for what they call the censorship of posts.

of his office, including his expansive investigatory powers, to retaliate against Twitter for having made editorial decisions with which he disagrees, lawyers for the company wrote in the suit filed in a Northern California court. Spokespersons for Paxton's office did not immediately

respond to a request for comment Monday evening.

Twitter's counterpunch comes as states, in addition to federal lawmakers and governments outside the US, are cracking down on tech companies they see as having amassed too much power in the past decade. This includes antitrust and anti-monopoly regulation, internet privacy laws as well as attempts to regulate how platforms like Twitter, Facebook and others moderate their sites. In December, Paxton led 10 Republican attorneys general in suing Google for allegedly running

an illegal digital-advertising monopoly in cahoots with Facebook.

GOP politicians in roughly two dozen states have also introduced bills that would allow for civil lawsuits against platforms for what they call the censorship of posts. While there is no evidence that tech companies are biased against conservatives, the narrative has been popular with Republicans since before President Trump was elected and only grew louder throughout his term. Trump getting banned for life from Twitter and suspended temporarily from Facebook

after inciting the January 6 Capitol riots only reinforced it. In launching his investigation, Paxton cited the First Amendment when he says tech companies' banishment of Trump chills free speech and wholly silences those who disagree with them. However, Twitter as well as the other companies Paxton targeted, including Facebook, Apple, Google and Amazon is a private firm, so the First Amendment does not apply to its decisions on what material to allow on its services. Unlike the government, Twitter is allowed to silence people.

Biden's Covid package a bet govt can help cure US

\$1.9 tn relief plan can also catapult US forward to tackle poverty, inequality etc

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 9 MARCH

President Joe Biden wants America to know that he's from the government and he's here to help.

That sentiment became a well-worn punchline under Ronald Reagan and shaped the politics of both parties for four decades. Democrat Bill Clinton declared the era of big government over in the 1990s, Barack Obama largely kept his party in the same lane and Republican Donald Trump campaigned on the premise that Washington was full of morons, outplayed by the Chinese and others.

But Biden is now staking his presidency on the idea that the government can use his \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief plan not only to stop a pandemic and jobs crisis but also to catapult the country forward to tackle deep issues of poverty, inequality and more. The massive bill could be approved by Congress as early as Tuesday. "When I was elected, I said we were going to get the government out of the business of battling on Twitter and back in the business of delivering for the American people," Biden said after the huge bill passed the Senate on Saturday. "Of showing the American people that their government can work for them."

Covid bill to deliver big health insurance savings for many

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 9 MARCH

Several million people stand to save hundreds of dollars in health insurance costs, or more, under the Democratic coronavirus relief legislation on track to pass Congress.

Winners include those covered by Obamacare or just now signing up, self-employed people who buy their own insurance and don't currently get federal help, laid-off workers struggling to retain employer coverage, and most anyone collecting unemployment. Also, potentially many more could benefit if about a dozen states accept a Medicaid deal in the legislation.

Taken together, the components of the coronavirus bill represent the biggest expansion of federal help for health insurance since the Obama-era Affordable Care Act.

Taken together, provisions in the 628-page bill add up to one of the largest enhancements to the social safety net in decades, pushing the country into uncharted territory.



A medical assistant holds up the J&J vaccine as she prepares to administer it at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.

Act more than 10 years ago.

Obamacare not only survived former President Donald Trump's repeated attempts to tear it down but will now get a shot of new life. Because health insurance is so complicated, consumers are going to have to do their homework to figure out if there's something in the bill for them. And health care benefits are not like stimulus checks that can be blasted out. There will be a lag as government agencies, insurers and employers unpack the bill's provisions.

Besides stopping the pandemic and jumpstarting hiring, money in the rescue package — now awaiting final approval in the House — is supposed to start fixing income

inequality, halve child poverty, feed the hungry, save pensions, sustain public transit, let schools reopen with confidence and help repair state and local government finances. And Biden is betting that the government can do all of this with the speed of a nation mobilizing for war without touching a tripwire of inflation.

"People have lost faith government can do good for them," says Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, who spoke daily with Biden while ushering the bill through the Senate last weekend. Now, as vaccines become more available and other changes take place, "people are going to see that government actually is making their lives better — which is how Americans used to think of it, and we've gotten away from it." Republicans say Americans have plenty of reason to be skeptical, calling the American Rescue Plan excessive and wasteful. They warn the sweeping package will run up the national debt to precarious new heights after \$4 trillion in aid has already been provided. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell argues against the package as missing the moment — too big at a time when the virus is showing signs of easing and the economy is poised to come "roaring" back.

Kerry in Brussels for climate change talks

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS, 9 MARCH

US special envoy for climate John Kerry traveled to Brussels on Tuesday to discuss transatlantic cooperation with European officials in the wake of President Joe Biden's decision to rejoin the Paris climate accord in the first hours of his presidency, undoing the US withdrawal ordered by predecessor Donald Trump.

Kerry will meet with the EU Commission vice-president in charge of climate action, Frans Timmermans, and discuss preparations for the next UN climate summit in Glasgow in November. He will also talk with von der Leyen and join a weekly commission meeting on transatlantic climate action.

The 2015 Paris climate change accord commits countries to put forward plans for reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, which is released from burning fossil fuels.

European Union leaders reached a hard-fought deal in December to cut the bloc's net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030 compared with 1990 levels.



The EU wants to be a leader in the fight against global warming and has pledged to reach climate neutrality by mid-century as part of its European Green Deal action plan. The Biden administration has yet to announce a new national 2030 target for cutting US fossil fuel emissions.

Experts say any international efforts to keep global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) or ideally 1.5 degrees C (2.7 degrees F) as agreed in the Paris accord would struggle without the contribution of U.S., the world's second-biggest carbon emitter after China.

Scientists say time is running out to reach that goal because the world has already warmed 1.2 degrees C (2.2 degrees F) since pre-industrial times.

In addition to the UN climate summit in November, Kerry will also discuss preparations for a US-hosted climate leaders summit on April 22-23.

Kerry will also meet with the bloc's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, US officials said.

EU lawmakers lift immunity of three Catalan separatists

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS, 9 MARCH

The European Parliament on Tuesday lifted the immunity of the former president of Spain's Catalonia region, Carles Puigdemont, and two of his associates, a move that could pave the way for their extradition and reopen the scars of separatism in Spain.

The Spanish government immediately welcomed the decision by the European Union's legislature as a victory for the rule of law and against those who sought to break the rich northeastern region away from the rest of Spain. The decision will likely extend the 3 1/2-year legal saga on the fate of the three separatists by months, if not years, since many avenues for appeal remain open before any possible extraditions.

In the decision on Puigdemont, 400 legislators voted for



the waiver of immunity, 248 were against and 45 abstained. The measures to lift the immunity of his associates former Catalan Health Minister Toni Comin and former regional Education Minister Clara Ponsatí were by largely similar margins.

We have lost our immunity, but the European Parliament has lost more than that. And as a result, European democracy, too," Puigdemont said. "This is a clear case of political persecution. He said that the European Parliament has unfortunately fallen into this strategy. Puigdemont and his two aides can't hide behind their legislative seats to avoid appearing before the justice system.

Palace silent, explosive Harry, Meghan interview reverberate across globe

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 9 MARCH

Prince Harry and Meghan's explosive TV interview divided people around the world on Monday, rocking an institution that is struggling to modernise with claims of racism and callousness toward a woman struggling with suicidal thoughts.

During the two-hour appearance with Oprah Winfrey, Harry also revealed the problems had ruptured relations with his father, Prince Charles, and brother, Prince William, illuminating the depth of the family divisions that led the couple to step away from royal duties and move to California last year.

The palace has not yet responded to the interview, in

Black Britons not surprised by racism charges

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 9 MARCH

Explosive allegations by Meghan, Duchess of Sussex that she faced racist attitudes from both the palace and the UK press came as no surprise to many Black Britons. Whether it's the disproportionate impact of Covid on people of

colour or the lack of non-white faces at the top of media and politics, ethnic minorities in the UK say racist attitudes and structures of discrimination are pervasive and all too often denied by society at large. This is a country that doesn't want to have an honest conversation about race, said historian David Olusoga,

who presented the TV series Black and British: A Forgotten History. Tiwa Adebiyi, a communications consultant and journalist, said the couple's revelations in the interview bore out her worst fears. When Meghan joined the royal family, every person of colour in the UK was worried, she said.

black people, amongst white people. But if we are hearing things like this I think that is below the belt. In Nairobi, Kenya, Rebecca Wangare called Meghan a 21st-century icon of a strong woman. She has faced racism head-on. Asma Sultan, a journalist

in Karachi, Pakistan, said the interview is going to tarnish the image of the royal family. There is so much controversy ever since Diana's death, so it is now Pandora box which is opened up, she said.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson refused to comment on the interview, praising the queen but saying that when it comes to matters to do with the royal family the right thing for a prime minister to say is nothing. Asked whether US President Joe Biden and his wife Jill had any reaction to the interview, White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Meghan's decision to speak about her struggles with mental health takes courage and that's certainly something the president believes in. But she said she wouldn't offer additional com-

ment on the situation given these are private citizens, sharing their own story and their own struggles.

News of the interview was reported in Chinese state media, including the overseas edition of the ruling Communist Party's flagship newspaper, People's Daily, and was widely discussed on the popular Weibo social media platform.

The allegations are especially damaging because many observers hoped Harry and Meghan, who is biracial, would help the tradition-bound monarchy relate to an increasingly multicultural nation. In the early days of their marriage, Harry and Meghan joined William, Kate, in projecting a glamorous, energetic image for the young royals.

Biden admin lets Venezuelans stay temporarily

WASHINGTON, 9 MARCH

The Biden administration said Monday it is offering temporary legal residency to several hundred thousand Venezuelans who fled their country's economic collapse and will review US sanctions intended to isolate the South American nation. Both measures mark a shift from US policy toward Venezuela under President Donald Trump.

President Joe Biden's administration announced it would grant temporary protected status to Venezuelans already in the United States, allowing an estimated 320,000 people to apply to legally live and work in the country for 18 months.

S ARVANTHANARAYANAN
While many elements on Earth were born in nuclear fusion, which is the process of the hydrogen bomb, it took a process many times more energetic to create the heavier elements.

Benoit Côté, Marius Eichler, Andrés Yagüe López, Nicole Vassh, Matthew R Mumpower, Blanca Világos, Benjamín Soós, Almudena Arcones, Trevor M Sprouse, Rebecca Surman, Marco Pignatari, Mária K Peto, Benjamin Wehmeyer, Thomas Rauscher and Maria Lugaro from Konkoly Observatory and Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Technische Universität and the particle accelerator, at Darmstadt, Germany, Michigan State University, University of Notre Dame, Los Alamos National Laboratory, in the US, and University of Hull, and University of Hertfordshire, UK, look at meteorites of the early Solar System, to create a snapshot of what the ancient processes looked like.

In a paper in the journal, *Science*, the team examines the radioactive nuclei of two elements, remnants of the high energy events where they were created. A helpful feature of these nuclei, that they decay at the same rate, enables the team to narrow uncertainties in the nature of radiation at the time when these nuclei were formed.

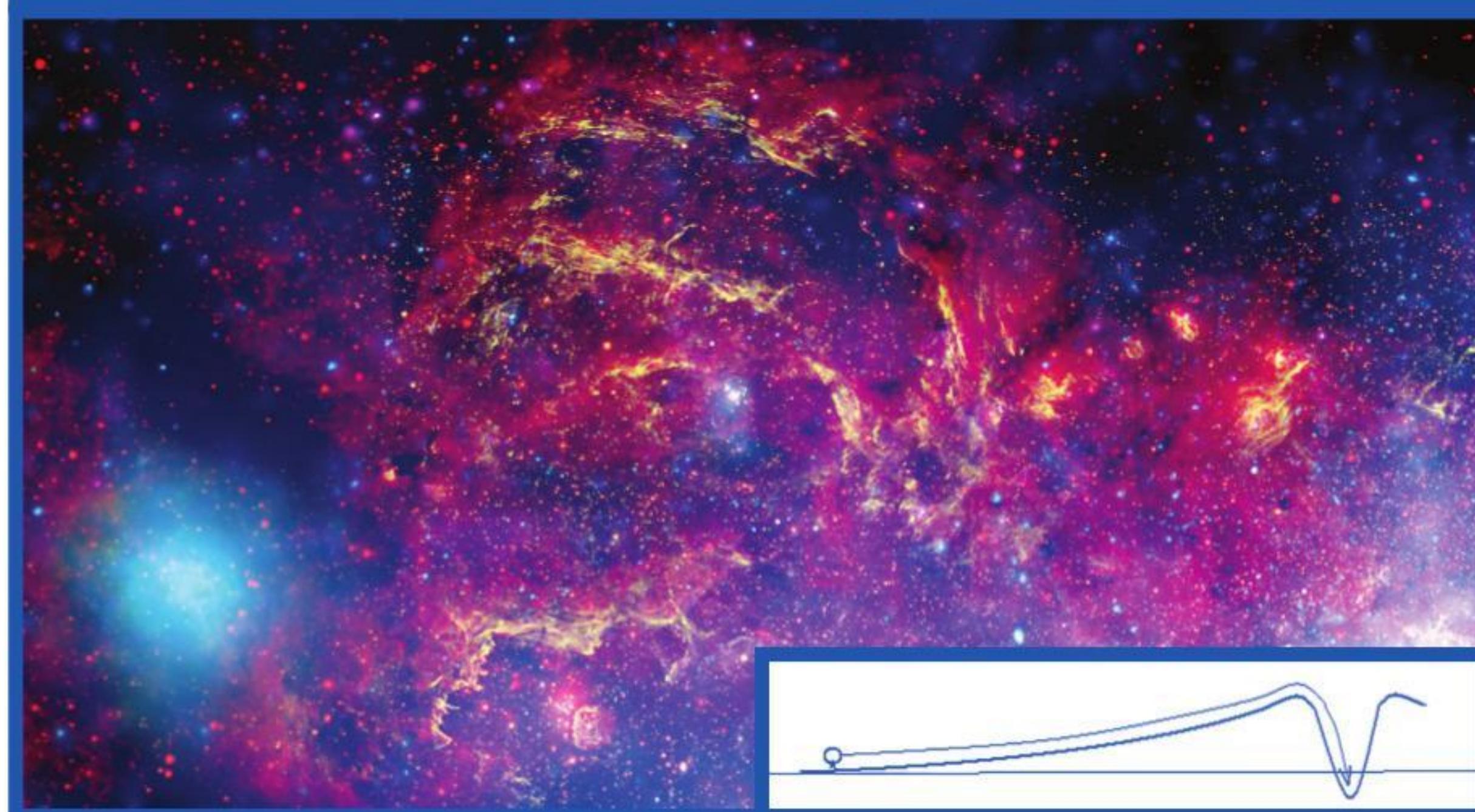
The first of the elements created, from the matter that arose in the Big Bang, was the simplest, the hydrogen nucleus, which consists of a single positively charged particle, the proton. And it was of hydrogen that the early universe consisted. Over billions of years, hydrogen clouds drew close, a result of gravity, till they were compressed many million times over.

The stupendous pressure brought the mutually repelling protons so close together that short range, attractive nuclear forces came into play and the nuclei merged, as nuclei of the element helium. While it takes great energy to force protons together in this way, once they merge, they fall into a stable, low energy state, and give off huge energy. It is like a golf ball falling into a deep hole that is at the top of a slope in the golf course. It takes a powerful stroke to drive the ball up the slope, but when it gets there and into the hole, it speeds up to be faster than it was at the start!

The huge energy released in the fusion of hydrogen nuclei, and this is the energy source of the stars, and our own Sun, makes the cloud expand. But when it has expanded as much as it can, it collapses again, to set off more fusion reactions and expansions. When the hydrogen nuclei get used up, the helium nuclei, which have two protons, begin to fuse, to form elements with more protons in

Back to the beginning

The universe was shaped by furious events of ages past



the nucleus, along with equally heavy, but neutral particles called neutrons, which help the nucleus stabilise. These heavier nuclei then participate in fusion reactions, to create even heavier nuclei, till the nuclei of iron, ^{56}Fe , which consist of 56 particles (26 protons and 30 neutrons), are formed.

The process stops at iron because iron is at the bottom of the pit, in the matter of releasing energy when a proton is added. Adding protons to the iron nucleus hence cannot sustain itself, but it takes more energy to bring about the fusion than the fusion releases. The elements that arise in the process of the creation of the stars thus have nuclei only till the element iron – and iron is also the most abundant constituent of meteorites and the oldest stars.

Where then, do the heavier elements like cobalt, nickel, copper, zinc or lead, silver, gold, platinum, and so on, come from? Well they come from more energetic events, where there is a high density of free neutrons. The process is "neutron capture", where a nucleus captures a neutron, which then undergoes radioactive decay, to turn into a proton. This can take place in the late stages of evolution of large stars, to account for about half the heavier elements, but for the rest, we

A question of what, in fact, were

need higher energy events like supernova explosions or collision of the heaviest stars. One of the end points of the life of a star could be that matter is compressed till the protons and electrons coalesce into neutrons, which enables them to be packed closer still. The result, the neutron star, is an extremely dense object, some 10 kilometres across, but with mass well over that of the Sun. The shrinking diameter also leads to a tremendous rate of spin. As the object has a strong magnetic field, there could be radiation in pulses, which leads to the object being called a pulsar. One can imagine that the collisions of objects like neutron stars (or black holes) would be energetic indeed. And it is such events that lead to the neutron densities for the heaviest of elements to be formed.

The paper refers to other studies which document the presence of radioactive nuclei that are produced in high energy neutron capture, in meteorites. Just as in the case of carbon dating of archeological artefacts or fossils, measurement of what proportion of the radioactive nuclei in the meteorites has decayed could reveal things about conditions when the nuclei were created. This, however, is not possible in the present case because there may have been more than one instance of "enrichment" of the parent nucleus, as well as other uncertainties, the paper says.

However, as a stroke of fortune, the paper says, two of the nuclei, found in meteorites, have almost the same rate of decay. The nuclei are iodine-129 and curium-247, and both of them have almost the same half-life, of about 15.6 million years. The

kinds of events that led to formation of the heaviest elements, however, has not been answered. As we can imagine, the only witnesses to these events are the meteorites that crash into Earth. The team writing in *Science*, however, has identified contents of these meteorites which can illuminate the conditions, particularly of the density of neutrons, at the time the meteorites were formed.

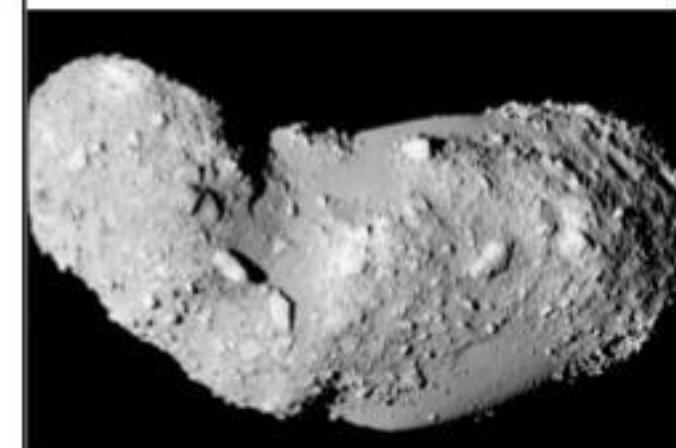
Now, it is possible to relate the rate of formation of the nuclei with the level of free neutrons that were circulating at the time of the relevant high energy event. Low neutron density would favour production of ^{129}I , as it has 53 protons (and 76 neutrons), and needs fewer neutrons to be added. High neutron density, however, would favour production of ^{247}Cm , which has 96 protons (and 151 neutrons) and needs more neutrons to be added. The number of ^{129}I nuclei in meteorites was found to be higher, at over 400 times the number of ^{247}Cm . This indicates greater production of ^{129}I when the nuclei were created, which suggests that the density of neutrons was modest, favouring the more easily created nucleus.

The calculations and values are tentative, as there are many factors to consider, but the approach is one that opens a window to imagine conditions 4.6 billion years ago, the time when the Solar System was formed.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

PLUS POINTS

Asteroid water



Scientists have found water and organic matter on the surface of an asteroid sample collected from the solar system – the first time that such material has been found on an asteroid.

The sample, which was only a single grain, came from the asteroid "Itokawa" found by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's first Hayabusa mission in 2010.

It shows both water and organic matter that originate not from an alien world, but from the asteroid itself. Researchers from Royal Holloway, University of London, suggest that the asteroid had been evolving for billions of years by incorporating the liquid and organic material in the same way Earth does. The asteroid has weathered extreme heat, dehydration, and shattering, but managed to re-form and rehydrate using material it picked up. The study also shows that S-type asteroids – which are the most common ones that come to Earth – can contain the raw components of life.

This could rewrite our knowledge of the history of life on Earth, which previously focused on carbon-rich C-type asteroids.

"After being studied in great detail by an international team of researchers, our analysis of a single grain, nicknamed 'Amazon', has preserved both primitive (unheated) and processed (heated) organic matter within 10 microns (a thousandth of a centimetre) of distance", said Queenie Chan from the department of earth sciences at Royal Holloway, in a statement.

"The organic matter that has been heated indicates that the asteroid had been heated to over 600 degrees Celsius in the past. The presence of unheated organic matter very close to it, means that the primitive organics arrived on the surface of Itokawa after the asteroid had cooled down."

The scientists' research, entitled "Organic matter and water from asteroid Itokawa", were published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

—THE INDEPENDENT

'Painting' tumours



A radiotherapy technique which "paints" tumours by targeting them precisely, and avoiding healthy tissue, has been devised. Researchers used a magnetic lens to focus a Very High Electron Energy beam to a zone of a few millimetres. Concentrating the radiation into a small volume of high dose will enable it to be rapidly scanned across a tumour, while controlling its intensity.

It is being proposed as an alternative to other forms of radiotherapy, which can risk non-tumorous tissue becoming overexposed to radiation. The researchers are planning further investigation, with the use of a purpose-built device. The study was undertaken at the CERN Linear Electron Accelerator for Research facility, and involved researchers at CERN, the University of Strathclyde, University of Oxford, the National Physical Laboratory, the John Adams Institute for Accelerator Science, the University of Napoli Federico II, the University of Oslo and Saclay Nuclear Research Centre in France. It has been published in *Nature Communications Physics*.

Professor Dino Jaroszynski, of Strathclyde's department of physics, led the study. He said, "Around 40 per cent of cancers are treated using external beam radiotherapy. The most commonly used form of radiation is high energy x-ray photons. Particle beams, especially heavier particles such as protons or ions, can improve on photons; heavier particles deposit their radiation dose only up to a finite depth, beyond which it is very small."

"This limited range, defined by the position of what is known as the 'Bragg peak' very effectively protects sensitive tissue. However, heavy particle accelerators are very expensive and large, which means that healthcare institutes can only afford a limited number of them."

Veebeams have been proposed as an alternative radiotherapy modality to megavoltage photons; they penetrate deeply but can be overexposed to healthy tissue. This can be largely overcome by focusing the Veebeam to a small location. Focused radiation beams could be used to precisely target tumours or regions of a tumour lacking oxygen, which would enhance the efficacy of radiotherapy.



JOBY BOXALL & KATHERINE FISH

We all depend on safe, clean drinking water for our health and well-being. Yet, sadly, not everyone has access to a safe water supply that they can rely on every day. Every country has its own approach to managing drinking-water supplies – some have networks that supply water directly to our homes that we can access at the turn of a tap, while others have protected wells from where safe, clean drinking water can be collected.

Despite access to safe, clean drinking water being a fundamental need and basic human right, millions of people across the world still lack a basic water service and have to collect drinking water from rivers, lakes or other water sources.

Those of us lucky enough to drink water supplied directly to our homes rarely think about the journey our water has been on to reach us. It takes energy and chemicals to treat the water, which is then pumped through the vast pipelines that make

up our drinking water distribution systems.

In the UK, we have some of the best drinking water quality in the world, but like many countries, we also have an ageing drinking water distribution system that poses risks and is having new pressures put on it with increasing population, urbanisation and the climate crisis. Sustainably managing our drinking water system is now critical for all of us – consumers and suppliers – worldwide.

Drinking water is not sterile; it would taste horrible and flat if it was. But it is easy to understand the need to manage the number and concentration of substances, including microorganisms, within our drinking water.

A common approach to this is to use disinfection, including a residual to protect against changes and risks during the often days spent in ageing distribution systems before reaching consumers. Such a residual is maintained in drinking water in many countries, although not all, to mitigate the regrowth or ingress of planktonic (or in other words, free-

living in the water) microorganisms, and the potential risks they present to our water quality.

Less easily understood is that most of the microorganisms within our drinking water systems aren't in the water; they are in biofilms, microbial communities embedded in a complex mix of biomolecules. Biofilms will inevitably develop on the interior surfaces of our drinking water pipes, their formation and subsequent mobilisation is responsible for water quality degradation. Crucially, it was not known how residual disinfection concentrations affected biofilms and, in turn, water quality.

Using an internationally unique, full-scale drinking water distribution experimental facility at the University of Sheffield in the UK, we determined the physical, chemical and microbiological impacts of different free-chlorine regimes on biofilms grown under each. We also evaluated their impact on water quality when mobilised.

Unexpectedly, we found that the use of a higher chlorine residual concentration resulted in the formation

SAFER WATER TO DRINK

By making a small change to the way we treat drinking water, a big difference to its quality can be made whilst being kinder to the planet

of distinct biofilms with respect to their bacterial community and inorganic composition, which resulted in greater degradation of water quality when mobilised, than biofilms developed under lower chlorine concentrations. The results also suggest that continued use of a higher chlorine concentration may select for more resilient biofilms, which are harder to manage in the future.

Our results fundamentally challenge the assumption that a measurable free-chlorine residual necessarily assures drinking water safety. There are countries that don't use a disinfection residual, commonly because the benefits of disinfection use are considered to be outweighed by risks associated with disinfection by-products and consumer complaints regarding chlorine taste/odour. Disinfection without a disinfection residual is feasible, generally because of younger distribution systems with lower leakage (so fewer routes for contamination), very high quality treated water with more efficient organic carbon (food for the microorganisms) removal and, critically, public acceptance of the periodic need for "do not drink" and "boil water" notices. The benefits of chlorine residuals in minimising regrowth and mitigating contamination risks, especially in ageing distribution systems must not be ignored. Providing a disinfection residual is a best option in the majority of situations.

This discussion highlights the need to consider the full range of impacts of disinfection residual within drinking water distribution systems, with our research particularly revealing unexpected impacts and risks associated with biofilms. We must understand and consider the full range of interactions and impacts that water quality management practices have.

We need to carefully consider the chemical and energy use in drinking water distribution and ensure that residual concentrations are set by considering all risks as part of integrated strategies. We need to recognise that employing a higher concentration of chlorine has costs and risks associated with it. There are ongoing economic and environmental costs of energy and chemical use, there are disinfection by-products and now we understand harder to manage higher risk biofilms.

The findings of our research show that we must be aware of, and understanding, the impacts of our management practices with consideration that goes beyond just the bulk-water (regrowth risk versus by-product formation). Our results suggest that using slightly lower disinfectant residual concentrations can result in biofilms that have less of a negative impact on water quality. The key, as with all sustainability, is to identify our preferred balance between the economic, environmental and social needs and costs.

Safe drinking water is the foundation of society and failure to ensure it soon has dramatic economic impacts, yet we must carefully select and decide on the chemical and energy used to provide it, to ensure this isn't at the undue expense of the environment. We must carefully evaluate our disinfection management practices ensuring provision of optimal balance of sustainable, safe drinking water.

Joby Boxall is professor and chair of water infrastructure engineering, and Katherine Fish is a post-doctoral research associate, University of Sheffield, UK



GOAL BOY

Borussia Dortmund do not expect "crazy things to happen" this summer despite Europe's biggest clubs trying to sign Erling Braut Haaland (photo, left). The Norwegian became the first player to reach 10 Champions League goals in just seven games for a single club when he netted twice in Dortmund's 3-2 win at Sevilla.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Role model: Suryakumar Yadav is a great role model for youngsters because of the patience he has shown for getting an India call-up, says VVS Laxman. He has been picked in the Indian squad for their five-match Twenty20 International series against England.

Williamson injured: Captain Kane Williamson will miss New Zealand's three One-Day Internationals against Bangladesh later this month with an elbow injury. New Zealand said Williamson had a small tear in his left elbow tendon that required immediate treatment.

Humpy best: Chess player Koneru Humpy won the BBC India Sportswoman of the Year award for 2020. It was based on a public vote in which Humpy beat Dutee Chand, Manu Bhaker, Vinesh Phogat and Rani Rampal; it was stated officially on Monday.

Chelsea win: Chelsea cemented their grip on fourth place in the English Premier League as Kai Havertz did well in their vital 2-0 win against Everton on Monday. Havertz has endured a disappointing first season following his move from Bayer Leverkusen.

La Liga: Real Betis rallied from 0-2 down to defeat Alaves 3-2 in the Spanish league, staying in the fight for European qualification spots. Betis' fourth victory in a row on Monday moved the club within three points of fifth-placed Real Sociedad and six points from Sevilla.

Narrow victory: Inter Milan moved six points clear at the top of Serie A after a 1-0 win at home against Atalanta. Defender Milan Krinić scored early in the second half on Monday and boosted Inter's chances of winning their first league title in more than a decade.

Ahmad out: Confederation of African Football president Ahmad Ahmad's five-year ban from football has been reduced to two years, the Court of Arbitration for Sport said on Monday, ending his hopes of re-election this week. Patrice Motsepe will replace him.

Top award: Former first lady Michelle Obama and soccer star Mia Hamm have been chosen for the US National Women's Hall of Fame as part of a Class of 2021 announced on Monday that included former Indra Nooyi and retired Brigadier General Rebecca Halstead.

Tokyo Olympics: Most Japanese do not want international spectators to attend the Tokyo Games this summer amid fears a large influx of visitors could spark a resurgence in new coronavirus infections. Organisers plan to decide on the matter by the end of the month.

Safe seat: Thomas Bach will be re-elected unopposed for a second term as Olympic chief, just five months before the opening ceremony of the coronavirus-delayed Tokyo Games and less than a year from the increasingly scrutinised 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.

Neymar injury: Neymar will miss Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League match against Barcelona because he has not fully recovered from injury, the club said Tuesday. PSG heads into Wednesday's game with a 4-1 lead from the first leg, which Neymar also missed against his former club after sustaining an adductor muscle injury on Feb. 11 while playing against Marseille.

How Australia foozled it and New Zealand made it

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE, 9 MARCH

Head coach Justin Langer today said Australia were "really slack" in not maintaining their over rate in the Melbourne Test against India which eventually cost them a place in the World Test Championship final.

Australia were fined four WTC points for being two overs behind in the second Test of the four-match series. India recently beat England 3-1 in a home Test series to set up a WTC final clash with New Zealand in June and Australia could have qualified in place of the Kiwis but for that slow over rate penalty.

"I remember we were in the team room afterwards and I spoke to Paine (skipper Tim Paine) and Dene Hills, our analyst, about it. I was a bit grumpy about it and I thought

"n't until after the game that we realised our over rate was down. Now, that's really slack on our behalf."

In the WTC standings, New Zealand finished 0.3 per cent ahead of Australia, who had decided not to travel to South Africa for a Test series owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I remember we were in the team room afterwards and I spoke to Paine (skipper Tim Paine) and Dene Hills, our analyst, about it. I was a bit grumpy about it and I thought

"imagine if this cost us the World Test Championship," Langer said. "And I mentioned it to the players afterwards that two overs down could cost us the World Test Championship. And so, we have to get better at that and make sure it doesn't happen in Sydney and Brisbane. It's very disappointing, but the lesson is the things that we can control, we have to control. And we can't relax for a second in Test cricket."

With India hosting the Twenty20 World Cup later this year, Langer said Indian Premier League-bound Australian players' performances in the T20 league will be taken into consideration when they sit to select the team for the ICC event. "There's no better showcase for some of our players.

They're playing in the same conditions (as the World Cup). We'll watch that really closely

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD, 9 MARCH

England all-rounder Ben Stokes has revealed that he and his team-mates endured a sudden weight loss during the fourth and final Test against India here after a stomach illness had hit the tourists before the match.

"Players are totally committed to England and I think that was emphasised last week when a few of us went down with illness that made operating in 41 degrees heat particularly taxing," Stokes said.

and see who performs well," Langer said. "It's a great opportunity for a lot of players. They get to play a lot of cricket under pressure, that can only benefit

told the UK's *Daily Mirror*. "I lost 5kg in a week, Dom Sibley 4kg and Jimmy Anderson 3kg among others. Jack Leach was ducking off the field in between bowling spells and spending more time than is ideal in the toilet. This is in no way an excuse, because everyone was ready to play, and India and Rishabh Pant especially produced a terrific performance, but I take off my hat to the effort that was put in by players who gave everything they had to try and win for England," Stokes said.

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and see who performs well," Langer said. "It's a great opportunity for a lot of players. They get to play a lot of cricket under pressure, that can only benefit

fit them individually and us collectively."

The IPL will run from 9 April to 30 May across six venues in India.

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Mandhana, Jhulan star as India level series against SA

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW, 9 MARCH

Veteran Jhulan Goswami's four-wicket haul was beautifully complemented by Smriti Mandhana's (in photo) sparkling 80 not out as Indian women outplayed South Africa by nine wickets in the second ODI to level the five-match series 1-1 here on Tuesday.

The 38-year-old Goswami returned with figures of 10-0-42-4 and she was ably supported by fellow seamer Mansi Joshi (2/23) and left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad (3/37) as India dismissed South Africa for a paltry 157 after opting to field.

Opener Mandhana (80 not out off 64 balls) and Raut (62 not out, 89 balls) then shared an unbeaten 138-run partnership for the second wicket with India overhauling the target in only 28.4 overs to bounce back from their eight-wicket loss in the first ODI.

Mandhana blasted 10 fours and three sixes while Raut dropped anchor at one end but also hit eight boundaries.

Mandhana made her intentions clear right from the start when she clubbed the first two balls of her innings for sixes off Shabnim Ismail (1/46).

However, India lost an early wicket when Jemimah Rodrigues (8 off 19 balls) dragged one to the stumps in the fifth over.

While Indian women have not played for a year before

the ongoing series, Jemimah's poor form dates back to the World T20 time as she hasn't been amongst runs for a considerable period of time.

Raut then took some time to get going but Mandhana was in full flow as she picked up boundaries regularly to keep the scoreboard ticking.

If the short balls were dispatched over the ropes, one outside the off-stump was sent to the third-man boundary with a deft late cut and anything fullish was driven through the covers.

Raut exploded in the 15th over, blasting two fours off Nonkululeko Mlaba.

In the 20th over, Mandhana picked up successive fours to get to her fifty in style, while Raut crossed the 50-mark with an innovative short behind the keeper.

Mandhana eventually scored the winning runs with successive fours in the 29th over.

Earlier, Lara Goodall was the most successful batswoman for South Africa as she scored a 77-ball 49, while skipper Sune Luus chipped in with a 57-ball 36.

Goswami struck twice in the 38th over, cleaning up Nadine de Klerk (8) and Shabnim Ismail (0) to reduce South Africa to 144 for 8.

Chetty was later dismissed by Gayakwad, who also accounted for Nonkululeko Mlaba.

Brief Scores:

South Africa women: 157 all out in 41 overs (Lara Goodall 49, Sune Luus 36; Jhulan Goswami 4/42, Rajeshwari Gayakwad 3/37).

India women: 160 for 1 in 28.4 overs (Smriti Mandhana 80 not out, P Raut 62 not out; S Ismail 1/46).

Electing to field, the Indian pacers were rewarded for bowling a probing line as Goswami and Joshi made early breakthroughs, dismissing openers Lizelle Lee (4) and Laura Wolvaardt (9) cheaply.

Luus and Goodall then added 60 runs but Joshi returned to dismiss the South Africa skipper in the 21st over.

The spinners then took control of the proceedings as Deepthi Sharma and Gayakwad bowled in tandem.

In the 26th over, Mignon du Preez (11) was caught by Deepthi at cover after she was deceived by Gayakwad in flight.

India skipper Mithali Raj made some excellent bowling changes as Goswami returned to get rid of Marizanne Kapp (10) and vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur cleaned up Goodall in her first delivery, reducing South Africa to 130 for 6.

Goswami struck twice in the 38th over, cleaning up Nadine de Klerk (8) and Shabnim Ismail (0) to reduce South Africa to 144 for 8.

Chetty was later dismissed by Gayakwad, who also accounted for Nonkululeko Mlaba.

Brief Scores:

Uttar Pradesh 280/7 (Uppendra Yadav 112 off 101 balls and skipper Karan Sharma's 83 off 100 deliveries to post a competitive 280/7.

The UP bowlers then did well enough to restrict Delhi to 234 in 48.1 overs with none of the middle-order batsmen getting a move on after a top-order collapse, having lost half of the side within 20 overs.

Shivam Mavi 1/31 in 8.2 overs was brilliant until he had to be taken off the attack for bowling a couple of beamers.

But it was the spinners

Shivam Sharma (1/33 in 10 overs) and off-spinner Sameer Choudhary (0/25 in 6 overs) who put the brakes in the middle overs when Lalit Yadav (61 off 78 balls) and Anuj Rawat (47 off 64 balls) couldn't break the shackles.

Brief Scores:

Uttar Pradesh 280/7 (Uppendra Yadav 112, Karan Sharma 83; Pradeep Sangwan 2/49, Simarjeet Singh 2/51) beat Delhi 234 in 48.1 overs (Lalit Yadav 61, Anuj Rawat 47, Akhsdeep Nath 2/29, Shivam Mavi 1/32).

UP beat Delhi by 46 runs to reach Hazare semis

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 9 MARCH

A disciplined Uttar Pradesh put up a thoroughly professional performance to outwit Delhi by 46 runs in the quarter-final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Tuesday.

Upwill now meet Gujarat in the first semi-final while heavyweights Mumbai will be pitted against Karnataka in the other last four clash.

Uttar Pradesh rode on keeper-batsman Upendra Yadav's stroke-filled 112 off 101 balls and skipper Karan Sharma's 83 off 100 deliveries to post a competitive 280/7.

The UP bowlers then did well enough to restrict Delhi to 234 in 48.1 overs with none of the middle-order batsmen getting a move on after a top-order collapse, having lost half of the side within 20 overs.

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Curran hopes IPL doesn't hinder his England chances

VITHUSHAN EHANTHARAJAH
LONDON, 9 MARCH

Sam Curran hopes his Indian Premier League commitments do not impinge on his desire to continue as a three-format player for England.

The all-rounder was retained by Chennai Super Kings for a second year, joining fellow centrally contracted Test players Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Jofra Archer and Chris Woakes at the competition.

It means, however, that if their respective sides make the play-off stages of the IPL, which take place 25-28 May, they will miss the start of the two-match series against New Zealand which is due to get underway at Lord's on 2 June.

Curran played both of the matches against Sri Lanka at the start of the year. The 22-year-old was due to play a part in the India series before logistical issues meant he was not able to rejoin the squad midway through the series following his prescribed rest.

Now in India as part of the limited-overs squad, he aims to cement a spot for the Twenty20 World Cup squad later this year in the same country. However, his red ball ambitions remain as strong as ever, even if he could miss out on adding to his 21 Test caps at the start of the English season.

"Any player wants to play all three formats for England. That is the goal and that's what we are doing at the moment, we are managing different workloads and it just appears the guys who play all three formats are finding it the most challenging. Hopefully, Covid and bubbles end soon and the vaccine helps and we get crowds in the summer. I guess that's the way we stop being in these bubbles. But I guess while they are around it's going to be tricky and we just have to take each series at a time I guess."

Curran's absence from the India series, which England lost 3-1, meant Joe Root was born a left-arm seam all-round option that would have given their attack some much-needed variety. He eventually arrived into the country on 25 February and underwent a week of hotel quarantine before training with a white ball over the last couple of days.

The ECB's rest-and-rotation policy for all-format players has come under scrutiny. Curran, however, has added his voice to the many players that have championed its merits. In his case, discussions with national selector Ed Smith and head coach Chris Silverwood took place at the end of last year to determine when and where he could get his break.

THE INDEPENDENT

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Ravichandran Ashwin was today named the International Cricket Council men's Player of the Month (February) for his stellar showing against England in a Test series at home which his side won 3-1 to qualify for the World Test Championship final.

England's Tammy Beaumont was adjudged the women's Player of the Month.

Ashwin scored a century in the second