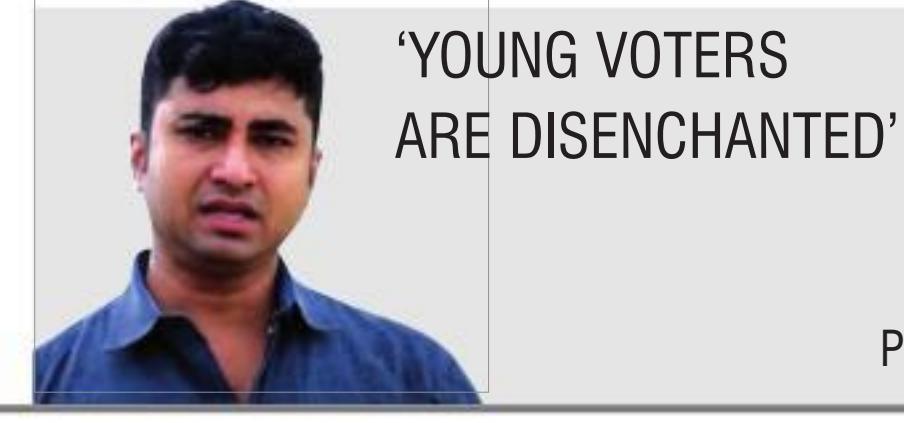




PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



INDU MALHOTRA
BIDS ADIEU TO
JUDGESHIP



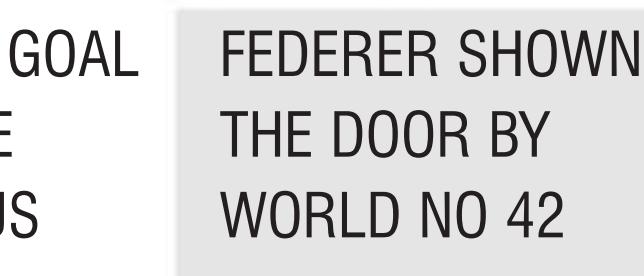
'YOUNG VOTERS
ARE DISENCHANTED'

P5



BIDEN SETS 4 JULY GOAL
FOR INDEPENDENCE
FROM CORONAVIRUS

P7



FEDERER SHOWN
THE DOOR BY
WORLD NO 42

P10



P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Mist in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 32 and 17 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 86% Min: 45%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 30.7°C (+1) Min: 17.9°C (+3)

SUN RISES

06:32 hrs

MOON RISES

07:14 hrs

SUN SETS

18:28 hrs

MOON SETS

18:28 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Prime Minister Narendra Modi pays homage to Mahatma Gandhi, at Sabarmati Ashram. Later he inaugurated the curtain-raiser activities of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' in Ahmedabad. ■ PIB (See P5)

Suvendu files nomination from Nandigram: Once again after 15 years, Nandigram has become the cynosure of West Bengal Assembly election where chief minister Mamata Banerjee will battle it out with her former protege Suvendu Adhikari who filed his nomination from Nandigram on Friday. Adhikari, after filing his nomination papers at the Haldia sub-divisional office, stressed on the importance of Nandigram seat saying, "The journey to Asol/Poribortan (real change) and restoring a Sonar Bangla will begin from here."

Interim cover to another activist in Toolkit case: A Delhi court on Friday extended by three days the interim protection from arrest granted to climate activist Shubham Kar Chaudhary, a co-accused along with Disha Ravi and others for allegedly being involved in sharing a "toolkit" on social media related to farmers' protest. Police urged the court to adjourn the matter till 15 March, when anticipatory bail pleas by Ravi and Shantanu Mukul are scheduled for hearing.



Four nations call for open, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region

ASHOK TUTEJA
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The four 'Quad' nations today announced their decision to launch a historic initiative to pool their financial resources, manufacturing capabilities and capacities and logistics to ramp up the manufacture and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines in the Indo-Pacific region.

At their first-ever summit, the four nations ~ the US, India, Australia and Japan ~ also called for an open, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region with freedom of navigation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the Indian delegation at the virtual summit which was also attended by US President Joe Biden, Australia Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

"India welcomes this (vaccine) initiative as it recognises our own manufacturing capacities and capabilities. We look forward to whole-hearted participation in this endeavour. This vaccine supply chain is built by trust," foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said while briefing the media on the outcomes of the summit.

He said the initiative would help mitigate the sufferings of the people due to the pandemic.

Under the initiative, vaccines would be manufactured in India and financed by the USA and Japan while the last mile delivery would be ensured by Australia. The aim was

to produce a billion doses by 2022 to cover the people in the entire Indo-Pacific region.

Shringla said the four leaders agreed to set up three working groups, including a vaccine experts' working group. In his remarks, Mr Modi said the four 'Quad' nations were united by their democratic values, and their commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.

Hesaid the agenda of the summit covered areas like vaccines, climate change and emerging technologies, which indeed made the 'Quad' a force for global good.

"I see this positive vision as an extension of India's ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', which regards the world as one family."

The 'Quad', Mr Modi said, has come of age and would be important pillar of stability in the region.

Mr Biden, who was attending his first plurilateral summit since his inauguration in January, said the US was committed to working with the other three 'Quad' countries and with its other allies in

the Indo-Pacific region to achieve stability. "This group is particularly important because it is dedicated to the practical solutions and concrete results," he added. The Australian Prime Minister said, "It's the Indo-Pacific that would now shape the destiny of the world in the 21st Century. As four leaders of great democracies in the Indo-Pacific, let our partnership be an enabler of peace, stability and prosperity in the region."

The Indian foreign secretary said the four 'Quad' leaders decided that they would hold an in-person summit on the margins of multilateral summits later this year. Mr Biden, Mr Morrison and Mr Suga appreciated India for its role in providing Covid vaccines to nearly 70 countries under the 'Maitri' (friendship) initiative.

Government sources said the vaccine initiative would allow new manufacturing capacities to be added in India for exports to the Indo-Pacific region. It would not impinge on India's existing manufacturing capacities.

China slams
'targeting' by
Quad nations

BEIJING, 12 MARCH

Ahead of the Quad summit on Friday, China said exchanges and cooperation between countries should contribute to mutual understanding rather than targeting a third party and refrain from pursuing exclusive blocs.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a media briefing here that exchanges and cooperation between nations should contribute to the mutual understanding and trust among nations, rather than targeting a third party or damaging the interest of a third party.

We hope that relevant countries uphold the principles of openness, inclusiveness and win-win results and refrain from pursuing exclusive blocs and things that are conducive to regional stability and prosperity, he said. ■

In today's context, it is one of the most important initiatives. We are talking about huge investments in creating additional vaccine capacities in India for exports to countries in the Indo-Pacific region for their betterment. We are talking about producing a billion doses of vaccines by the end of 2022," Mr Shringla said.

Mamata discharged from hospital; Trinamul team seeks probe into 'attack'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 12 MARCH

West Bengal chief minister Miss Mamata Banerjee was discharged from SSKM Hospital this evening though the doctors of the medical board set up for her treatment advised her to remain at the hospital at least for two more days for observation.

She was rushed to the hospital on Wednesday evening after she sustained injuries on her left leg, chest and shoulder in an alleged 'attack' at Nandigram where she is contesting the Assembly polls.

The medical board has advised her to revisit the hospital after seven days for check up.

A Trinamul Congress delegation, meanwhile, met the Election Commission (EC) in New Delhi and demanded a high-level probe into the alleged attack on Miss Mamata Banerjee in Nandigram, claiming that it was not an "unfortunate incident", but a conspiracy.

A health bulletin released by the SSKM Hospital said: "CM Mamata Banerjee has responded well to the treatment. Due to her repeated requests, she has been discharged, although with appropriate instructions. She has been advised to review after 7 days." It further said, "The board has re-examined the health condition of the chief minister. We opened the plaster cast. Fresh plaster has been applied. Wound looks better. We wanted to keep her under observation for



Chief minister Mamata Banerjee returns home from SSKM hospital in Kolkata on Friday.

48 hours. But with the repeated requests, we are discharging her."

After her discharge, Miss Banerjee was seen coming out of the hospital in a wheelchair. The state urban development minister Firhad Hakim and her nephew MP Abhishek Banerjee were seen escorting her to the car from the Woodburn Ward where she was undergoing treatment since Wednesday.

In a video message from the hospital on Thursday, Miss Banerjee had said that she would go home within two or three days and resume the election campaign. She suffered injuries when she was on a two-day visit to Nandigram from where she filed her nomination on Wednesday. She alleged that she was pushed by a few unidentified people, resulting in the injuries.

In New Delhi, six TMC MPs met Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora and other members of the EC, and contended that the 'attack' on Miss Banerjee at Nandigram was pre-meditated and part of a deep-rooted conspiracy.

The delegation submitted a memorandum to the EC, highlighting how Bengal's BJP leaders, including state president Dilip Ghosh and MP Soumitra Khan had threatened the chief minister through tweets and other remarks.

The memorandum also said that on 10 March the BJP complained against police personnel responsible for the chief minister's security and on the same day at around 6.30 p.m. "Local police was suspiciously absent when an attempt was made on the life of Miss Banerjee."

It also stated that two 'eye witnesses', Chittaranjan Das and Debarata Dasm who reportedly told some media persons that Banerjee's car had hit an iron post, are followers of BJP candidate Suvendu Adhikari.

India, China hold in-depth talks on remaining issues in E. Ladakh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The two sides agreed to convene the 11th round of the senior commanders' meeting at an early date so that they could work towards complete disengagement from the remaining friction areas, the MEA said

Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China border affairs.

The Indian delegation was led by Naveen Srivastava, Additional Secretary (East Asia) in the Ministry of External Affairs while the Chinese delegation was headed by the Director General of the Boundary

and Oceanic Department in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The two sides agreed to convene the 11th round of the senior commanders' meeting at an early date so that they could work towards complete disengagement from the remaining friction areas, the MEA said.

The two sides reviewed the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and had in-depth discussions on the remaining issues along the LAC in the Western Sector.

They agreed that the completion of the disengagement in North and South Bank of the Pangong Lake provided a good basis for the two sides to work towards early resolution of these remaining issues.

One lakh new Covid cases in six days

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI/KOLKATA,
12 MARCH

India added over one lakh coronavirus infections in six days with 23,285 cases being reported in a span of 24 hours till Friday morning, the highest in around 78 days, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The nationwide Covid-19 tally has reached 1,13,08,846, while the death toll increased to 1,58,306 with 117 new fatalities, data updated at 8 a.m. showed. Over the last three days, the number of fatalities has also spiked. On Thursday, India had reported 22,854 Covid-19 cases and 126 deaths while on Wednesday, 17,921 Covid-19 cases and 133 deaths were recorded.

There are 1,97,237 active

cases at present. Besides, 15,157 patients of Covid-19 were discharged in a day. A total of 1,09,53,303 persons have been discharged so far.

The rise in the number of Covid-19 cases, which had so far looked confined to Maharashtra and Punjab, is now beginning to show in several other states.

States/UTs such as Delhi, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh have had very similar growth trajectories in recent weeks. Delhi on Thursday reported 409 cases.

Maharashtra, by far the worst-off state, recorded this year's highest one-day spike for the third day in a row on Friday, with 15,817 new infections coming to light, according to a state health official.

The caseload in the state rose to 22,82,191, with 1,10,485

FACT FILE

TOTAL CASES
1,13,08,846

ACTIVE CASES
1,97,237

NEW CASES
23,285

NEW RECOVERIES
15,157

TOTAL DEATHS
1,58,306

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.
FRIDAY 12 MARCH 2021

Double trouble:
IIP contracts 1.6 pc in Jan, retail inflation rises to 3-month high

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

In a double whammy for the economy, industrial production growth re-entered the negative territory by contracting by 1.6 per cent in January, while retail inflation soared to a three-month high of 5.03 per cent in February on costlier food items.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) released the Quick Estimates of Index of Industrial Production (IIP) for January 2021 and Consumer Price Index (CPI) numbers for February 2021 on Friday evening.

As per the data, the contraction in the IIP in January was mainly on account of a decline in output of capital goods, manufacturing and mining sectors.

The output of the manufacturing sector, which accounts for 77.6 per cent of the IIP contracted by 2 per cent during the month under review, as against a growth of 1.8 per cent during the corresponding month last fiscal.

The worst performance was witnessed in the capital goods sector which showed a contraction of 9.6 per cent during January over a decline of 4.4 per cent during the same month in the previous fiscal.

NSO also revised upwardly the IIP number for December 2020 to 1.56 per cent from earlier estimate of 1 per cent. The factory output growth was in the negative in November 2020. It had posted an increase during September and October 2020.

DETAILS ON PAGE 8

Mithali 2nd woman to reach 10K international runs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW, 12 MARCH

Veteran batter Mithali Rajon Friday became the first Indian woman cricketer and second internationally to complete 10,000 runs across all formats, drawing praise from some iconic names of the game and the BCCI.

The 38-year-old Mithali, who leads the Indian ODI team, joined England's Charlotte Edwards in the elite club.

BCCI secretary Jay Shah called the India captain an "absolute legend".

"Take a bow, @M_Raj03! What an achievement to be the first Indian woman cricketer to surpass the international 10,000-run mark. Absolute legend," Shah wrote on his Twitter handle.

Earlier, the Board too con-



BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

► The 38-year-old Mithali, who leads the Indian ODI team, joined England's Charlotte Edwards in the elite club.

► Mithali achieved the feat with a boundary off Anne Bosch in the 28th over of India's innings during the ongoing third



People of Nandigram are saddened as she had blamed the locals for the incident

KAILASH VIJAYVARGIYA, NATIONAL GENERAL SECRETARY, BJP

ON THE ALLEGED ATTACK ON CM MAMATA BANERJEE IN NANDIGRAM

Capital logs 431 fresh corona cases, highest in over 2 mths

Delhi's positivity rate much lower than Maha, Kerala; govt fully prepared and on vigil: Jain

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH



Delhi today recorded 431 fresh coronavirus infections (Covid-19) — the highest in more than two months — while the positivity rate increased to 0.60 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The city thus registered over 400 Covid cases for the second consecutive day today as it had yesterday logged 409 cases.

The national capital's Covid toll climbed to 10,936 with two more fatalities, the health bulletin said. Delhi had recorded 370 Covid cases and 3 deaths on 10 March and 320 cases and 4 deaths on 9 March.

On 7 and 8 March, 286 and 239 coronavirus cases, respectively, were logged in the national capital. The city had registered 321 coronavirus cases and 1 death on 6 March, and 312 cases and 1 fatality on 5 March.

A total of 585 Covid cases were reported in Delhi on 1 Jan-

uary and 384 cases on 4 January. The daily coronavirus count had dropped to 306 on 11 January and risen again to 386 on 12 January, according to official figures.

The numbers had started to come down subsequently. On 26 February, the month's highest daily count of 256 cases was recorded in the city.

With today's fresh Covid cases, Delhi's caseload mounted to 6,42,870, the bulletin stated. The number of active coronavirus cases in the city rose to 2,093 from yesterday's 2,020.

Health experts and doctors have attributed the fresh uptick in coronavirus infections to people turning complacent and not following Covid-appropriate behaviour while

"assuming that all is well now". Today's cases were detected out of 72,031 tests including 46,135 RT-PCR tests and 25,896 rapid antigen tests, the bulletin said.

The number of Covid patients under home isolation rose to 1,097 from yesterday's 1028.

The Covid patients who recovered during the past 24 hours numbered 356, with the total number of such recoveries in the city rising to 6,29,841 so far.

There were 488 containment zones in the city now, the bulletin added.

As Delhi continues to witness an uptick in Covid cases afresh, health minister Satyendar Jain today however said that its positivity rate is still less than one per cent, "much lower" compared to the figures in Maharashtra and Kerala. He asserted that the Delhi government was on "full vigil" to combat the Covid pandemic.

Jain told reporters that the figures of over 400 cases per day suddenly were "not alarming".

"The positivity rate in Delhi in November was about 15 per cent. It came down to less than 5 per cent first and then to less than 1 per cent, and for the last two months, it is still below 1 per cent, which is much lower than what is being recorded in cities in Maharashtra and Kerala," he said.

Jain said there was a "stark difference" in the number of cases reported in Delhi and states like Maharashtra and Kerala, adding that the positivity rate recorded in Maharashtra was "about 10 per cent", while in Delhi it was hovering around 0.5 per cent.

"We are fully prepared and on full vigil," Delhi health minister said, adding that over 70,000-80,000 tests were being conducted a day.

"We are quite alert, tests are being conducted on a large scale. We are well within the cut-off mark, and are on the safer side, concerning the positivity rate. Delhi alone is conducting Covid tests five times that of what is being conducted in all of India," Jain also stated.

Kejri: Everyone will work towards fulfilling unfinished dreams of India

PTI
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH



To commemorate 75 years of India's independence, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal opens the 75-week-long programme at Connaught Place on Friday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

Everyone will work towards fulfilling the unfinished dreams of India and make the country "numberone in the world", Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Friday as he set the ball rolling for over a year-long series of programmes to commemorate 75 years of India's independence.

An evening of patriotic songs, headlined by lead singer of band 'Euphoria', Palash Sen, was organised at Connaught Place's Central park. Friday marks the beginning of the 75-weeks-long celebration concluding on August 15 this year.

The programmes to be showcased during the celebration will highlight the city's role in the freedom movement, its journey in the last 75 years and the "vision of Delhi" in 2047 when India will complete its 100 years of Independence.

"Thousands of people sacrificed their lives to get us freedom, this is the time to remember them and their dreams...many of their dreams were achieved in the last 75 years, many remain to be fulfilled..."

He also mentioned about his government, including "deshbhakti period", in the city's schools and installing 500 flag masts across Delhi to instill the sense of patriotism among the youth and students.

"We teach our students Science, Maths, Physics, Biology, but don't teach them to love their country. Now we will have a separate curriculum where students will be special classes of deshbhakti for one hour every day, and will instill the sense of patriotism in them," he added.

pendence Day.

He also mentioned about his government, including "deshbhakti period", in the city's schools and installing 500 flag masts across Delhi to instill the sense of patriotism among the youth and students.

"We teach our students Science, Maths, Physics, Biology, but don't teach them to love their country. Now we will have a separate curriculum where students will be special classes of deshbhakti for one hour every day, and will instill the sense of patriotism in them," he added.

AAP, BJP spar over non-payment of salaries to MCD employees

PTI
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The AAP and the BJP Friday traded charges over the issue of non-payment of salaries and pensions to MCDs' current and retired employees with both parties accusing each other of not releasing funds.

Am Admi Party's chief spokesperson and MLA Saurabh Bhardwaj referred to a Delhi High Court order dated March 9 that has reportedly held the commissioners of the three municipal corporations directly responsible for non-payment of salaries to teachers, doctors, nurses and other workers.

"The MCD has not paid teachers, doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, retired employees for a long time, yet the (BJP-ruled) MCD took no concrete action, no solution has been brought forth," he said.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Kapoor said AAP leaders have no moral or political right to raise questions on this issue as the AAP government is directly responsible for financial crisis of the municipal corporations.

Sisodia orders probe into 'financial irregularities' in aided DU colleges

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia today directed the Directorate of Higher Education to set up an enquiry committee to probe into alleged financial irregularities in the Delhi government-funded colleges of Delhi University, saying that stringent action will be taken against guilty officials.

In a statement, Sisodia

said that it was brought to his notice that several Delhi government-funded colleges of Delhi University have not disbursed the salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff from the grant-in-aid released for the third quarter of 2020-21.

Sisodia, who holds the education portfolio, stated that he has also come to know that many of the colleges have not submitted the utilisation certificates of the grant-in-aid given in

the above third quarter.

The deputy CM reportedly asserted that the probe panel will look into alleged irregularities of funds in 12 Delhi government-funded colleges.

"If colleges have not disbursed salaries, then what has been done with the funds? What is the reason that utilisation certificates have not been submitted? The non-submission of utilisation certificates seems to indicate financial irreg-

ularities. It seems like an attempt to avoid scrutiny and accountability," Sisodia said.

"DoE is hereby directed to set up an enquiry committee, which should include senior accounts functionaries to look into how the third quarter grants and existing surplus funds have been spent with transparency. Strongest action needs to be taken against any financial irregularities by these Delhi Government colleges," he stated.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

COURT NOTICE
(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)
IN THE COURT OF
SH. ANUPREET SINGH
Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurugram
CNR No. HRGR02-00131-
2021

Next Date: 16-04-2021

Vinod Kumar

versus

General Public.

Publication issued to:

General Public, Gurugram

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. That defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 16-04-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourtcd.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&district=gurugram.

Dated, this day of 12-03-2021.

Civil Judge
(Junior Division)
Gurugram

Seal of the Court

2. Sh. R.K. Misra, Mangaer,
M/s. Avtars Roll Forge Industries,
Amluh Road, Mandi Gobind Garh, Tehsil, Amluh Dist.
Fatehgarh Sahib.

VERSUS Plaintiff

1. M/s. Associated Steel Industries, A/4/2, M.I.D.C. Kamleshwar, Nagpur Andhra Pradesh-27, Through its Partners Mr. Satish Goel, Partners, M/s. Associated Steel Industries, A/4/2, M.I.D.C. Kamleshwar, Nagpur Andhra Pradesh-27.

3. Manmohan Singh, Partners, M/s. Associated Steel Industries, A/4/2, M.I.D.C. Kamleshwar, Nagpur Andhra Pradesh-27.

In above titled case, the defendant(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 20-05-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourtcd.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&district=Fatehgarh Sahib

Dated, this day of 28-01-2021.

Additional Civil Judge
(Sr. Division), Amrit P. Seal of the Court

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE

TO Whomsoever It May Concern

This is to inform the General Public that following share certificates of GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Health care Ltd having its Regd. Office Hindustan Unilever Limited, Unilever House, Sector 17, Sawai Marg, Chakala, Andheri (E) Mumbai 400099, registered in the name of M. L. Ahuja under Folio No. M02383 have been lost by the regd. holder. CERTIFICATE#5901, Distinctive Nos. 224278-242400, No. of Shares 25, CERT.#104339, Dist. Nos. 224278-242400, Dist. No. 25, CERT.#13075296, Dist. Nos. 26208362-26209031, Dist. No. 50, CERT.#379998, dated

03.03.2021 at Barrackpore Court before the Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class, declare that my name is Subhashish Chattopadhyay, Subhasish Chattopadhyay and Suvasish Chattopadhyay, son of Shri Sukumar Chattopadhyay is same and one identical person residing at 342/8, Besundebpur Road, Post Office, Shamnagar, P.O. Jagaddal, North 24 Parganas, State: West Bengal, Pin-74127.

I, SIYARAM Ray, So. late Jagannath Ray of No. Rail Gate, R.C. Path, P.O. Nawabganj, P.S.: Noapara, Dist.: 24 Pgs., (N) I have received a letter from Gramin Rojgar Siya Ram Ray to Siyaram Ray by affidavit at Barrackpore (J.M.) Court on 02.03.2021.

NOTICE — That my client Smt. Archana Chatterjee, wife of Sri Sankar Chatterjee and daughter of late Jahan Lal Chandra & late Dalabani Chandra, residing at Block-B, 2nd Floor, 26/2, Baje Shilpgram, Post Office, Shilpgram, Police Station: Shilpgram District: Howrah PIN: 711102, has lost one original Deed of Sale registered before the District Registrar, Howrah and recorded in Book No. I, Volume No. 47, Pages from 261 to 264, Being No. 3076, for the year 1957 from her custody. That for such loss of original Deed of Sale my client Smt. Archana Chatterjee lodged a General Diary before Chatterjeehat Police Station having G.D. No. 1204/21 dated

25.02.2021. That presently my client possessed the Certified Copy of the Deed of Sale. That for the loss of original Deed of Sale I on behalf of my abovementioned client Smt. Archana Chatterjee publishing this information and stated that if anybody elsewhere have any news above the loss of original Deed of Sale and / or any news above the estate which covered by the Deed of Sale then he or she or they should contact with me within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice.

Sumandip Bandyopadhyay Advocate Mobile No. 7980775429

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So far as I am concerned my casting had never been influenced by anyone's political beliefs or colours.

DIRECTOR KAMALESWAR MUKHERJEE
AFTER KAUSHIK KAR, AN ARTISTE, WAS REMOVED FROM A PLAY FOR JOINING THE BJP

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 13 MARCH 2021

Khattar presents ₹1.55Lcr Haryana Budget for 2021-22

Health, agri & infra get top priority in Haryana Budget which doesn't have any fresh tax proposal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 12 MARCH

Health, agriculture and infrastructure have been given top priority by the Haryana government in its over Rs 1.55 lakh crore Budget for the financial year 2021-22.

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who also holds the finance department portfolio, presented the Budget in the state Assembly on Friday. Presenting the Budget estimates, which have no fresh tax proposals, Khattar proposed a Budget of Rs 1,55,645 crore for FY 2021-22, an increase of 13 per cent over FY 2020-21 of Rs 1,37,738 crore.

The Budget outlay comprises 25 per cent as capital expenditure of Rs 38,718 crore and 75 per cent as revenue expenditure of Rs 1,16,927 crore. Reading out the Budget estimates in the House, Khattar said the Covid-19 pandemic posed unpreceded challenges and "taught us several lessons".

"It is important for the Budget to prioritise specific sectors that are key to leverage a rebound in the economy, particularly in times of crisis. We have identified health, agriculture and infrastructure as key priority areas that we need to focus recovery and resurgence," he said.

"While focusing on health is of paramount importance



Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar presenting the Budget for 2021-22 in the Assembly on Friday.

in these times of unprecedented public health crisis, agriculture which forms the foundation of our economy and which is the sheet anchor of our self-reliance is critical," the CM said.

Khattar said his government needs to continue providing assistance to farmers for paving the way for Haryana's economic growth. An outlay of Rs 6,110 crore has been proposed for 2021-22 in this regard, of which Rs

2,998 crore is earmarked for agriculture and farmers welfare, Rs 489 crore for horticulture, Rs 1,225 crore for animal husbandry & dairying, Rs 125 crore for fisheries and Rs 1,274 crore for cooperation. The outlay of Rs 6,110 crore for 2021-22 indicates an increase of 20.9 per cent against the 2020-21 fiscal's Rs 5,052 crore.

The CM said the Haryana government is committed to doubling the farmers'

income. "We are indebted to our farmers, whose toil and hard work has made Haryana the food bowl of the country. Agriculture is the mainstay of our economy. We are committed to doubling farmers' income and ensuring his/her wellbeing," he said.

He said this Budget endeavours to reinforce "our interventions and schemes for agriculture on increasing farmer's income, crop diversification and water conser-

vation".

It is also important to support and nurture these interventions by providing critical infrastructure - be it expanding the health network, increasing the outreach of vaccination, setting up testing labs and so on, farm gate processing infrastructure, irrigation, especially micro-irrigation facilities, to promote crop diversification among other key things, Khattar added.

HP Govt opens exhibition as part of Amrit fest of India's Independence



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 12 MARCH

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatraya on Friday inaugurated the photo exhibition organized at the historic Ridge in Shimla under the aegis of Regional Outreach Bureau Chandigarh, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, and Department of Language and Culture, Himachal Pradesh.

The exhibition is being organised as part of the 'Amrit Mahotsav of Independence' celebrations to mark the coming 75th anniversary of India's Independence.

Urban Development minister, Suresh Bhardwaj, and Mayor of Shimla Municipal Corporation, Satya Kaundal, were also present.

The Governor paid floral tribute on the statue of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi on the Ridge before

HP's urban poor to also benefit from assured employment: CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 12 MARCH

Himachal Pradesh's urban poor, including those from the newly constituted Municipal Corporations in the state, would be to get benefits of assured employment under 'Mukhya Mantri Shahari Ajivika Yojna' on the lines of MNREGA being implemented in the rural areas.

This was stated by HP Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur while addressing the people at Talyahar near Mandi after inaugurating and laying foundation stones of developmental projects worth Rs 17.43 crore in Mandi Assembly segment, which includes inauguration of Rs 25 lakh Integrated Command and Control Centre at Police Lines Mandi.

The chief minister also laid foundation stone of parking at Government Middle School Purani Mandi to be completed by spending an amount of Rs 2.87 crore and of DNA New Block at Regional Forensic Science Laboratory, Central Range Mandi to be constructed by spending Rs 1.32 crore.

He also inaugurated DNA Analysis Facility at Regional Forensic Science Laboratory, Central Range Mandi to be completed by spending Rs 2.15 crore.

The chief minister said that about 605 projects hanging in fire due to forest clearances were cleared recently which has provided much needed



relief to the state government in executing various developmental projects in HP. He said that works on ambitious Shiv Dham worth Rs 150 crore and 33 KiloVatt (KV) sub-station Talyahar were delayed due to the cases pending in the Apex Court for want of forest clearances. He said that now with the forest clearances the work on all these projects would be expedited.

Thakur said that Mandi was a fast-expanding and fast-growing town, which has a glorious history and a bright future. He said that in order to ensure better development of this town, the state government has decided to upgrade Nagar Parishad Mandi in Municipal Corporation. He said that this would ensure better and planned development of the town and provide better civic facilities to the people of the town. He said that no tax would be levied on the residents of the merged areas of the town. He said that all the land rights of farmers would also remain intact.

He said that Shiv Dham Mandi would be an added attraction for people visiting the town. He said that Mandi town is bound to regain its old and rich cultural glory.

Later, while addressing the people at Purani Mandi, the chief minister said that the parking area in Purani Mandi would go a long way in facilitating the people of the town. He said that some people are trying to mislead the public by claiming that the Municipal Corporation would burden them with additional taxes.

Jal Shakti Minister Mahender Singh said the MC status would ensure systematic and planned development of the town. He said that schemes worth crores of rupees have been started to provide sewerage facilities to the Mandi town and the new merged area of the town.

Member of Parliament from Mandi Ram Swaroop Sharma said that the chief minister is committed to ensure that Mandi town becomes one of the most vibrant towns of the state. He said that now it is the responsibility of the people of the town that they give wholehearted support to the Chief Minister, so that the pace of development goes uninterrupted.

Mandi Shivratri fair gets underway with fervour

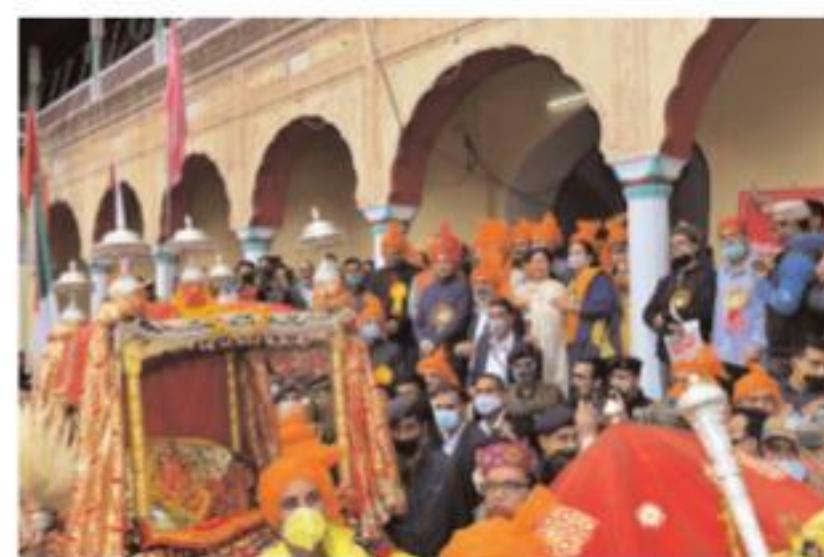
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 12 MARCH

Traditional fervour marked the beginning of the week-long Swarnim International Shivratri Fair of Mandi on Friday, as thousands of people participated in the procession carrying their local deities dancing all the way up to the historic Paddal ground.

Over 150 deities from Mandi district participated in the 'Jalebi', the traditional Shobha Yatra.

Addressing people at the Paddal ground, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur felicitated the people of the state on the auspicious occasion of International Shivratri festival, which is being celebrated this year as Swarnim International Shivratri Fair to mark fifty years of HP's statehood.

He said that the world is yet



to come out from the Corona pandemic and we all need to be cautious as the crisis is not yet over. He said that fortunately, the number of Covid-19 cases is declining constantly. He said that this is due to precautions by the people and timely decisions taken by the Central leadership.

Thakur said the recently

upgraded Municipal Corporation Mandi would ensure that the Mandi town is developed in a planned and systematic manner.

He said that the three years tenure of his government has been "full of achievements and accomplishments". He said that almost every section of the society has been ben-

fitted by the policies and programmes of the state government. He said that fairs and festivals are an integral part of the rich cultural repository of the state and should be celebrated in a befitting manner.

He said that the district administration has been directed to ensure adequate arrangements for the people accompanying the deities. He said that the State Government has made adequate provision for welfare of every section of the society in the Budget for the financial year 2021-22 despite the Covid-19 crisis.

The chief minister announced an increase of 5 per cent in honorarium of 'Bajantries' accompanying the deities.

Later, the Chief Minister inaugurated the exhibition at Paddal Ground set up by var-

ious Departments, Boards and Corporations and evinced keen interest in the exhibition.

Deputy Commissioner Mandi and Chairman International Shivratri Fair Organizing Committee Rughved Thakur said that Shivratri fair of Mandi is a unique cultural repository of Himachal Pradesh. He said that the theme of this year's event is the fifty years of Himachal Pradesh and this year as many as 216 deities were invited to participate in this fair.

He said that the exhibition on the "glorious and golden journey" of the state during the last fifty years is the main attraction of the fair. He said that an Awareness Rath has also been included in the procession to highlight the "Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao" campaign.

drivers of the HRTC buses furthermore important. He said that the drivers of the Corporation are working hard day and night to ensure that the people reach their destination safely and well in time.

He said that the pandemic has adversely affected the economy of the state. He said that the state government has ensured that the drivers and conductors of HRTC buses do not suffer and that they were provided all their dues well in time.

Thakur said that 200 new buses have been added to the fleet of the HRTC to provide better and comfortable transport facilities to the people of the state. He said that a provision of Rs 377 crore has been made in the budget for the state Transport.

The chief minister said the

state government would sympathetically consider the demand of the drivers for their promotion since a driver even after putting in services of over 30 to 35 years retires as drivers and have no promotion avenues. The chief minister was also presented a cheque of Rs 1.51 lakh by the Drivers Union as contribution towards the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Founder of HRTC Drivers' Union Satya Prakash Sharma said that drivers of HRTC have been providing round the clock services to the people of the state. He said that the Corona pandemic has badly affected the economy of the state, but the state government ensured that the drivers get salary on time so that their families do not face any hardship.

Hooda trashes Budget, says Khattar govt taking H'yana into bankruptcy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 12 MARCH

Former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition, Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Friday said the Haryana Budget for 2021-22 presented by the Manohar Lal Khattar government is "disappointing" as it provided no relief to people who are in acute financial distress.

Addressing a Press conference after the Budget, the Leader of the Opposition said the people are still struggling from the economic impact of long Covid lockdown and the corona pandemic and expected some relief and concessions from the Budget. "But the Chief Minister's two and a half hour long Budget speech did not provide any relief or help to any section including farmers, labourers, workers, businessmen and homemakers," he said and added that CM Khattar deliberately prolonged the budget speech only to "mislead and confuse" people.

Hooda said that the government repeatedly claimed to increase the Budget for education and agriculture while "the truth is that instead of increasing Budget allocation, they have been reduced". An attempt has been made to confuse the public by adding technical education to the education budget, he added.

The Congress leader expressed concern over the deteriorating financial health of Haryana and said that the



state was being pushed towards "financial insolvency".

"The financial situation of the state has become very fragile today due to the policies of the government. The government has barely five per cent Budget left for developmental works after paying loans, interests, salaries and allowances to the employees. That is why there is a question mark on the announcements being made by the government. How will the announcements be completed without adequate financial resources," he questioned.

"The BJP government is pushing the state in debt and is taking Haryana towards bankruptcy and that is why the debt figures were not clearly stated in the Budget speech this time. Apparently, the government is hesitating to expose its failure. It is estimated that the total debt on the state has increased to Rs 2.25 lakh crore and every child in Haryana is born with a loan of Rs 1 lakh on her head," the Leader of the Opposition said.

Hooda charged that the "most disappointing aspect" of the Budget was that it did not show any vision nor did it appear to be trying to fulfil its election announcements. "Old age pension has been increased by just Rs 250 while the JJP formed an alliance with the BJP on condition of increasing old age pension to Rs 510 but the promise has remained unfulfilled," he said.

SHIFTING WEATHER



During a spell of rain in Shimla on Friday.

LALIT KUMAR

HRTC bus drivers played key role during pandemic: Jai Ram

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 12 MARCH

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Friday said that the drivers of Himachal Road Transport Corporation (HRTC) buses have played a major role during the Corona pandemic in bringing back home lakhs of Himachali stranded in different parts of the country.

Addressing the State Level 9th Foundation Day function of Himachal Pradesh Road Transport Corporation Drivers' Union at Mandi, he said that thousands of students were also brought back home from far-off places such as Kota in Rajasthan. The chief minister said that roads are lifelines of the economy for the hilly states like Himachal Pradesh. He said that this makes the role of

conductors of HRTC buses do not suffer and that they were provided all their dues well in time.

Thakur said that 200 new buses have been added to the fleet of the HRTC to provide better and comfortable transport facilities to the people of the state. He said that the Corona pandemic has badly affected the economy of the state, but the state government ensured that the drivers get salary on time so that their families do not face any hardship.

The chief minister said the

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures

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- PUNCHKUAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chkr.)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

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Prove through this election that only those who do good to people can come to high positions. Put an end to dynasty politics

TAMIL NADU CHIEF MINISTER K PALANISWAMI

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ndia

THUMBNAILS



Karnataka CM BS Yediyurappa takes his first dose of Covid-19 vaccine at a hospital in Bengaluru on Friday.

AGENCIES

Road accident: A bus driver was killed and 38 injured in an accident in the Naroda area on Friday, police said. While 22 people were admitted to Aligarh Medical College, the rest are getting treatment at the district hospital. District Magistrate said a bus on the way to Badarpur from Delhi crashed into a tree near Ratnapur village. PTI

Girl raped by stepfather: A four-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her 50-year-old stepfather in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district. Based on the complaint of the girl's uncle, police has arrested her stepfather. PTI

DMK releases list of candidates for TN polls

Stalin to contest from Kolathur, son to make debut from Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 12 MARCH



MK Stalin visits the memorial of his father and late DMK chief M Karunanidhi before releasing his party's candidate for the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, in Chennai on Friday.

AGENCIES

The Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam(DMK) today released the list of candidates for 173 constituencies in Tamil Nadu Assembly elections and prominent among them is none other than Udhayanidhi Stalin, the son of party chief MK Stalin. Udhayanidhi Stalin is the party's youth wing leader and also a well-known face in Tamil cinema as an actor and producer. DMK President MK Stalin will contest from Kolathur for the third time.

Though the party is primarily relying on heavyweights and sitting MLAs, it will field nearly 50 new faces and choose to field several of these new faces in constituencies represented by AIADMK ministers. But DMK, which always spoke for women reservation, disappointed this time with allocating only 12 women candidates which is seven percent of the total candidates. In almost 170 constituencies DMK candidates are pitted against its arch-rival and ruling party AIADMK.

DMK is one of the parties which is always advocated for the Women's Reservation Bill that would ensure 33 per cent seat reservation for women in government posts and legislatures. Of the DMK's women candidates, six will contest in reserved constituencies.

Addressing the media persons at Anna Arivalayam before reading the list, DMK president Stalin said, this is not the list of candidates but the list of winners in the upcoming elections.

The AIADMK on Thursday finished allotment of all seats except for the Padmanabham-puram constituency. While the party will field members in 178 seats, a total of 190 candidates will contest under the Two Leaves symbol.

Following meetings that lasted for several days, the AIADMK inked a pact with GVK Vasani's TMC (Tamil Maanila Congress) on Thursday. TMC has been allotted six seats.

The party has given seats

to 23 incumbent Cabinet ministers and 45 sitting MLAs. Giving utmost heartburn to the fresh applicants, even sitting Rajya Sabha MPs KP Munusamy and Vaithilingam have been given MLA tickets for this election. Over 9,000 persons applied to contest as party candidates in the 234 constituencies, of which at least 50 seats are being given to allies. For the remaining 180 odd constituencies, the party has fielded well-known and established leaders to a large extent. This includes former Chennai mayor Saidai Duraisamy in Saidapet, MLA Sathyaranayanan in T Nagar, former MLA JCD Prabhakar in Villivakkam, deputy speaker Pollachi V Jayaraman in Polachi, minister for animal husbandry Udamalai Radhakrishnan in Udamalpettai and former minister Natham R Viswanathan in Natham.

Meanwhile, the DMK has fielded young candidates against heavyweights of AIADMK and the party's Salem district functionary Sampath Kumar is the opponent of Tamil Nadu chief minister and four-time MLA Edappadi K Palaniswami in the Edappadi constituency. The party also fielded its Maduravoyal south secretary Ganapathy against school education minister P Benjamin at the Maduravoyal constituency. DMK's Thiruvallur Central District Secretary SM Naseer will face off against minister Mafoi Pandiarajan. Former AIADMK MLA JCD Prabhakaran will be up against DMK's Netri Azhagan in the Villivakkam constituency. At Jolarpettai, DMK has fielded their Vellore West district Secretary Dhevaraj against minister for Commercial taxes KC Veeramani.

Both the Dravidian majors-AIADMK and DMK-have fielded new faces in the R K Nagar constituency previously held by former Tamil Nadu CM J Jayalalithaa. DMK has fielded JJ Ebinaser against AIADMK North Chennai (East) district secretary RS Rajesh. Significantly, TTV Dhinakaran, the AMMK chief and the sitting RK Nagar MLA, has chosen to contest from Kovilpatti.

DMK youth wing secretary Udhayanidhi Stalin will be making his electoral debut from the party's bastion of Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni. He will be contesting against a PMK candidate. The Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni seat, once held by his grandfather and former CM M Karunanidhi, was last represented by DMK's late J Ambazhagan, who passed away last year.

Kumar is the opponent of Tamil Nadu chief minister and four-time MLA Edappadi K Palaniswami in the Edappadi constituency. The party also fielded its Maduravoyal south secretary Ganapathy against school education minister P Benjamin at the Maduravoyal constituency. DMK's Thiruvallur Central District Secretary SM Naseer will face off against minister Mafoi Pandiarajan. Former AIADMK MLA JCD Prabhakaran will be up against DMK's Netri Azhagan in the Villivakkam constituency. At Jolarpettai, DMK has fielded their Vellore West district Secretary Dhevaraj against minister for Commercial taxes KC Veeramani.

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Kamal Haasan to contest from S Coimbatore

CHENNAI, 12 MARCH

Actor-turned politician Kamal Haasan would make his electoral debut, contesting from Coimbatore South constituency in the 6 April Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

The Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) president made the announcement here on Friday, releasing the second list of 43 party candidates which included veteran politician Pazha Karuppiah and yesteryear actor Sripraya.

The party also named candidates for 18 constituencies in neighbouring Puducherry which also goes to polls on 6 April for its 30-member Assembly. Haasan, whose party is heading a three-party coalition in Tamil Nadu, will be up against the nominees of BJP and Congress, partners in the AIADMK and DMK-led alliances respectively, in Coimbatore South. Three years after floating the MNM, the 66-year-old Haasan is taking the electoral plunge.

U'khand: Cabinet formed, 8 ministers, 3 ministers of states included

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 12 MARCH



The Tirath Rawat Cabinet took oath in Dehradun on Friday. Eight ministers and three ministers of state were inducted in the new Cabinet of Uttarakhand government. All the old faces of the earlier Trivendra Rawat government were repeated and four new faces were included.

Uttarakhand Governor Baby Rani Maurya administered the oath of office and secrecy to the cabinet ministers in Dehradun on Friday.

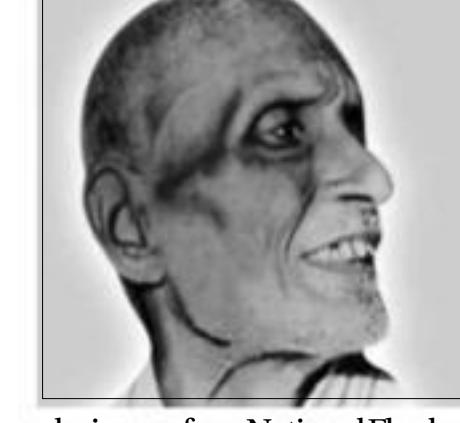
Tirath Singh Rawat chose his team by giving equal importance to caste and region. The name of Ritu Khanduri, daughter of former Uttarakhand CM Major General (Retd.) BC Khanduri, was also making the round, but she failed to make it to the cabinet.

Haridwar Rural MLA Yatishwaranand, who had defeated senior Congress leader Harish Rawat in 2017 state assembly polls, finally got his due by becoming state minister (independent in charge) in the BJF government.

Senior BJP leader and current Didihat MLA Bishan Singh Chufal and Kaladhuni legislator Bansidhar Bhagat took oath as cabinet ministers. Both were included to provide strong representation to the Kumaon region.

YSR writes to PM, urges to award Bharat Ratna to Pingali Venkayya

HYDERABAD, 12 MARCH



ed it the first designs and specimen of the National Flag; the flag that will fill the hearts of millions of Indians with the spirit of freedom, independence and duty to carry on with the struggle until the motherland was unshackled from the chains of slavery," wrote Reddy. He went on to add: "It is in this light, I request your kind self to confer Bharat Ratna (posthumously) upon Shri Pingali Venkayya who designed the National Flag.

The chief minister initiated the celebrations for the 75th Independence Day by felicitating the daughter of Pingali Venkayya at Guntur and handing over Rs 75 lakh as financial assistance from the state government.

Pingali Venkayya, who passed away last year, was mentioned in his letter the life and works of the

designer of four National Flags has remained largely unrecognised. "The country has lost several decades without recognising the untiring efforts of her son late Shri Pingali Venkayya who gifted

TENDER

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Office of the Executive Engineer(E)-II SSZ
11th Floor, Technical Laboratory,
Disaster Management Centre, Ghaziabad, Delhi-96
No. E.E. (Elect.)-II/Shah(S)/2020-21/D-757 Date : 11.03.2021
CORIGENDUM-1 PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No. 30 EEE-II/EDMC/ENGG./2020-21/ Date : 25.02.2021,
Tender No. 319687
The last date of re-encryption of online bid for item No. 1 has been extended till 18.03.2021 up to 02:00 PM.
Other details/information can be seen on website
www.mcdtenders.com
RO NO - 88/DP/EAST/2020-21 Executive Engineer (E)-II/Shd. (S)
EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. 155303

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Mandi invites tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s) through offline process:-

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earliest Money	Cost of Form	Time Limit
1	Community Centre in Lower Saini Muhal Mandi Tehsil Sadar Distt Mandi HP (SH:- C/O Community Centre at Lower Saini above Luv Kush Balniki Temple building at Lower Saini) (DC Deposit)	2,50,834/-	5100/-	250/-	Three Months
2	A/R & M/O to Various LWSS/TWSS under Jal Shakti Sub-Division Saligao Distt Mandi HP (SH:- Repair & Maintenance of R/Main/Gravity Main by cutting, Welding and Testing of GI pipe of 150mm dia, 80mm dia, 65mm dia, Manufacturing & Fixing of GI bends, CS slice valve, CI Foot Valve and Suction pipe etc in Jal Shakti Section Dhanyari)	1,38,544/-	2800/-	250/-	Three Months
3	Restoration of Rain Damages of LWSS to NPCP habitation from Uri river to Tung Bijn & its adjoining villages in CP Tung & Bijn Tehsil Mandi HP (SH:- Laying, Jointing and Testing of GI pipe 40mm dia from Node K9-K12 = 700 Rmt, 32mm dia from Node K9-K40 = 200 Rmt, K40-K41 = 200 Rmt, K41-K42 = 600 Total 32mm dia = 1000 Rmt and 25mm dia K25-K43 = 200 Rmt.) (UNDER JMM)	1,49,765/-	3000/-	250/-	Three Months
4	Providing LWSS to PC habitation in Census Village Jhir, Nagwan, Shill Masbara & Takot in GP Nagwan, Jhir & Takot in Tehsil Aut Distt Mandi HP (SH:- Laying, Jointing and Testing of GI pipe 40mm dia from Node K9-K12 = 700 Rmt, 32mm dia from Node K9-K40 = 200 Rmt, K40-K41 = 200 Rmt, K41-K42 = 600 Total 32mm dia = 1000 Rmt and 25mm dia K25-K43 = 200 Rmt.) (UNDER JMM)	2,60,250/-	5205/-	250/-	Three Months
5	A/R & M/O WSS Takot Susan in GP Takot & Kotadhar Tehsil Aut Distt Mandi HP (SH:- Providing & Laying Ventifiled Tiles at AE Residence Panarsa).	2,13,457/-	4300/-	250/-	Three Months
6	Construction of Paver Block Flooring from Matwara Road to village Neta Muhan Tehsil Sadar Distt Mandi HP (SH:- Providing & Laying of Paved Flooring).	3,00,248/-	6100/-	250/-	Three Months
7	C/O RCC Circular Storage Tamk 10000 Ltr Capacity near Sh. Dev Bala Kasna Temple Mohal Mub in GP Dhar Tehsil Sadar Distt Mandi HP (SH:- C/O RCC Circular Storage Tamk 10000 Ltr Capacity near Sh. Dev Bala Kasna Temple Mohal Mub in GP Dhar Tehsil Sadar Distt Mandi HP (DC DEPOSIT).	1,49,966/-	3000/-	250/-	Three Months
8	Slagger for wall/writing under Supports activity Head (EC) and Sub-Head reminder media as per annual action plan (AAP) 2020-21. (SH:- Slagger for wall writing under Supports activity head (EC) and Sub-Head reminder media as per annual action plan (AAP) 2020-21).	4,85,827/-	9800/-	250/-	Three Months

Last date of sale of tender form from divisional office: 16-03-2021upto1.30 PM. The tender shall be received on dated 17-03-2021 till 3.00 PM and shall be opened on the same day at 3.30 PM in presence of tendered or their authorized representative.

The tender detailed conditions can be obtained from the website www.hphip.org and tender form from office of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Mandi upto date specified above after showing the documents as mentioned at Sr. No 1 to 5 of terms and condition.

Term and condition

Notes:- Following documents are required at the time of submission of tenders forms, tenders received without following documents will summarily be rejected.

1. Copy of Enrollment/renewal of contractor in appropriate class with Jal Shakti Vibhag.
2. The earnest money in shape of Demand Draft or FDR of any nationalized bank duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Mandi, Distt. Mandi. Exemption of EMD shall be allowed.
3. Copy of GST Registration certificate.
4. Copy of PAN No.
5. The contractors/firm must quote their rates in words as well as in figures.
6. Telegram, emailed or tenders through Fax shall not be accepted.

6483/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti Division Mandi

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) e-Procurement Notice

The Superintending Engineer, 7th Circle, HPPWD, Dalhousie on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the item rate bids in electronic tendering system for following works under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) work in the District Chamba for six number of package(s) with estimated cost totaling to Rs. 1349.65 Lakhs including maintenance for five years from the eligible contractors registered with HPPWD and HP Jal Shakti Vibhag. Contractors of HP Jal Shakti Vibhag are eligible to participate for the works having amount upto tender above Rs. 100.00 Lakhs. Non registered contractors may submit the bids, however successful bidder has to register himself in appropriate class before signing the contract with appropriate authority in HPPWD.

Division	RDF	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (Rs Lacs)	Total Cost (Rs Lacs)	Period of Completion (Months)	Bid Security (Rs Lacs)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dalhousie	XXVI	Construction of Link road from Langi to Drouni Km 0/0 to 3/225 (SH:- Formation cutting, C.D. Work etc.) Under NABARD RDF-XXVI.	247.95	247.95	12 Months
Dalhousie	XXVI	Construction of link road to village Dhudhaha to Naloh in GP Chalara km 0/0 to 5/0 (SH:- Formation cutting, CD works etc. (under NABARD RDF-XXVI))	172.35	172.35	12 Months
Chamba	XXVI	Metalling /Tarring of Ghoom to Janjia road Km. 0/0 to 4/				



When we had undertaken cycle rides before the 2011 state Assembly elections, the UP government has lost the polls

SAMAJPARTY CHIEF AKHILESH YADAV
WHILE ADDRESSING A RALLY IN RAMPUR DISTRICT.

THUMBNAILS



A Kashmiri villager walks on a snow-covered road at Kukroosa area of Handwara, Kashmir on Friday.

MOHAMMAD AMIN WAR

Assam polls: Filing of nomination papers for the second phase of Assam legislative Assembly polls covering 39 seats (out of 125 Assembly constituencies) came to end on Friday where over 100 candidates submitted their nomination papers for their respective constituencies. SNS

J&K liquor shops: The J&K government has decided not to increase the number of liquor shops in the Kashmir Valley and to stick to the existing number of only four vends in the safe cantonment area of Srinagar that are proposed to be e-auctioned for the financial year 2021-22. PTI

Stranded cargo ship : The Indian Navy provided assistance to a stranded cargo ship with seven Indian crew members as it was drifting in the Gulf of Oman following failure of its propulsion and power generation systems, officials said on Friday. PTI

Modi flags off Dandi march rerun

PM also launched the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" during the commemoration of 75th anniversary of independence

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 12 MARCH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today described salt as a symbol of dignity of labour and equality.

Flagging off the re-enactment of Mahatma Gandhiji's 'Salt Satyagraha' march to Dandi at the Sabarmati Ashram here this morning, Modi emphasized the symbolism of salt in the Indian context --- gratitude, faith and honesty.

At the peak of the freedom movement in 1930, Mahatma Gandhi and 80-odd his followers had started their march on this day to Dandi in south Gujarat to symbolically defy the British laws by picking up a handful of salt from the Arabian Sea coast.

The famous 386-kilometre march from the Sabarmati Ashram later earned the sobriquet 'DandiYatra' and entered the Indian textbooks as one of the powerful components of the non-violent movement for freedom struggle.

The Prime Minister also launched the "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", the commemoration of 75th anniversary of independence. The two-hour-long event included a short film on India's independence struggle and afterwards, songs from different regions and also an innovative rendition of "Vande Mataram".

Elaborating the significance of salt, chosen by the Mahatma as symbol of disobedience of British laws, Prime Minister Modi said that salt for Indians means loyalty, gratitude, faith and honesty.



Salt is not evaluated in India by its price, he said.

"Indians say we have eaten salt of the country", Modi explained how and why it means an expression of gratitude. A nation's future is secure only if it stays rooted in pride of its rich history and cultural heritage, said the Prime Minister.

Recalling the various stages of freedom struggle, Modi said that Mahatma Gandhi's 'Satyagraha', Lokmanya Tilak's 'Purna Swaraj' and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose's slogan 'Dilli Chalo' were later kept alive by India's saints and monks. As part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' festival, the 75 years of independence will be celebrated at 75 different locations in six districts associated with the freedom struggle. Various events would be held also in places like Dandi, Bardoli, Rajkot, Mandvi, Porbandar and Vadodara. The prime minister flagged off a padyatra (foot march) from Sabarmati Ashram to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's

Dandi march.

The padyatra is being undertaken by 81 marchers from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to Dandi in Navsari, a journey of 386 km. The march will end after 25 days, on April 5. "We are proud of our Constitution and democratic traditions. India is the mother of democracy and we are marching ahead by strengthening it. India's achievements are not just our own. Our achievements are showing light to the entire world," Modi said after launching the celebrations.

India's 'Atmanirbhar' approach of development will give momentum to the development journey of the world, he said.

"Five pillars - Freedom Struggle, Ideas at 75, Achievements at 75, Actions at 75 and Resolves at 75 - are the guiding force for moving forward," he said. Listing the contributions made by freedom fighters and different incidents related to the freedom struggle, Modi said, "The coun-

try has been making a conscious effort for the last six years to preserve this history, in every state and every region.

"The revival of the site associated with the Dandi Yatra was completed two years ago. The site where Netaji Subhash (Chandra Bose) hoisted the tricolor in Andaman after the formation of the country's first independent government has also been revived.

"The Andaman and Nicobar islands are named after the freedom struggle. Places associated with Babasaheb (Ambedkar) have been developed in the form of Panchteethas. The memorial in Jallianwala Bagh and Paika movement memorial have also been developed, Modi said. After landing at Ahmedabad airport, Modi drove to Sabarmati Ashram, where he paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi. He also visited Hriday Kunj.

Modi wrote in the visitors' book that the Mahotsav is a tribute to our freedom fighters and freedom struggle.

"By coming to the Sabarmati Ashram and with the inspiration of Bapu, my determination for nation building is strengthened," he wrote.

"Mahatma Gandhi gave the message of atma-nirbharta (self-reliance) and atma-vishwas (self-confidence) from here, Modi wrote.

"Azadi Ka Amrit Mohotsav is a tribute by our people to our freedom fighters and freedom movement. During the celebrations the country will not only remember all the important milestones, important times during the freedom movement but also gain new energy for development of our future," Modi wrote.

Rahul: India becoming increasingly chained by authoritarian forces

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

On the 91st anniversary of the historic 'Dandi March', Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged on Friday that India is becoming increasingly "chained by authoritarian forces led by the RSS" and urged people to be guided by Mahatma Gandhi's example to continue with the march for freedom.

On March 12, 1930, Mahatma Gandhi started his march from the Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi in Gujarat to break the salt-tax law imposed by the British. It was an act of civil disobedience to protest against British rule in India.

"Gandhi's Dandi March gave a bold message of freedom to the entire world," Rahul Gandhi said in a Facebook post.

"Today, as India is becoming increasingly chained by authoritarian forces led by the RSS, we must renew our individual commitment to collective freedom. Let us be guided by Gandhi's example and continue the march for freedom. Jai Hind!" the former Congress chief said.

In a tweet in Hindi, Gandhi said the farmers were carrying forward the tradition of Dandi march and the anti-farmer Modi government, like the Britishers, wants to trample upon 'satyagraha'.

MP CM claims freedom history taught wrongly:

Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan claimed today that history of our country has been deliberately taught wrongly and only a few certain people have been credited for the freedom struggle, while the names of many other freedom fighters have been purposely not mentioned.

Chouhan said this addressing students and public, as he inaugurated the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' event at the 'Shaurya Smarak' in Bhopal under light drizzle in the morning. The event coincided with similar events across the state and the country to mark the launch of Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March in 1930 on this day. Chouhan said that we have been taught in history books that only certain people fought against the British for India's freedom.

"Satyagraha will win, not arrogance!" he added. In another tweet earlier, Rahul Gandhi also attacked the Centre over the issue of employment, saying students want jobs but the government is giving them "beating by police, spraying by water cannon, tag of 'anti-national' and unemployment".

Officials associated with govt cannot work as SECs: SC

NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

In a significant verdict, the Supreme Court Friday held that a person employed with the government cannot work as state election commissioners (SECs) and came down on the Goa government for giving its Law Secretary the additional charge of the SEC.

The apex court said the state poll panels shall be headed by independent persons who do not hold any office under the state government and if they hold any such offices, then they have to resign before taking charge of the SEC.

The top court said election commissioners have to be independent persons and no state can appoint a person who holds any office with the government.

A bench headed by Justice RF Nariman also directed the Goa state election body to issue the notification for the local body polls within 10 days from today and complete the election process by 30 April.

Under the Constitutional mandate, it is the duty of the state to not interfere with the functioning of the state election commission, the bench held in its judgement delivered on the appeal of the state government. The judgement came on an appeal by the Goa government against the high court's ruling on panchayat polls. The Goa government, in its appeal, had said that High Court could not have interfered with the poll process.

TENDER

NORTHERN RAILWAY
PUBLIC NOTIFICATION
CRS INSPECTION OF ELEVATED TRACK IN ROHTAK CITY FROM KM 0/800 TO 5/650 ON ROHTAK-GOHANA-PANIPAT LINE OF DELHI DIVISION.

Newly constructed elevated line in Rohtak City on Rohtak-Gohana-Panipat section (5 Km) of Delhi Division will be inspected by Commissioner of Railway Safety. High speed trial of the section by special train will be conducted by Commissioner of Railway Safety on 14.03.2021 after trolley inspection.

General public is informed to stay away from Railway lines in above section. Track should not be crossed. Trespassing of track is a punishable offence and liable for prosecution under Railway Act.

Issued by
563/2021 Northern Railway Construction Organization
Serving Customers With A Smile

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

NIT No. 221-S4/2/BP/SSB/ML-IV (2020)
Name of work and its location Round the clock Transportation of Drivers Lines Boxes of Diesel & Electric Drivers and guards from Engine/Train/B. Van to running room/Lobby/Station/Yard and vice versa at Shakurbasti Station under Sr. Crew Controller, for the period of two years from the date of execution of work.

Approx Cost of work Rs. 21,70,868/- + GST as applicable (Rs. Twenty One Lakh Seventy Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty Eight Only)

Earnest Money Rs. 43420/- (Note: It should be in the form of net banking or gateway only. Note: FDR not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Board letter no 2015/CR-IC/CT/51 dated 31.08.2016)

Completion period of work Two years i.e. 24 months from the date of execution of work

Cost & tender document on cashby post Rs. 3540/- including GST @18%

Date & Time for submission of tender and opening of tender Upto 12:00 hrs. on 05.04.2021 Opening of Tender at 12:15 hrs.

Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen Above tender will be available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

221-S4/2/BP/SSB/ML-IV(2020) Date : 12.03.2021 568/21
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
DIRECTORATE OF FLORICULTURE SRINAGAR KASHMIR
Tel-0194-2474234 Fax - 2482032 - email : kashflori@rediffmail.com

Sub: Extension No. 01.
In view of poor response, the last date for submission of bids invited vide this office e-Tender Notice No. 20 of 2021 dated. 05.02.2021 for Outsourcing of Hiring Out of Parking lot at Parimahal, Srinagar is hereby extended as per the details given below:-

1. Period of downloading of bidding document	10/03/2021 from 11:00 AM to 24/03/2021 up to 2:00 PM
2. Bid submission Start Date	10/03/2021 from 02:00 PM
3. Bid submission End Date	24/03/2021 up to 2:00 PM
4. Date and time of Opening of Tenders	26/03/2021 at 2:00 PM

Other terms and conditions shall remain same as laid down in the aforesaid Tender Notice.

By order
Sd/- Accounts Officer
(Member secretary)

No. DIPK-14870/20
Dated:- 10-03-2021



MORNING SPREE



Cyclists silhouetted against a cloudy sky on Chandigarh-Bathinda road during early morning hours, in Patiala on Friday. IANS

SC seeks Centre's response on plea for appointment of regular CBI cheif

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The NIA on Friday filed a supplementary chargesheet against an Indian operative of Pakistan's spy agency ISI for allegedly raising funds for espionage activities in India, an official said.

They were involved in espionage activities by collecting sensitive and classified official information relating to vital defence installations in order to threaten the integrity, security and sovereignty of India, he added.

The first supplementary chargesheet against Imran Yakub Giteli, a resident of Godhra in Gujarat, was filed under sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) before the special NIA court in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, he said.

The official said a case was registered in November 2019 under sections of the IPC, the UAPA and the Official

Secrets Act in Vijayawada over a conspiracy hatched by Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agents along with their associates based in India to carry out terrorist acts in India.

It had said that government has instead appointed Praveen Sinha, as an interim director of the premier investigating agency. "We are issuing notice. We will have it after two weeks," the bench said. Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the NGO, said the work of CBI is suffering because of non-appointment of a regular CBI director as per section 4A of the Delhi Special Police

have the matter next week. The top court said that next week this bench is not available as it will be sitting in the Maratha reservation matter and for that reason it is listing after two weeks.

Bhushan said the court can ask them (Centre) to at least convene the meeting of the selection committee.

We will hear them. We are issuing notice, the bench said. The plea, filed through Bhushan, has also sought a direction to the Centre to initiate and complete the

process of selection of the CBI director well in advance, at least one to two months before the date on which the vacancy to the post is about to occur.

The plea added that the appointment of regular CBI director as per the statutory law is necessary for upholding the rule of law and for enforcement of the rights of citizens under articles of the Constitution dealing with equality before law and protection of life and personal liberty.

and Justice AS Bopanna. Attorney General KK Venugopal said that it is very unfortunate that judges of the Supreme Court have to retire at the age of 65.

We all will miss a great judge, Venugopal said while praising Justice Malhotra. Senior advocate Vikas Singh, who is also the president of the Supreme Court Bar Association, agreed with Venugopal's view and said judges of the apex court should not retire at the age of 65.

"65 year is the age when you are at the peak. There is no reason why judges of the apex court should retire at 65 years," Singh said. He said, "Demand of the bar is that there should be an immediate replacement

at the bench by a lady member".

"She (Justice Malhotra) is an icon and she is a motivation for young as well as lady members of the bar," Singh said. Senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi, P S Narasimha, V Mohana and other lawyers also praised Justice Malhotra for the grace, dignity and patience with which she did her work as a judge of the apex court and as a member of the bar before being elevated to the bench. Malhotra, who was designated as a senior advocate in 2007, became the first woman lawyer to directly enter the top judiciary as a judge on April 26, 2018. With her retirement, Justice Indira Banerjee remains the only woman judge in the top court.

Notice is hereby given that due to reorganisation of our branch network and to provide continued service to our customers, it is proposed to merge our existing branch at the following place with effect from 21.6.2021.

Sabarimala issue under radar in poll-bound Kerala

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 12 MARCH

Sabarimala women entry issue has become a heated topic of discussion in the election-bound Kerala, with senior CPI-M Kerala leader and state Devaswom minister Kadakkampally Surendran on Thursday expressed regret over the incidents that took place in Sabarimala over the women entry issue.

Surendran's remark appeared to have evoked images of the tumultuous days in several quarters. His confession ahead of the Assembly elections is viewed as an attempt by the LDF to prevent a repeat of the backlash faced in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Nair Service Society (NSS) reacted sharply to Surendran

and said that his stand was wrong and that he was paid by it. BJP state president KS Surendran said Kadakkampally is now crying out scaring the coming polls and the people of the state would not believe him.

Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala said the minister is deceiving the devotees by expressing regret over the incidents in Sabarimala. He asked Vijayan would publicly say that he was paid by it. BJP state president KS Surendran said Kadakkampally is now crying out scaring the coming polls and the people of the state would not believe him.

Notice is hereby given that due to reorganisation of our branch network and to provide continued service to our customers, it is proposed to merge our existing branch at the following place with effect from 21.6.2021.

Existing Branch

AGRA

Second Floor, No.7,
Shanta Tower, No.29-F/211,
Sanjay Palace,
Agra - 282 002

Whither moderation

The irresponsible invective which presumably responsible leaders from across the political spectrum in the USA quite routinely spout is coming home to roost. Ms Vanita Gupta, President Joe Biden's nominee to a senior post at the Justice Department, is now busy dialling back her not very moderate posts on Twitter and Facebook, becoming the second Indian-origin American official to face trouble over social media outbursts. Ms Gupta, 46, was nominated to serve as Associate Attorney General. "I regret the harsh rhetoric that I have used at times in the last several years. I can pledge to you today that if I am confirmed, you won't be hearing that kind of rhetoric from me," she told members of the Senate Judiciary Committee during her confirmation hearing on Tuesday. Last week, in a major setback to President Biden, Ms Neera Tanden withdrew her nomination as Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget after the Democratic Party and the Biden Administration failed to muster enough votes in the Senate to secure her confirmation. Ms Tanden, 50, too had faced a tough time in her confirmation hearing over her Twitter rants against several lawmakers, including those from her own party, who disagreed with her stand on various issues.

While in these cases the virtues of moderation were lost on those from the American left, right-wing politicians are equally culpable in what appears to be a societal shoot-and-scoot global pandemic wherein all manner of allegations are made against specific individuals on social media under the garb of expressing an opinion. Each side, of course, claims freedom of speech to defend often libellous and defamatory attacks against those who may hold a different point of view and is quick to label any response to allegations from those targeted as 'hate speech' or worse. The obvious hypocrisy of those who claim freedom of expression as a defence while giving short shrift to moderation, common sense, and erring on the side of responsibility rather than giving vent to pet peeves in provocative language, is one aspect of the whole mess. The other is the self-serving retraction of their own statements when they threaten to imperil career advancement.

The following exchange at the US Senate hearing on Ms Gupta's confirmation about sums it up. When she was accused of being an "extreme partisan advocate" who has demonstrated "significant hostility to religious liberty" and whose "record is that of an extreme left ideologue" not an officer of the law, her response was: "If I am confirmed as Associate Attorney General, I will be motivated to enforce our federal laws to protect and enforce our immigration laws." When it is her job on the line, Ms Gupta has no qualms about mainlining moderation, it would appear. That her questioner was Senator Ted Cruz, himself not exactly the epitome of responsible public utterances, only underlines the irony of the situation.

Hell on Earth

The famine conditions in embattled Yemen, after five years of relentless conflict with Saudi Arabia, have brought the impoverished and embattled country to the brink of famine. Wednesday's caveat advanced by the UN's World Food Program can thus be contextualised with the visual of a child reduced to skin and bone with an inflated tummy, recalling reports of a "starving Biafra" in the 1970s. Closely intertwined with the food crisis is the grim reality that people have been driven to penury in this swathe of Asia. To the extent that the WFP may be forced to seek hundreds of millions of dollars in a desperate attempt by a UN entity to stave off widespread famine in the coming months. The Program needs at least \$815 million in aid to Yemen over the next six months, but has only \$300 million. The UN agency will require at least \$1.9 billion to meet targets in 2021. Indeed, the situation in the war-afflicted country has been described as "hell" by the world body.

On closer reflection, the war has been no less devastating than the nationwide scarcity of food and the grinding poverty. Yemen symbolises the correlation between hunger and abject penury with the populace helmed by a beleaguered government. Thus far, there has been no attempt to distinguish between extensive malnutrition and starvation. Albeit on a limited scale in terms of geographical spread and the number of the sick and dying, the enormity of the tragedy is no less severe than the catastrophic Covid pandemic that has plagued the world. But the response of the comity of nations has been awfully limited at best and woefully impervious at worst.

As the cry for food resonates and international wihers remain unwrung, Yemen represents a microcosm of an international tragedy. This must of necessity take precedence over the Saudi blitz against the Iran-backed Houthis. The world needs to wake up to how bad things have gotten in Yemen, was the lament of WFP's executive director, David Beasley. Children have been "wasting away" in a hospital in Sanaa, Yemen's capital. The heart-rending tragedy has deepened with reports that Yemen's youngest are the worst affected. The adult has failed the child across the border from oil-rich Riyadh, the imperial seat of the desert kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The UN, which has dithered in other parts of the Arab world, has rather belatedly woken up with the robust intervention of the World Food Program. Its senior representative has succinctly assessed the scenario with the high-minded lament ~ "In the children's ward of a hospital, you normally hear crying and laughter. There's no crying, there's no laughter, there's dead silence." The silence of the baby is pregnant enough. Yemen symbolises hell on earth.

Depsang impasse

The Depsang Plains represent a high-altitude gravelly plain at the northwest portion of the disputed Aksai Chin region of Kashmir, divided into Indian and Chinese administered portions across a Line of Actual Control. India controls the western portion of the plains as part of Ladakh, whereas the eastern portion is controlled by China, but which is claimed by India



Indian and Chinese troops have implemented step-wise disengagement in eastern Ladakh's Galwan and Pangong Tso areas, ending the long standoff between the two ground forces. However, the longstanding standoff persists at more than one location in the Depsang Plains region of Ladakh.

The Depsang Plains represent a high-altitude gravelly plain at the northwest portion of the disputed Aksai Chin region of Kashmir, divided into Indian and Chinese administered portions across a Line of Actual Control (LAC). India controls the western portion of the plains as part of Ladakh, whereas the eastern portion is controlled by China, but which is claimed by India. The Depsang plains are also part of the area called Sub-Sector North (SSN) by the Indian Army.

In April 2013, the PLA had set up a temporary camp at the mouth of Depsang Bulge, where the Rakhi Nala and Depsang Nala meet, claiming it to be Chinese territory. However, after a three-week standoff, they withdrew as a result of an agreement with India. In 2015 China tried setting up a watchtower near Burtsa. Any threat to Depsang affects India's DSDBO road. Initially India had stationed about 120 tanks in the SSN, and over the years the numbers have increased.

During the 2020 China-India stand off, the Chinese had laid claims to the Depsang Bulge. It came to light that Chinese troops had been blocking Indian patrols from proceeding along the Rakhi Nala valley near the "bottleneck" since 2017. After a resolution to

the standoff at Pangong Tso in February, it was reported that the Chinese had started strengthening their positions at Depsang.

The Indian military's SSN is east of Siachen Glacier, located between the Saser Ridge on the southeastern side and the Saltoro Ridge on the Pakistan border. With regard to a two front war for India for this area can provide a linkage for Pakistan and China in Ladakh. The territorial wedge created by Depsang Plains-Karakoram Pass-Shyok Valley prevents this territorial link up, hence its great importance to India. The Depsang Plains are also close to China's western highway G219. Depsang at 16,000 feet north of Shyok River is strategically important as it provides India the Daulat Beg Oldie airstrip and Karakoram Pass further north. On its west is the Siachen Glacier under Indian control. Indian patrols have been blocked here by PLA in the Y junction area as the Chinese have intruded 18 km inside since 2013. Regular patrols to patrol points 10,11, 11A, 12 and 13 have been blocked due to the impasse.

Unlike the usual optical satellites, which rely on sunlight to capture images, the Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) generates a picture emitting microwaves and illuminating its target on the earth. The SAR has an advantage over traditional optical satellites as it can capture images at night

as well as during bad weather conditions.

The SAR images of a permanent Chinese post, generated by illuminating radio waves during the night, provide glimpses of the Chinese buildup near the LAC. Situated at a distance of about 24 km opposite India's highest airstrip Daulat Beg Oldie in Ladakh and PLA's Tianwendian post is an all-season post in Aksai Chin. The post was established after the 1962 war and has seen consistent upgrades over the past few years. According to the latest imagery, the Tianwendian post with its air defence systems, storages, additional shelters and vehicles for reinforcements serves as the core of the PLA operations in the region.

Imagery suggests that its main building has seen additional auxiliary structures, camps, vehicles, and fencing since August 2020. The latest high-resolution imagery were captured on the night of 25 February by the SAR commercial satellites of the US-based space firm, Capella Space. During the current standoff, Chinese troops have brought in their tanks and troops close to Indian positions. The additional buildup of new camps and shelters were first seen in July last year after the brutal hand-to-hand combat between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan river valley.

The post initially had three

large buildings possibly for accommodating a large number of troops; however, the facility seems to have been expanded to house additional PLA troops during the standoff period. Temporary shelters with defensive walls as well as observation posts are also visible in the new imagery.

India has been asserting that not just Pangong but all friction points across Eastern Ladakh including Depsang Plains and areas around Damchok where Indian grazers have been obstructed should be dealt with and status quo maintained.

With India and China agreeing to restore status quo ante on the LAC, a meeting between National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi, both special representatives on boundary resolution, will soon take place to sort out differences in perception over the undefined border. However, the back channel talks between the special representatives have ensured no side will unilaterally alter the status quo along the LAC and the status quo will be restored on all other friction points.

Wang during his annual press meet on 7 March said India and China needed "to create enabling conditions for the settlement" of the boundary dispute, even as he reiterated China's view that the "rights and wrongs" of last year's crisis were clear. However, defence experts feel that the Chinese are not keen on further disengagement and that is why they are dragging their feet. They claim Hot Springs and Gogra as their own territory. They are not even willing to talk about Depsang.

A MEMBER OF THE ANN ASIAN VOICES

Sustainable energy key for Asia-Pacific

The past year is one that few of us will forget. While the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic have played out unevenly across Asia and the Pacific, the region has been spared many of the worst effects seen in other parts of the world. The pandemic has reminded us that a reliable and uninterrupted energy supply is critical to managing this crisis. Beyond ensuring that hospitals and healthcare facilities continue to function, energy supports the systems and coping mechanisms we rely on to work remotely, undertake distance learning and communicate essential health information. Importantly, energy will also underpin cold chains and logistics to ensure that billions of vaccines make their way to the people who need them most.

The good news is our region's energy systems have continued to function throughout the pandemic. A new report "Shaping a sustainable energy future in Asia and the Pacific: A greener, more resilient and inclusive energy system" released recently by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) shows the energy demand reductions have mainly impacted fossil fuels and depressed oil and gas prices.

Renewable energy development in countries across the region, such as China and India, has continued at a

healthy pace throughout 2020. As the Asia-Pacific region transitions its energy system to clean, efficient and low carbon technologies, the emergence of the pandemic raises some fundamental questions. How can a transformed energy system help ensure our resilience to future crises such as Covid-19? As we recover from this pandemic, can we launch a "green recovery" that simultaneously rebuilds our economies and puts us on track to meet global climate and sustainable development goals (SDG)?

A clean and sustainable energy is central to a recovery from Covid-19 pandemic. By emphasising the importance of the SDGs as a guiding framework for recovering better together, we must focus on two critical aspects. First, by making meaningful progress on the SDGs, we can address many of the systemic issues that made societies more vulnerable to Covid-19 in the first place – health, decent work, poverty and inequalities, to name a few. Second, by directing stimulus spending to investments that support the achievement of the SDGs, we can build back better.

THANK You Jesus and St. Jude for favour received. — D.S.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Wrong signal on vaccination

SIR, Covid cases in India are on the rise, and the vaccine programme is also in full swing. But motivation seems to be lacking. At a vaccination centre I am associated with, two-third of the doctors who are at the helm of affairs have preferred to remain unvaccinated for trivial reasons like mild allergy and use of blood thinners which are not at all contraindicated.

This sends a wrong signal to the general public. Doctors' organisations should take up the matter and begin a massive campaign advocating vaccination.

Yours, etc., Basudeb Dutta, Santipur, 12 March.

BANK STRIKE

SIR, The impending bank strike on March 15 and 16 implies that banking services shall remain disrupted for four consecutive days,

the previous two days being a second Saturday and a Sunday. It is as if the bank unions have fixed their strike schedule so as to create the maximum inconvenience to users.

While the genuine grievances of bank employees like wage revision and fear of privatisation need to be suitably highlighted, depriving the general public of banking services for four consecutive days is abominable and needs to be condemned in no uncertain terms.

Yours, etc., Bhaskar Roy, New Delhi, March 12.

APPEAL TO NTA

SIR, Students of North Bengal are facing problems due to the presence of only a handful of exam centres of the National Testing Agency. For example, I live in Coochbehar district of West

Bengal but to give the exam I have to go to Siliguri because it is the nearest centre from Coochbehar and the only one in North Bengal.

To go to Siliguri, more than 150 km away, I have to spend at least a day. For second, third and fourth preferences, I have to travel even further.

I request the authorities to look into the matter and provide additional centres in North Bengal so that students do not face problems in appearing for examinations that determine their future.

I believe that the National Testing Agency is a competent authority which thinks of the well-being of students. It should address this concern of North Bengal students.

Yours, etc., Abhra Jyoti Choudhury, Coochbehar, 8 March.

A MOTHER'S HEART

SIR, Congratulations to *The Statesman* for publishing an educative article, 'Nutritional insecurity' (11 March) by Jaydev Jana. As a mother I am indebted to the writer. The piece is worth preserving and I believe that the content will help enrich the knowledge of people of all generations. Many of us are unaware of the connecting links between nutrition and the economy. Mr Jana has superbly discussed this aspect based on scientific data and explained how malnutrition adversely affects the economy and overall development of the country, besides causing physical and mental harm.

As a mother, I can realise better than a man that a large number of mothers in India are unable to take proper food during pregnancy and in the post-natal period as poverty stands in the way. Poverty snatches the baby's food and hunger too. This problem is also seen in more affluent families due to lack of food awareness.

The writer has reminded us that the initial 1,000 days of one's life, from the day of conception till he/she turns two years of age, are considered as a critical 'window of opportunity' when poor nutrition can result in stunted growth, diminished immune response, impaired intellectual ability, poor school performance and lower economic productivity.

Governments, both Central and in the states, must realise that improper nutrition hampers progress in health, education, employment and empowerment of women. A few days ago, we celebrated Women's Day, and both central and State ministers sent congratulatory messages. This is routine. But who will share the feelings of a mother's heart? I believe they would do well to read Mr Jana's article in *The Statesman*.



Yours, etc. Indranil Guha, Kolkata, 12 March.

NUTRITIONAL INEQUALITY

SIR, This is with reference to Jaydev Jana's article, 'Nutritional inequality' on 11 March. The writer has portrayed a gloomy picture of the future saying that the pandemic has left separate generation of nutritional inequality. The pandemic is a temporary shock but its effects on the future generation would be disastrous. Chronic malnutrition should be the main concern for most of the countries. In order to contain this malnutrition, the task before pandemic-affected countries should be to accord nutrition the highest priority.

Yours, etc., Dilip Kumar Dutta, Midnapore, 12 March.



paper.thestatesman.com

'Young voters are disenchanted'

CPI-M leader SHATARUP GHOSH, a third-time MLA candidate for Kasba assembly constituency and party spokesperson is known to his comrades and voters as the 'boy with a golden heart and a silver tongue' that often puts the opposition speaker in dire straits during debates. Ghosh explains to SOUMYADIP MULLICK why he feels present-day politics is letting down youth who are constantly trying to bring the 'people's government' narrative on the right track.

Q. You contested in an Assembly poll at the age of 25 in 2011 from Kasba and after 2016, this is the third time you have been fielded by CPI-M from your home constituency. What drew you to politics?

A. I never had any political background in the family. I was drawn to the Left philosophy through cultural influences. Works of eminent personalities such as Pablo Neruda, Bob Dylan, Sukanta Bhattacharya, and many others became my inspiration. My first brush with politics was in college where I joined the Students' Federation of India and thereafter destiny took its own course.

Q. Is today's youth losing interest in politics or are politicians letting the youth down each time they look for aspiration?

A. Both. There is an orchestrated effort to make the youth lose interest in politics. In Indian cinema, we often come across villainous and corrupt politicians. At present, it seems the line between on-screen and off-screen politicians has blurred. Even in cinema, we used to often feel certain things were over-the-top but now we are shocked to see these being replicated by politicians in real life. This is one reason why youths feel demoralized. The second example is chief minister Mamata Banerjee banning college union elections right after coming to power. If college campuses do not contribute to the making of a future politician then what will? At present, political figures are emerging out of mafia and syndicates.

Q. A popular narrative that the Left is a party of and for veterans only has changed this time. In the 2021 Assembly polls, the Left-Front has fielded several youth candidates. How do you think it will impact the voters?

A. It is important to point out that all our Left youth candidates have come to this position through years of struggle and hard work. These youth began student-level politics and have worked their way up gradually but at



the same time continued with their education. They were given this opportunity not out of any nepotism factor or because they come from privileged families. These youth represent the sons and daughters of every household that is today struggling to get proper education and jobs to secure their careers. Today's youth desperately want someone who would make their demands heard amidst the prevailing political cacophony.

Q. If you were to handle the education portfolio in the state, what are the necessary changes you would have proposed to improve the education system?

A. One of our agenda items is to make education free in government schools till class 10 or 12. Secondly, the focus will be on helping students to grow a scientific temperament so that they can be empirical in their approach to life and resist each time a government or a political party tries to turn yesterday's superstition into today's practice. Under the present central and state governments, lines are blurred between mythology and history. Quality education is vital. Thirdly, we will restore the practice of providing government fellowships for core subjects which include research works in science. Fourthly, employment generation since education is incomplete without it. Under the Mamata government, people are made to feel as if the government is

doing a big favour by giving us what is already within the ambit of our rights. Dole is not a solution but a concession. Last but not the least, teacher recruitments in schools, since it did not happen in the last 10 years.

Q. Left youth organizations had arranged a protest march to state secretariat Nabanna to demand their rights to proper education and employment but were resisted by a huge contingent of police who charged with batons and subsequently a youth worker lost his life. Is this a sign of autocracy?

A. Definitely. The message from the state government is, come to us with folded hands and we will shower you with privileges but if legitimate demands are raised, a brutal police force will be unleashed to scuttle any protest. Had those students gone to Nabanna to ask for doles, they would have come back loaded with cash but their mistake was to raise demands on education and employment. TMC workers, who have only handed over alcohol bottles and illegal arms to the unemployed in the last 10 years, will also get jobs if we come to power since every citizen has the right to employment.

Q. We have always seen the Left's Brigade ground rallies drawing lakhs of people from all corners of the state and this time too it was apparent. Why does this footfall not convert into votes?

A. It does convert but 2019 was an exception. Those who voted for either the TMC or the BJP in 2019 have suffered the consequences and realized their blunder. These two parties never care for real issues. We on the other hand are continuously highlighting issues that matter to people. We have pledged to start recruitment in all vacant seats in government jobs and also increase the 100 days' work to 150 days if we form government. The reason why people will vote for us is simple. Uttar Pradesh's chief minister Yogi Adityanath, in his public rally in Bengal, said if BJP comes to power, cow shelters will be built for cow protection. Now people will decide whether they will vote for their children's secured future or for Yogi's cows.

Q. Bengal is quite apparently polarized between Hindu and Muslim votes while TMC and BJP leaders have begun chanting religious hymns on stage during public rallies to prove their knowledge of religion to each other. How do you think the youth perceives it?

A. This will be answered by the youth of Bengal in the upcoming election through votes. We strongly condemn the fusion of religion with politics. This never happened during 34 years of Left Front rule. We believe religion is a matter of personal belief and must not be dragged into state policies or vice-versa,

Q. Left Front is stuck in an alliance with the Indian Secular Front led by Furfura Sharif's Muslim cleric Pirzada Abbas Siddiqui who in the past made comments which cannot be accepted in a civilized society. How secular do you think the ISF is?

A. In the Sanyukta Morcha Brigade rally, everyone saw Abbas giving his speech. Has he once talked of religion or made his points along religious lines? On the contrary, we have seen during public rallies how Mamata feels compelled to utter Inshallah as many times as she thinks she should. Trinamul was said to be a messiah for the Muslims. Today the Trinamul turncoat Suvendu Adhikari tells Mamata that in Nandigram, some 65,000 Muslim votes won't even matter since he will secure victory with 2 lakh Hindu votes. Now the messiah doesn't even require the Muslims. Even Abbas Siddiqui has admitted that communalism never got to rear its ugly head in Bengal during Left Front rule. The BJP is attempting to constantly change the Constitution of India to suit their religious propaganda with RSS support but ISF is not demanding Sharia law in Bengal, but fundamental rights of the people. Two political parties might differ in certain perspectives but when it comes to a broader spectrum of policies that we think is good for the country on an immediate basis, we join hands to work towards implementing it.

Q. You secured about 41.26 per cent of votes in 2016 Assembly polls from the Kasba constituency and finished second after TMC candidate Javed Khan who secured 47.41 per cent of the total votes. Given your apparent popularity among the residents of the Kasba area, what is your target this time?

A. It is important to recall that Kasba is made up of six wards, among which CPI-M won five in the 2016 polls. It was only in one ward that a few booths dictated the poll results eventually. People know how the poll was conducted in these booths. Money and muscle power may have had a bearing on the last election but not this time. Voters know who works for them throughout the year. CPI-M has been running Sramajibi Canteen since the Covid outbreak when several people were left famished during months of lockdown. Today the TMC government has introduced the 'Ma' scheme and I appreciate it since this will also help feed the famished. In fact, this is healthy competition rather than competing to recruit as many celebrities as one can to increase the party's glamour quotient and gain votes through fandom.

OCCASIONAL NOTE

State-managed enterprises seem to prosper no better in Australia than anywhere else. The latest papers received from the Commonwealth report a speech by Mr. James Mitchell, Premier of Western Australia, in the course of which he showed a deficit of pound 628,000 on State saw mills, implement works, hotels, brickworks, quarries, steamers, and meat works. Mr. Mitchell expressed his opinion that the other State trading concerns could also be put on a paying basis with good management, which is equivalent to confessing that the State management hitherto relied upon has been bad. He himself does not believe in State trading, as he frankly acknowledged; but, as the Western Australian Government has these enterprises on its shoulders, he recognises it as a duty to make them pay. Whether this can be done under State management remains to be seen. One cannot but believe that private enterprise would tell a different story. Even the railways of the highly developed State of Victoria, as an Australian writer points out, for many years have had to call upon the general revenue to make up greater or less deficits. The State, no doubt, may render useful service in assisting a new industry through its initial stages, any loss being regarded as an investment of public money to be recouped by the benefits which the community will share with those directly concerned when the enterprise becomes self-supporting.

NEWS ITEMS

ELECTION PETITIONS IN UNITED PROVINCES

Allahabad, Mar 12

In the current issue of the United Provinces Gazette there appear orders of the Governor in connection with two election petitions that have recently been inquiry into by Commissioners appointed under the Electoral Rules. After Pandit Nanak Chand had been declared elected as member of the United Provinces Legislative Council for Bulandshahr District non-Mahomedan rural constituency, a petition was presented by Rai Bahadur Chaudhri Amar Singh, another candidate for the constituency, and ED. Simpson, E.R. Meave, and Saied Muhammad Shafi were appointed as Commissioners to try the case. The other case was that of Lala Shadi Ram against whose election for the Saharanpur District non-Mahomedan rural constituency to the United Provinces Council a petition was presented by Lala Chaman Lal, another candidate.

MAGISTRATE AND BOMBAY STRIKERS

Bombay, Mar 12

The Fifth Presidency Magistrate disposed of the case today against nineteen strikers of Mackenzie's Saw Mills and four Pathans who were charged with rioting and failing to disperse when ordered to do so. Superintendent Sullivan stated that on February 24, Mr. Baptista addressed the strikers suggesting that they should arm themselves with sticks and defy the police. The strikers subsequently marched on the mill and came into collision with the Pathan watchmen. The police arrested both the strikers and Pathans. The Magistrate acquitted two of the strikers, and said he would take into consideration the fact that the accused were ignorant and illiterate persons and that they had acted under the advice of a lawyer. The Magistrate held that the Pathans had acted in self-defence and therefore acquitted them.

DESTRUCTIVE STORM AT BARISAL

Wednesday's tornado did serious damage in some parts of Barisal. Information has reached here that the village Manpasha, in police station Nalchiti, suffered very badly. Almost all the houses in the village have been razed to the ground, and nearly every big tree has been uprooted. Three persons are reported to have been killed while many others were injured. The District Magistrate and the Civil Surgeon have gone to the village. Several volunteers of the village-reform society have also gone there with medicine, rice and other articles. The heavy downpour which followed the tornado has caused serious loss to the rabi crop.

GERMAN VESSEL ARRIVES AT BOMBAY

The first ship to arrive in Bombay harbour under the German flag since the outbreak of the war came in today and is now lying in the stream. She is bringing a general cargo from Hamburg and has touched at all the intermediate ports, including Karachi. Police protection has been asked for on behalf of the crew as a precaution. The vessel's name is the Frauendorf. She belongs to the Hansa Line and is one of the few ships which escaped capture and was not handed over under the terms of the armistice. The local agents are Messrs. Graham and Co. It is understood that the Germans are now trying to establish a direct cargo service between Germany and India with the object of reopening trade with India on a large scale.

As a million species face extinction...

JAMIL AHMAD

For millennia, humans have benefited from nature's generosity without caring much for it. Now, this one-sided relationship has become untenable, especially with an economic paradigm that treats nature with disdain. Human actions are destroying nature and causing biodiversity loss at an alarming rate. This is double trouble for a planet already under assault from a ferocious climate crisis. However, unlike the visible climate devastation, biodiversity loss is silently gnawing at the fabric of life's support systems.

Nature's elaborate arrangement of interdependence among and between species makes earth habitable by providing indispensable ecosystem services. There are two main types: 'provisioning services' such as food, fuel, timber and drinking water, etc., and 'regulating services' like pollination, air/water filtration and prevention of natural hazards.

A global assessment by the Inter-

governmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, covering the period between the 1970s and 2050, revealed that in the last 50 years, the pace of change has been unprecedented. More than 85 per cent wetlands have been lost, while 75 per cent land and 66 per cent oceans have been significantly altered. Consequently, up to a million species of animals and plants face extinction, leading scientists to fear a sixth mass extinction.

The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2020 lists biodiversity loss as one of the top four global risks in likelihood and impact. Changes in land usage have had the biggest impact as habitats and forests are converted for agricultural purposes. Meanwhile, the loss in forest cover affects pollination patterns lowering yields of dependent crops.

On the other hand, the frequency and intensity of floods, landslides and wildfires keeps surging with the weakening of biodiverse ecosystems that act as nature's shields against environmental hazards. Moreover, expan-

sion of infrastructure contributes to encroachment and fragmentation of wildlife habitats, creating room for the transmission of diseases from animals to humans. Outbreaks of zoonotic diseases such as like Ebola, SARS, and coronavirus highlight the link between health and environmental conditions.

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focuses on coordinated action that considers the impact of biodiversity loss on other socioeconomic sectors. The biodiversity-specific SDG-14 addresses "life below water" and SDG-15 "life on land", but these SDGs are inter-linked so failure in one, for example poverty or climate, will affect progress in the rest. A number of countries have devised national action plans under the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity, while the UN Environment Programme regularly produces evidence-based reports for bridging the gap between science and policy.

Despite these arrangements and scores of related international agree-

ments, poor implementation has marred progress in biodiversity conservation. The Strategic Plan 2011-2020 of the Convention of Biological Diversity failed to achieve its targets. This may be because in developing countries, biodiversity conservation remains low on the list of national priorities. More often than not, a lack of cross-sectorial dialogue and effective coordination mechanisms hamper mainstreaming biodiversity into social and economic policies. Harmful subsidies in agriculture, fossil fuels and fishing add to the complexity of the crisis.

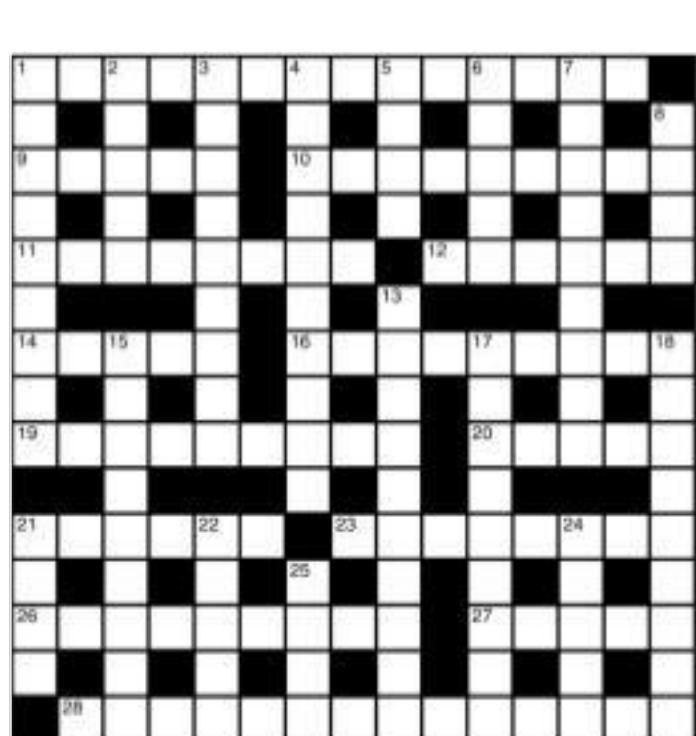
But hope for turning the tide is kept alive by various biodiversity-friendly initiatives. Africa's Great Green Wall is an example of political will, partnership and innovation. With 20-plus partner countries, the initiative is steadily moving towards its 2030 target of restoring 100m hectares of degraded land, generating around 10 million jobs and stabilising economies. The huge swathe of green cover will serve as a carbon sink for up to 250 million tonnes of emissions.

The writer is director of intergovernmental affairs, United Nations Environment Programme.

Dawn/ANN

NO 28852

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

SOLUTION FOR 06 MARCH

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

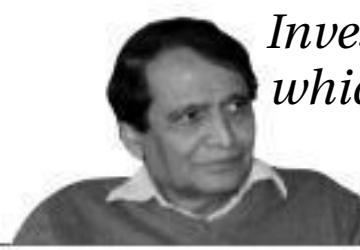
ACROSS

- 1 Exact revenge and look after number one? (3,4,3,4)
- 9 To desert; returning cards (5)
- 10 The colour of blood? (5,4)
- 11 Activity for those preferring it over IT? (8)
- 12 Draw saw (6)
- 14 Donald's expression of impatience about yellowish hue (5)
- 16 One spinning act of cowardice, perhaps, as high-class (3-6)
- 19 See Rolling Stones outside Suffolk town (3,4,2)
- 20 Good to harness energy of member of younger generation (5)
- 21 She, perhaps, finds absence at the core of hollow man (6)
- 22 Lagerbeer (5)
- 23 Stratum; impasse (5)
- 24 Dawn (5)
- 25 Cut seed corn for threshing (8)
- 26 Fatigue of auditor having more than one drink around start of session (9)
- 27 Excuse of boxer swinging this way and that? (5)
- 28 25 maybe designate party line (10,4)

DOWN

- 1 Answer clue, but not this one? Explain (3,6)
- 2 Beat automated programme set up with input from CV-scanners (5)
- 3 Bow tie grabbed by Labour supporter? Infamy! (9)
- 4 Double check to determine who should be put in the picture (6-4)
- 5 Means of top-down influence (4)
- 6 Listening device left in - note
- 7 Top and bottom marks separately gained by university fellow (9)
- 8 Passed something in joint? (4)
- 13 Main issue when hunting is permitted (4,6)
- 15 Weekend warriors in a stew over controversial issue (3,6)
- 17 Longer across than down lights on crossword allow puzzle enthusiast to start (9)
- 18 Traditional philosopher embracing online mobile platform (9)
- 21 Fall out of party dress (4)
- 22 Body suits taken up by female (5)
- 24 Indian side seen in Andorra and Italy (5)
- 25 Something swelling lower down plughole? (4)

something sticking out (5)



Investments from India will create local jobs in Sri Lanka which will propel Sri Lanka in the higher growth trajectory

SURESH PRABHU
FORMER UNION MINISTER

THUMBNAILS

Anti-dumping duty on China drug: India has imposed anti-dumping duty on the Chinese antibacterial drug Ciprofloxacin Hydrochloride to guard the domestic industry against cheap imports from the neighbouring country. The duty was imposed following a recommendation by the commerce ministry's investigation arm Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR). DGTR in its probe had concluded the product had been exported to India from China below its normal value, which has resulted in dumping and in turn impacting the domestic industry.

PTI

Portal for investors: The government is in the process of developing a portal ~ Aatmanirbhar Niveshak Mitra ~ for handholding, information dissemination and facilitation of domestic investors, the commerce and industry ministry said on Friday. The portal is in testing phase and the final version will be ready for launch by 1 May 2021. The webpage will also be available in regional languages and mobile app in due course, the ministry said.

PTI

Amazon Pay: Amazon has infused over Rs 225 crore into its payments unit in India ~ Amazon Pay, according to regulatory documents. The fresh infusion is expected to help the company compete more aggressively against rivals like PhonePe, Google Pay and Paytm. The board has approved "allotment of 22,50,000 equity shares... aggregating to Rs 225 crore to the existing shareholder on rights basis", regulatory documents showed.

PTI

Rapido campaign: Bike taxi platform Rapido has announced the launch of its new 360-degree marketing campaign ~ GoOhWithRapido ~ that highlights the benefits of using the Rapido service, especially if one is a peak hour traveller. The campaign goes live across the country with a special focus on top metros like Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Guwahati and Kolkata, said a Press release.

SNS

Samsung: Samsung on Friday announced the launch of its new smartphone Galaxy M12. After the success of Galaxy M11 and Galaxy M21 in 2020, Samsung is looking to further cement its position in the sub-15K segment in India with some of the biggest upgrades in its product offering this year, it said in a Press statement.

SNS

HMSI recall: Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) on Friday said it is recalling a certain number of its recently launched 350cc bike H'ness CB350 to fix a faulty transmission part. The company is recalling units manufactured between 25 November and 12 December last year, HMSI said.

PTI

Govt to infuse ₹14.5K cr in banks under PCA soon

Indian Overseas Bank, Central Bank & UCO are currently under this framework

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 12 MARCH

The finance ministry is likely to infuse Rs 14,500 crore mainly in the banks that are under the RBI's prompt corrective action framework in the next few days to improve their financial health.

Indian Overseas Bank, Central Bank of India and UCO Bank are currently under this framework that puts several restrictions on them, including lending, management compensation and directors' fees.

The ministry has almost finalised its names of probable candidates for capital infusion, sources said.

The infusion will be made in the next few days, the sources said, adding the biggest beneficiary of this round of capital infusion would be the banks that are under the prompt corrective action (PCA).

The capital infusion will help these banks to come out of the Reserve Bank of India's enhanced regulatory super-vision or PCA framework.

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The capital

BJP MLA 'attempts suicide', consumes sanitizer in Odisha Assembly

Oppn stalls house over farmers distress, says govt has betrayed

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 MARCH:

High drama was witnessed in Odisha Assembly today as a BJP MLA tried to consume sanitizer inside the house in protest against the alleged non-procurement of paddy from farmers at different market yards of the state.

The Deogarh BJP Subash Panigrahi attempted to consume sanitiser during the post lunch session.

The Parliamentary Affairs Minister Bikram Keshari Arukha and fellow MLAs intervened and prevented Panigrahi from consuming the sanitiser.

It may be noted that the BJP

MLA had earlier threatened to commit suicide over the plight of farmers in the state.

While Ranendra Pratap Swain, State Food Supplies and Consumer Welfare and Cooperation Minister, was about to present a statement over paddy procurement in the Assembly, Panigrahi had attempted to drink sanitiser.

"I had earlier announced to end my life over paddy procurement crisis the farmers were passing through. I had consumed a few drops of sanitiser before fellow MLAs snatched it from me. I am fine. But I was compelled to do so as there is no solution in sight and farmers who have elected us are in acute distress. I cannot face the farmers," said

Panigrahi while talking to media persons outside the Assembly.

Earlier during the day, the Opposition BJP and Congress paralysed proceedings of the Assembly over the paddy procurement issue alleging that the state government had betrayed the farmers and had not even fulfilled its commitment to lift paddy from all genuine farmers.

Veteran Congress leader Narasingha Mishra, BJP leaders Jayanarayan Mishra, Nauri Naik and others came down heavily on the government and said it was meaningless to conduct the session when the government does not keep its promise made in the house and at the all party meeting.

they charged.

People will lose faith and trust on the Assembly, if the government does not do what it says here, they added.

The government had told the Assembly that it will procure paddy stock from all genuine farmers and will book fair farmers and dalals. Unfortunately, it has not done so, charged Mishra and others.

The Food Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain, in his reply said that till date 60.40 lakh tonne of paddy have been procured this kharif season which is 19 percent more than last kharif season.

A total of 14.97 lakh farmers have registered for sale of their paddy of which 11.22 lakh

have already sold. Last year, 9.17 lakh farmers had got themselves registered in paddy procurement. This is a clear indicator that there has been a substantial rise in the number of farmers from whom paddy has been procured, he said.

The allegation of lapsing of period 2900 tokens in Deogarh is being looked into by the district Collector. The government has relaxed security deposit norms of six Sambalpur-based custom millers to enable them procure paddy in Deogarh district, Swain said.

Rs 10,828 crore has been transferred to the accounts of farmers towards paddy procurement.

Odisha clears 8 industrial investment proposals

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 MARCH:

The State Level Single Window Clearance Authority (SLSWCA), Odisha, cleared eight industrial projects entailing an investment of Rs 1214 crore in the manufacturing, plastic food processing and hospitality sectors today.

The SLSWCA meeting held by chief secretary Suresh Mohapatra accorded in principle approval following a presentation of the proposals by the Industries secretary Hemant Sharma.

These industrial projects are further expected to create employment opportunities for 2427 persons in the state.

The projects included a 2.75 MTPA Iron Ore Beneficiation plant and 1.2 MTPA Pellet plant by Energise Minerals Private Limited envisaging an investment of Rs 256 crore to be set up in Mayurbhanj district, a 5-star hotel by ITC Limited in Bhubaneswar with an investment of Rs 141.14 crore, another 5-star hotel by Falcon Real Estate Private Limited in Bhubaneswar, Rs 120.26 crore, expansion of Britannia Industries Limited's manufacturing unit at Khord-

ha at an investment of Rs 94 crore.

The other major projects were a grain-based distillery plant (in two phases) and 6 MW Cogeneration Plant by Indalc Spirits Pvt Ltd against entailing investment of Rs 215.15 crore in Deogarh district, expansion of refractories by Sarvesh Refractories who proposes to invest Rs 123 cr, manufacturing unit for Cast Polypropylene Film by Purv Packaging Pvt Ltd at Paradip and a grain based distillery proposed by Mash Spirits Pvt Ltd with investment of Rs 204 crore at Jharsuguda district.

Additional Chief Secretary Dr Mona Sharma and senior officers, Anu Garg, Sanjay Kumar Singh, N.B. Jawale were present at the meeting along with principal secretaries, secretaries and senior officers of the concerned departments participate in the discussions.

Mnaging Director IPI-COL Nitin Bhanudas Jawale said, "Because of improved the ease of doing business in the State and facilitating promotional policies of State Government, major investors like Arcelor Mittal are now being considered Odisha as a flourishing destination of investment."

Decline in Covid 19 active cases in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 MARCH:

The consistent rise in the recoveries and daily slowdown of virus infections has contributed to the sharp decline in the COVID-19 active cases in Odisha.

The state currently has 677 active cases. Daily recoveries have overtaken the number of daily infections since the past two months.

The State's recovery rate currently stands at 99.21% with as many as 3,35,408

patients cured of the disease so far.

As many as 17 districts of the state are on the verge of being freed from pandemic with active cases in single digit numbers.

The breakup of districts with single digit active cases are- Boudh and Malkangiri (1 each), Ganjam, Koraput and Kendrapara (2 each), Bolangir, Subarnapur and Nayagarh (3 each), Dhenkanal and Nuapada (4 each), Nabarangpur (5), Gajapati and Keonjhar (7), Jagatsinghpur (8), Kala-

handi and Rayagada (9 each). Sundargarh district with 93 Covid infected patients has the highest number of active cases followed by Sambalpur (77), Khordha (66) and Puri (60).

Meanwhile the state on Friday reported 64 fresh cases of COVID-19 while the death toll rose to 1,918 with one fresh fatality reported in the past 24 hours.

A total of 85,80,019 sample tests have been conducted in the state so far including 21,907 on Thursday.

Man on the run for 37 years arrested

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KENDRAPARA, 12 MARCH:

On the run for almost four decades, an accused in a dacoity case finally fell into cops' net in Kendrapara district.

The fugitive identified as Akshya Jena of Palasudha village under Patkura police station limits was arrested on Thursday night, 37 years after committing the crime. Jena now 56 years of age had committed the dacoity in Jajpur road in 1984 when he was a teenager.

He was declared an absconder by the court in connection with dacoity case registered against him in Jajpur Road police station. Acting on a tip off, the accused was arrested from his house at Palasudha village, said Sujit Pradhan, Inspector Patkura police station.

No allocation for BYV scheme

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 MARCH:

There is no allocation for the Biju Yuva Vahini in the budget for 202-21, informed Minister of state for youth affairs, Tushar Kanti Behera today.

Consequently, the BYV is not functioning in any part of the state at present, he added.

Regarded as one of the largest youth engagement programme, BYV was launched with much fanfare in 2018. It was hyped as a unique scheme to engage youths in social action and community

activities.

The Opposition BJP and Congress were quick to point out that the scheme was nothing but an electoral gimmick launched prior to the last general election to garner votes.

OPCC president Niranjan Patnaik chided - "BYV has served its purpose, elections are over, so the scheme is closed, they will launch some similar scheme before the next general elections".

The BJP alleged that the BYV was to garner votes in 2019 elections and enable BJD supporters to pocket government funds.

Women in tribal heartland branded as witches for grabbing property

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 12 MARCH:

With the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) conferring Odisha the ignominious tag Odisha of reporting the second highest number of deaths due to witch-hunting after Jharkhand, a comprehensive study has found the branding of land-owning women especially single and widows by mischief mongers for grabbing their movable and immovable assets.

The victims of witch hunting practice are in most cases

elderly women, widows who are branded as witches because of their physical features - hunchback, weird hair or skin colour.

In a few cases even men have been accused of having supernatural powers and are made to suffer the consequences", the study conducted by the ActionAid Association (India) said.

The family and children of the woman who is branded as witch also suffer as they are usually treated as social outcasts and are forced to leave the village or in worse cases

killed. In 2020, Odisha has witnessed at least four killings every month due to practice of witchcraft.

The study that covers witch-hunting-prone pockets of the State found deep seated superstitious beliefs and internal village politics as the root causes of the prevalence of abhorrent practice mainly in the tribal dominated districts of Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Nayagarh, Rayagada, Malkangiri, Keonjhar and Nuapada district. The southern districts of Ganjam and

Gajapati are also witness to witch-hunting violence at periodic intervals.

Children of the deceased and survivors alike are deeply impacted by the events of witch hunting, which often includes public humiliation and heinous murders. They are traumatised for life and develop the feelings of vengeance. Health issues related to children are oftentimes associated with witch-hunting practices and usually a single or widow woman of the family is targeted, and eventually blamed for casting evil-eye.

On account of any event of deteriorating health, the patient is taken to a witch-doctor. Treatment at health centres usually is second preference or not preferred at all due to two main reasons:

Witch-doctors or Ojhais are overly compensated for their services, which encourage them to turn into this profession. The self proclaimed witch-doctors misutilised people's trust to earn bread for their family, making it a full time business.

Most of the survivors belong to poor and backward

families, they lack required funds for the court procedures that follow these cases.

Moreover, police are not very benevolent towards helping these poor survivors and no support from the external world reaches them.

Most people lack awareness of the Odisha Prevention of Witch-Hunting Act, 2013. As a result, the perpetrators do not fear the law.

The victims usually do not come forward to report it due to fear or their acceptance of the practice. Lack of evidence leads to acquittal of the per-

petrators.

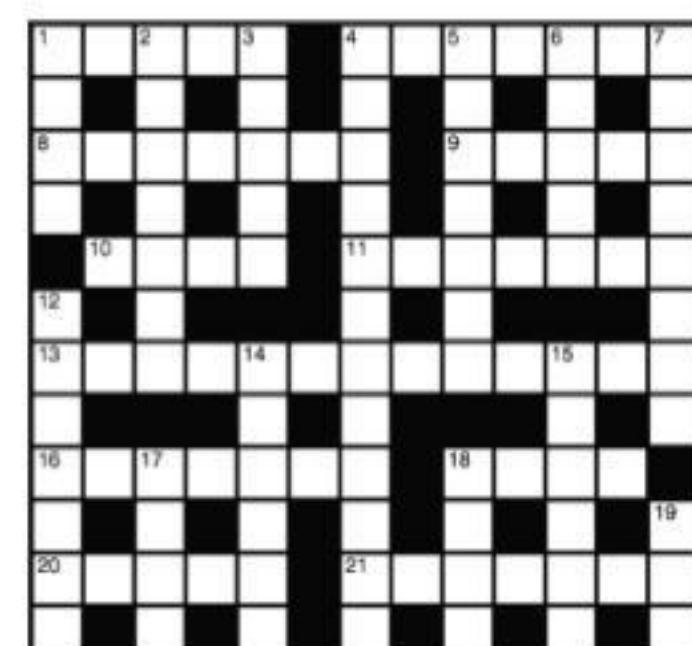
Apart from people being mercilessly murdered under suspicion of practicing witchcraft, there are innumerable instances of victims being brutally tortured and ostracized from the villages altogether.

Most of these cases go unreported and are never brought to the notice of law-enforcing agencies..

Mostly helpless and defenceless women are targeted and attacked. Widows and destitute are targeted to grab the property owned by the victim.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Magical spirit (5)
- 4 Hypersensitive reaction (7)
- 8 Melange (7)
- 9 Desert animal (5)
- 10 Circular band (4)
- 11 Eat in a restaurant (4,3)
- 13 Impartial (13)
- 16 Small wind instrument (7)
- 18 Lather (4)
- 20 Supplement (3,2)
- 21 Large ape (7)
- 22 Small holes (7)
- 23 Wall painting (5)
- 24 Recommend (8)
- 25 Foul (7)
- 26 Young child (7)
- 27 Make confused (5)
- 28 Clear off! (5)
- 29 Post (4)

DOWN

- 1 Match (4)
- 2 Poisonous (7)
- 3 Furnish (5)
- 4 Beef cow (8,5)
- 5 Official permit (7)
- 6 Ardent lover (5)
- 7 Christman (Archaic) (8)
- 8 CHRISTIAN (8)
- 9 EYOT, 13 Tubas, 17 Magic lantern, 19 Lees, 20 Vacation, 22 Dancer, 23 Sled.
- 10 Bonbon, 14 Clever, 16 Snacks, 18 Arena, 21 Tie.
- 11 Longrette, 12 Ember, 13 Frosty, 14 Intrinsic,

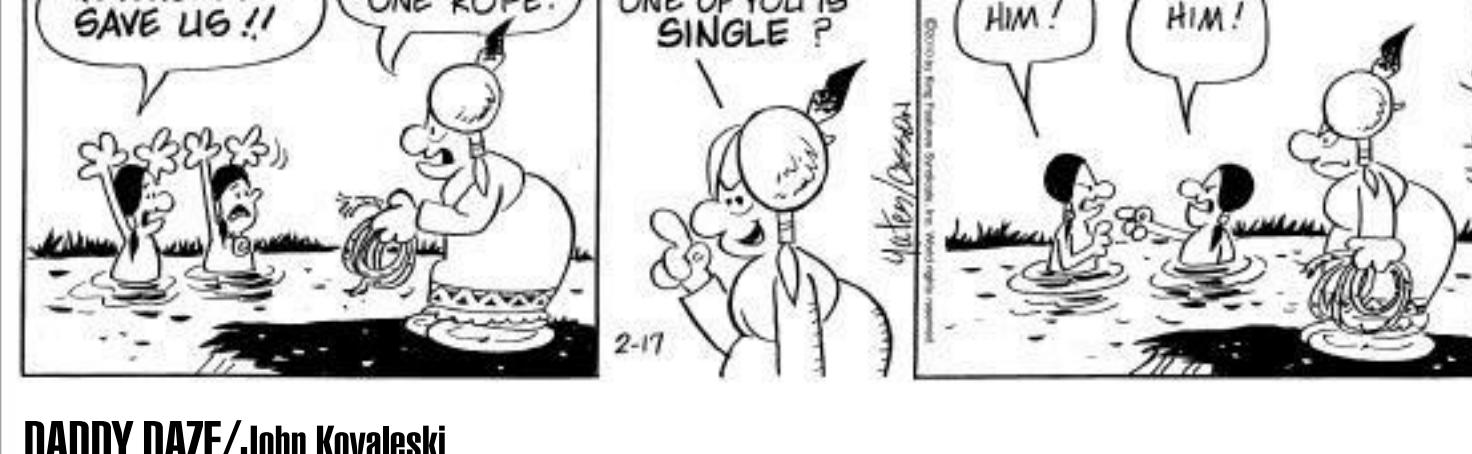
SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

2258622, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free No. 1800125151

+SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886,

54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

Haryana Roads 23861262

Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25494403

Guru Teg Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

SCRABBLE BRAND

YESTERDAY'S SCRABBLE BY JUDD

PAR SCORE 185-195

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

JUDD'S TOTAL: 255

SCRABBLE BRAND

YESTERDAY'S SCRABBLE BY JUDD

PAR SCORE 185-195

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN



...it is one of the most transformative and historic bills any of us will ever have the opportunity to support

US HOUSE SPEAKER NANCY PELOSI

ON JOE BIDEN'S \$1.9 TRILLION CORONAVIRUS RELIEF PACKAGE

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	30	25 H
HONG KONG	25	19 H
TOKYO	13	11 R
LONDON	11	6 H
DUBAI	33	21 H
SAN FRANCISCO	16	7 R
NEW YORK	18	8 H
MOSCOW	-7	-16 H

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

THUMBNAILS



A Palestinian girl has her temperature taken by a health worker in Gaza City on Friday. ■ AGENCIES

Japan to tighten border control: Transportation minister Kazuyoshi Akaba says Japan will tighten border controls and limit the number of entrants to up to 2,000 per day to guard against the more contagious variants of the coronavirus. Japan has confirmed 345 cases of the more contagious new variants, mostly the kind first found in Britain. ■ AP

Spying charges: A Communist Party newspaper says China will soon begin trials for two Canadians who were arrested two years ago in apparent retaliation for Canada's detention of a senior executive for Chinese communications giant Huawei Technologies. ■ AP

Bangladesh's 1st transgender news anchor: A Bangladeshi satellite television station has hired the country's first transgender news anchor, saying it hopes the appointment will help change society. Tashnuva Anan Shishir, who previously worked as a rights activist and actress, debuted on Boishakhi TV on International Women's Day. ■ AGENCIES

'Independence Day' from virus: Biden sets 4 July goal

US President addresses nation shortly after he signed a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, 12 MARCH

US President Joe Biden has announced that all adult Americans will be eligible for Covid-19 vaccination by May 1 under an ambitious plan to get the country, worst-hit by the pandemic, closer to normal by July 4, Independence Day.

In his first prime-time address to the nation on Thursday since assuming office on January 20, Biden offered an ambitious plan to lift the country from the worst health crisis using a pair of upcoming dates: May 1, by which he will order states to allow all adults to receive vaccines; and July 4, when he said Americans can again celebrate Independence Day in person.

"After this long hard year, that will make this Independence Day something truly special, where we not only mark our independence as a nation but begin to mark our independence from this virus," he said in his address, shortly after he signed a \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package approved by the US Congress.

His speech also came a year after the outbreak was classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organisation.

Laying out new steps in the school reopening effort, Biden said his administration will continue to take steps to combat the spread of variants including expanding testing and genomic sequencing.

Biden said that he is using every power he has as President of the United States to put the US on a war footing to get the job done.

It sounds like hyperbole, but I mean the war footing, and thank God we are making some real progress now. In my first full day in office, I outlined for you a comprehensive strategy to beat this pandemic. We have spent every day since attempting to carry it out, he said.

As of Thursday, he said total deaths in America due



to Covid is over 527,000. That's more deaths than in World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, and 9/11 combined, he said.

They were husbands, wives, sons, and daughters, grandparents, friends, neighbours, young and old. They leave behind loved ones unable to truly grieve or to heal, even have a funeral..., he said.

The US is the worst-hit country with the world's highest number of cases and deaths at 29,150,068 and 529,102, respectively, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Biden said his administration has been working with vaccine manufacturers, Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson to manufacture and purchase hundreds of millions of doses of these three safe, effective vaccines. And now at the direction and with the assistance of his administration, Johnson & Johnson is working together with a competitor, Merck, to speed up and increase the capacity to manufacture new Johnson & Johnson vaccines which is one shot, he said.

Biden said at the start of his presidency, his goal was to get 100 million shots in people's arms in my first 100 days in office.

"Tonight, I can say we're not only going to meet that goal. We're going to beat that goal because we've actually been on track to reach this goal of 100 million shots in arms on my 60th day in office. No other country in the world has done this. None," he asserted.

Biden said at the start of his presidency, his goal was to get 100 million shots in people's arms in my first 100 days in office.

Fourth, in the coming weeks, Biden said his administration will issue further guidance on what Americans can and cannot do once fully vaccinated to lessen the confusion, to keep people safe, and encourage more people to get vaccinated.

And finally, fifth, and maybe most importantly, I promise I will do everything in my power. I will not relent until we beat this virus. But I need you, the American people, I need you. I need every American to do their part. That's not hyperbole, I need you, he said.

These exercises are of paramount importance in strengthening the Navy's connection with foreign fleets who share common interests, he added.

Israel, Greece and Cyprus have taken a number of steps in recent months to cement ties, including advancing plans to build a 2,000 megawatt undersea electrical cable and a 1,900-kilometer undersea gas pipeline. The three countries' defense ministers met in November and agreed to increase military cooperation.

Over the past week, the Navy led a large-scale exercise in which it implemented capabilities in underwater warfare, search and rescue, convoy escort and surface combat," Rear Admiral Eyal Harel, the head of Israeli naval operations, said.

The Israeli military said Friday that it has conducted a joint naval exercise with Greece and Cyprus, in the latest sign of increased cooperation among three countries that increasingly view Turkey as a rival in the Mediterranean Sea.

It said the Noble Dina exercise, which was led by Israel and also included France, covered anti-submarine procedures, search and rescue scenarios, and a scenario simulating battle between ships. The exercise was concluded on Thursday.

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He was initially held at the Kolchugino jail in the Vladimir region northeast of Moscow. The TASS news agency, citing a law enforcement source, reported at the time that Navalny was being held there for quarantine before being moved to the IK-2 penal

colony, also in the Vladimir region.

Vadim Kobzev, one of Navalny's lawyers, said he had visited his client on Thursday, but that another lawyer had tried to see him on Friday only to be told, eventually, that Navalny had been moved somewhere else.

"The prison said he wasn't there and that's it," Kobzev told Reuters, adding that

Navalny was in good health when he had visited him a day earlier.

Citing laws on protecting personal information, a spokeswoman for the Federal Penitentiary Service said she could not disclose information on Navalny's whereabouts.

Meanwhile, dozens of countries including the United States called on Russia on Friday to release Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny saying his imprisonment was unlawful and demanding an investigation into his poisoning last year.

In a statement read out by Poland to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, they said that actions by Russian authorities against the opposition leader were "unacceptable and politically motivated". The 45 countries were mainly European but also included Australia, Canada and Japan.

Navalny was moved from a detention facility in Russia's Vladimir region where he was incarcerated last month and moved to an unknown location, one of his lawyers said on Friday.

Navalny, one of President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critics, was moved from jail in Moscow last month to serve out a sentence of around two-and-a-half years after a court ruling the West condemned as politically-motivated.

He was initially held at the Kolchugino jail in the Vladimir region northeast of Moscow. The TASS news agency, citing a law enforcement source, reported at the time that Navalny was being held there for quarantine before being moved to the IK-2 penal

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Package could permanently alter social safety net: Dems

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 12 MARCH

President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion Covid relief package is being hailed by Democrats and progressive policy advocates as a generational expansion of the social safety net, providing food and housing assistance, greater access to health care and direct aid to families in what amounts to a broad-based attack on the cycle of poverty.

With more than \$6 billion for food security-related programs, more than \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance, nearly \$10 billion in emergency mortgage aid for homeowners, and extensions of already-expanded unemployment payments through early September, the package is full of provisions designed to help families and individuals survive and recover from pandemic-induced economic hardships.

"When you stand back and look at it, that's when you really can appreciate the sheer scope of it," said Ellen Vollinger, legal director for the Food Research & Action Center, a food-security advocacy group. "The scope is

thirdly, with the passage of the American Rescue Plan,... we can accelerate a massive nationwide effort to reopen our schools safely and meet my goal that I stated at the same time about 100 million shots of opening a majority of

through 8 schools in my first 100 days in office, he said.

Fourth, in the coming weeks, Biden said his administration will issue further guidance on what Americans can and cannot do once fully vaccinated to lessen the confusion, to keep people safe, and encourage more people to get vaccinated.

And finally, fifth, and maybe most importantly, I promise I will do everything in my power. I will not relent until we beat this virus. But I need you, the American people, I need you. I need every American to do their part. That's not hyperbole, I need you, he said.

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And



These actions deny Hong Kongers a voice in their own governance by limiting political participation, reducing democratic representation, and stifling political debate.

US SECRETARY OF STATE TONY BLINKEN

CONDAMNING CHINA'S CONTINUING ASSAULT ON DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS IN HONG KONG

More Myanmar protests, Seoul suspends defence ties

Friday's rallies came a day after a rights group said security forces killed 12 protesters

AGENCIES
YANGON, 12 MARCH

Myanmar activists held more rallies against the junta on Friday (March 12) as South Korea said it would suspend defence exchanges and reconsider development aid to the Southeast Asian nation because of the military's harsh crackdown on the protests.

Friday's rallies came a day after a rights group said security forces killed 12 protesters and as the lawyer of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi ridiculed new bribery allegations against her.

The deaths took to more than 70 the number of protesters killed since the coup, the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP) advocacy group said.

"Despite repeated demands of the international community, including South Korea, there are an increasing number of victims in Myanmar due to violent acts of the military



Protesters holding pictures of deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi, march against the military coup on Friday. ■AP

and police authorities," South Korea's foreign ministry said in a statement.

It said Seoul would suspend defence exchanges, ban arms exports, limit imports of other strategic items, reconsider development aid and grant humanitarian exemptions allowing Myanmar nationals to stay in South Korea until the situation improved.

Protests were held in Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city, and several other towns on Friday, according to photographs posted on social media by witnesses and local news organisations. There were no

immediate reports of violence. Former colonial ruler Britain on Friday advised its citizens to get out of Myanmar if they could, warning that "political tension and unrest are widespread since the military takeover and levels of violence are rising".

"The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advises British nationals to leave the country by commercial means, unless there is an urgent need to stay," the British foreign ministry said.

The South-east Asian country has been in crisis since the army ousted Ms Suu Kyi's

elected government in a Feb 1 coup, detained her and officials of her National League for Democracy party and set up a ruling junta of generals.

Junta spokesman, Brigadier-General Zaw Min Tun, said on Thursday Ms Suu Kyi had accepted illegal payments worth US\$600,000 (\$580,000), as well as gold, while in government, according to a complaint by Mr Phyto Mien Thein, a former chief minister of Yangon.

Adding corruption charges to the accusations against Ms Suu Kyi could mean she faces a harsher penalty. She currently faces four comparatively minor charges - including illegally importing six walkie-talkie radios and flouting coronavirus restrictions.

"This accusation is the most hilarious joke," Ms Suu Kyi's lawyer Khin Maung Zaw said in a statement posted on social media. "She might have other weaknesses but she doesn't have weakness in moral principle."

Myanmar court extends detention of journalist: A court in Myanmar on Friday extended the pre-trial detention period for an Associated Press journalist arrested while covering demonstrations against the military's seizure of power last month. The charge can send him to prison for three years.

Thein Zaw, was one of nine media workers taken into custody during a street protest on 27 February in Yangon, the country's largest city, and has been held without bail. His next hearing at the Kamayut Township court will be on March 24.

The hearing Friday, which Thein Zaw attended via a video teleconference, came at the end of his initial remand period. Zaw and at least six other members of the media have been charged with violating a public order law, according to his lawyer, Tin Zar Oo, and the independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners.

Sanjrani elected as Pak Senate chairman for second term

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 12 MARCH

Pakistan government-backed candidate Sadiq Sanjrani on Friday won another term as chairman of the Senate, in a re-election victory that overruled the objection, saying the votes were rejected because they were not stamped correctly. One of the votes was rejected because it had been cast in the favour of both the candidates.

Gilani and Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri (JUI-F) were fielded by the PDM as its joint candidates for the posts of chairman and deputy chairman, respectively.

The government had announced that outgoing Senate chairman Sanjrani will be its candidate for the office for another term.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Khan nominated Senator Mirza Mohammad Afridi for the post of deputy chairman.

Gillani served as prime minister from 2008 until his disqualification and ouster by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in 2012.

The polling day was marred by discovery of hidden cameras and microphones installed at a polling station which the Opposition termed a scandal like that of Watergate'.

Nawaz fires fresh salvo at Imran for Maryam

LAHORE, 12 MARCH

Pakistan's deposed prime minister Nawaz Sharif has accused the country's powerful military establishment of threatening his daughter Maryam Nawaz, warning that if anything happens to her Prime Minister Imran Khan and the three top generals would be responsible for it.

In a video message from London, the PML-N supremo said that they (military establishment) have threatened to smash Maryam if she does not stop against them (the military).

You have stooped so low. First you broke open the Karachi hotel room door where Maryam was staying. Now you are threatening her that if she does not stop, she will be smashed.

If anything happens to her Prime Minister Imran Khan, Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, ISI head Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed and Gen.

Irfan Malik will be responsible, 71-year-old Sharif said in the video which he posted on his Twitter account on Thursday.

Sharif has been in London since November 2019. The Khan government had allowed him to leave the country after the Lahore High Court granted him bail for four weeks on medical grounds.

He was serving a seven-year imprisonment in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail in Al-Azizia Mills corruption case.

Taunting the military for requesting politicians not to drag it in politics, Sharif said: You (generals) rigged 2018 polls to impose inept Imran Khan on the nation and after the defeat in the Senate you helped your selected (PM Khan) to get vote of confidence and it is no more a secret.

Addressing the generals, Sharif said: What you have done is a grave crime and you will be answerable to your deeds.

Meanwhile, Maryam, a senior functionary of the PML-N party said in a tweet that she had not only been threatened but those issuing the threat had also used abusive language. PTI

Gunmen abduct dozens of students from college in northwest Nigeria

AGENCIES
KADUNA, 12 MARCH

Gunmen in northwest Nigeria kidnapped around 30 students overnight from a forestry college near a military academy, three students said on Friday to reporters.

It is the fourth mass school abduction that occurred since December.

The Federal College of Forestry Mechanization sits on the outskirts of Kaduna city, capital of Kaduna state, in a region roamed by armed gangs, who often travel on motorcycles.

Kaduna state's security commissioner, Samuel Aruwan, confirmed the attack but did not say how many students had been taken.

Sani Danjuma, a student at the college, said those abducted were all female students, but authorities were unable to confirm this.

Other students said some of the young women had managed to escape during the attack.



Local resident Haruna Salisu, speaking by phone, said he had heard sporadic gunshots at around 11:30 p.m.

"We were not panicking, thinking that it was a normal military exercise being conducted at the Nigerian Defence Academy," he said.

"We came out for dawn prayers, at 5:20 a.m., and saw some of the students, teachers and security personnel all over the school premises."

"They told us that gunmen raided the school and abducted

ed some of the students."

The resident further told that he had also seen military personnel taking the remaining students into the academy. On Friday morning, relatives of students abducted by the gunmen, gathered outside the gates of the forestry college, which was then surrounded by more than 20 army trucks.

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The Quad summit, she reiterated, is not focused on

US will directly raise with China issue of genocide against Uighur Muslims: Biden Administration

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, 12 MARCH

The United States will directly raise with China the issue of genocide against Uighur Muslims, the Biden Administration said on Thursday.

It added that a range of global issues is expected to part of the conversation of the Quad's leadership summit.

"Addressing the genocide against Uighur Muslims is something that will be a topic of discussion with the Chinese directly next week but certainly this conversation (Quad summit) tomorrow... I have invited National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan to come and give you a readout of that meeting."

"I know there's a lot of interest in the Quad summit tomorrow, but we expect the conversation to be about a range of global issues," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference.

The Quad summit, she reiterated, is not focused on

China.

"Of course, China is a topic on the minds of many leaders and countries, but we expect they will talk about the climate crisis, about economic cooperation, about addressing Covid, a range of issues and discussions and you know certainly the position of the United States is that what is happening is genocide and we will look for opportunities

to work with other partners on putting additional pressure on the Chinese, but we also raise it directly, and it will be a topic of discussion next week," she said.

Days after the Quad summit, US Secretary of State and the National Security Advisor are scheduled to meet their Chinese counterparts in Anchorage, Alaska on March 18.

"This meeting next week, we felt it was important to have it on US soil, we certainly anticipate that National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and Secretary of State Tony Blinken will be discussing both the challenges we've had, and not holding back on issues and concerns we have with the behaviour of Chinese leadership, whether it's on Taiwan or recent, you know, efforts to push back democracy in Hong Kong or on concerns we have about the economic relationship," Psaki said in response to another question.

"So they will certainly raise those issues and the lack of transparency as it relates to Coronavirus, human rights abuses as well. But they'll also talk about areas of opportunity and ways we can work together. They will not be holding back in the conversation. But they wanted to, you know, it's an important moment next week to engage directly and in person." "I know they're looking forward to it. We'll have a robust readout, I'm sure, when that meeting concludes," Psaki said.

At a separate news conference, State Department spokesperson Ned Price told reporters that the US will engage China from a position of strength. "There will be some difficult conversations, I would expect. We will certainly not pull any punches in discussing our areas of disagreement, but as Secretary of State Tony Blinken will be, our relationship with Beijing is a multifaceted one. It is fundamentally competitive. It is adversarial, in some ways," he said.

Turkey plans to host Afghan peace talks in Istanbul

AGENCIES
ANKARA, 12 MARCH

Turkey plans to host Afghanistan peace talks in Istanbul in April, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Friday, and Ankara will appoint an Afghanistan special envoy.

Cavusoglu's comments come after the United States shared a draft peace plan calling for replacing Afghanistan's government with a power-sharing interim administration pending elections under a new constitution.

The US proposal is intended to jump-start stalled talks between the Taliban and the government to continue in a "goal-oriented" way. The exact

date in April, and the content of the talks, were being discussed.

Cavusoglu also said Turkey had been sending messages to Afghan officials, the Taliban and the negotiating team to host talks, and this week's decision came after a US proposal for Turkey to host a meeting.

The Taliban and the Afghan government have been negotiating in Qatar to reach a peace deal.

Those talks resumed in January after an almost month-long break, but negotiators and diplomats say there has been little progress since then.

Russia also plans to hold a conference on Afghanistan in Moscow later this month, the TASS news agency said.



Flames engulf a house as wildfires rage across Golondrinas, Chubut province in Argentina. ■ AGENCIES

65 media workers killed in 2020: Journalists' group

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS, 12 MARCH

A total of 65 journalists and media workers were killed worldwide in 2020 while doing their jobs, according to the International Federation of Journalists.

That is 17 more than in 2019, and the death toll is around the same level as in the 1990s, the federation said on Friday.

The IFJ said the killings took place in 16 different countries during targeted attacks, bomb attacks and crossfire incidents. A total of 2,680 journalists have been killed since the IFJ started keeping count in 1990.

The ruthless reign of crime barons in Mexico, the violence

of extremists in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Somalia, as well as the intolerance of hardliners in India and the Philippines have contributed to the continued bloodshed in media," said IFJ General Secretary Anthony Bellanger.

He and his family fled bombings in 2012, thinking it would be a short, temporary stay. His hometown of Homs was under siege, and subject to a ferocious Syrian military campaign. He didn't even bring his ID with him.

Almost 10 years later, the family still hasn't gone back. The 53-year-old Zakaria is among millions of Syrians unlikely to return in the foreseeable future, even as they face deteriorating living conditions abroad. On top of his displacement, Zakaria now

struggles to survive Lebanon's financial meltdown and social implosion.

"We came on the assumption that we would come in and out," said Zakaria, sitting outside his tent on a cold day recently as his children walked around in worn-out slippers.

Syria has been mired in civil war since 2011, when Syrians revolted against President Bashar Assad amid a wave of Arab Spring uprisings. The protests in Syria, which began in March that year, quickly turned into insurgency and eventually a full-blown civil war in response to a brutal military crackdown by Assad's security apparatus.

Nearly half a million people have been killed, and about 12,000 children have died or were injured in the con-

flict in the past decade, according to the UN children's agency, UNICEF. The conflict also resulted in the largest displacement crisis since World War II.

The Norwegian Refugee Council this week said that since the war began in 2011, an estimated 2.4 million people were displaced every year in and outside Syria. The war has left Syria divided and in ruins. Nearly a million children have been born in exile.

Of the country's pre-war population of 23 million, nearly 5.6 million are refugees living in neighboring countries and Europe. Some 6.5 million are displaced within Syria, most of them for longer than five years.

In Lebanon, jobs are hard to come by as an economic and financial crisis roils the country. Financial assistance is scarce and irregular. A currency

crash sent inflation and prices soaring. Zakaria now tries to make ends meet by selling gas bottles used for heaters to other refugees in his settlement.

He makes 1,000 Lebanese pounds from each gas cylinder he sells. But this winter, his neighbors in the settlement, which houses around 200 Syrian refugee families, could hardly afford to buy enough gas to heat their tents.

Through the unprecedented economic crisis, Lebanon's currency has so far lost over 80% of its value. "Life is expensive here," he said. "It is so expensive even for medicine or doctors."

Zakaria said he feels great sadness for his younger three children who have no memories of Syria and their home in Homs.

South Africa's Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini dies

JOHANNESBURG, 12 MARCH

King Goodwill Zwelithini, the traditional leader of South Africa's Zulu nation, has died aged 72 after being hospitalised for more than a month, his family announced Friday.

Zwelithini had health problems related to diabetes, according to local news reports.

Zwelithini, the eighth Zulu king, reigned for more than 50 years,



A BIT OF ALL RIGHT

"The Indian Premier League has been extremely beneficial for us," says England and Wales Cricket Board managing director Ashley Giles (photo, left), citing it as the reason why his team are No 1 in the game's white-ball formats. There are 12 England cricketers, some with million-dollar contracts, playing in the IPL.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS



Federer beaten, hopes to be '100 per cent' for Wimbledon

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DOHA, 12 MARCH

Roger Federer admitted his goal was to be "100 per cent" back in business by the time Wimbledon rolled around after the 20-time Grand Slam title winner had seen his comeback from 13 months out with injury end in Doha yesterday.

The 39-year-old squandered a match point and was knocked out of the Qatar Open by Georgia's Nikoloz Basilashvili (in photo) in his first tournament since losing to Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open semi-finals in January 2020.

Federer, who underwent two knee operations last season, secured the first set against world number 42 Basilashvili but eventually wilted and lost the quarter-final tie, 3-6, 6-1, 7-5.

Mutual admiration: Rivals

are wary of England and

Eoin Morgan's men are the

favourites to win the Twen-

ty20 World Cup this year,

India captain Virat Kohli said

on Thursday. Morgan and

his deputy Jos Buttler have

said India will be the

favourites to win the title.

Olympic vaccines: The Inter-

national Olympic Committee

has said that it has received

an offer from China to

make vaccines available to

athletes at the 2020 Tokyo

Olympics and the 2022 Bei-

jing Winter Olympics. The

IOC is reportedly expected

to pick up the tab.

Football stopped: The gov-

ernment of Brazil's São

Paulo state has suspended

football for at least two

weeks owing to a surge in

coronavirus infections and

deaths. The emergency

measure, part of wider

restrictions, will begin on 15

March and end on 30 March.

Matches postponed: Half

the group stage matches in

the Asian Football Confe-

deration's Champions League

were on Thursday post-

poned until June and July

because of the coronavirus

pandemic. Matches for 40

clubs across 10 groups were

to start in two zones.

New leader: Kraigg Brath-

waite has replaced Jason

Holder as captain of the

West Indies Test team.

Brathwaite recently led the

West Indies in their 2-0

series win in Bangladesh in

the absence of Holder. He

led the team earlier in

seven Tests whilst deputis-

ing for Holder.

Pak league: The Pakistan

Cricket Board, at a meeting

with the six franchises of

the Pakistan Super League

on Thursday, decided to aim

at holding the 20 remaining

matches of PSL 6 in Karachi

in June this year. The PCB

said the decision had been

unanimous.

Death probe: Hundreds of

Argentine football fans

demonstrated on Wednes-

day in Buenos Aires to

demand justice for

Maradona, who had died on

November 25 in circum-

stances under investigation.

"Maradona was left to die

and it was not fair," the

crowd said.

Muguruza wins: Garbine

Muguruza overcame Aryna

Sabalenka in a tight three-

setter for a second consec-

utive week to storm into

the Dubai semi-finals for a

third time in seven appear-

ances. She bounced back to

eliminate the third-seeded

Sabalenka 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Tokyo Olympics: A decision

has not been reached on

whether to allow foreign

spectators to watch the

Olympic Games, Tokyo 2020

organising committee chief

Seiko Hashimoto said on

Thursday, denying media

reports that a decision had

already been reached.

Klopp realistic: Juergen

Klopp said every club left in

the Champions League

would have designs on win-

ning it but despite Liverpool

cruising into the quarter-

finals the German down-

played his own team's

chances as they struggled

for form on the domestic

front.



It was just the second match since his return, having also needed three sets to see off Britain's Dan Evans on Wednesday.

"I might be better earlier, that would be a bonus and that means I'm at 100 per cent before Wimbledon," said Federer when asked if he was targeting the All England Club because that was the earliest

he anticipated being back at full strength.

"I'll just see how much workload the body and the knee still take and what's the best way to prepare all the way for basically the beginning of the season for me, which is the grass court season."

Federer has won eight of his 20 majors at Wimbledon.

He was agonisingly close to

a ninth in 2019 when he had two championship points in an epic five-set final loss to Djokovic.

"I've come from so far away that I'm actually happy that I was able to play back-to-back three set matches against top players," said Federer, a former world number one now down at six in the rankings.

"That's an important step forward for me. I know that I'm still building up, this is a stepping stone."

Looking ahead, Federer also said that he had not taken decisions on tournaments before Wimbledon or the Tokyo Olympics but hinted that he would likely be at Roland Garros.

"What comes before the grass courts are the clay courts. So from that standpoint, I have no choice but to play on clay if I want to play matches," he added.

"It could be good for me, the clay. It could be bad for me, the clay. So I will only know in practice, but I don't think it's going to be bad, to be honest."

However, Federer did concede that he wasn't sure if he would play in Dubai next week.

"I haven't (yet) decided with the team" about the Dubai Championships (next week), Federer said. "We're probably going to do that at some point tomorrow or tonight."

While tournament second seed Federer was out of action, Rafael Nadal equalled his men's record Grand Slam title haul with a 13th Roland Garros triumph.

Djokovic, meanwhile, captured a ninth Australian Open last month to make his career tally 18. Djokovic has also taken Federer's record for wins at number one with the Serb moving to 311 weeks in total on Monday.

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Brilliant Lee single-handedly powers South Africa to win in 3rd women's ODI

AGENCIES

LUCKNOW, 12 MARCH



a 40-run stand for the second wicket. Mignon du Preez (37) too made a significant contribution as Lee kept South Africa's chase alive by scoring only the third century of her career.

Lee kept South Africa abreast with the required rate, which eventually proved crucial after rain played spoilsport with the visitors at 223 for four in 46.3 overs, six ahead of India via the DLS method.

Earlier, Punam Raut struck a second successive half-century -- 77 off 108 balls -- to power India to a fighting score. Also, India skipper Mithali Raj (36) became the first Indian woman to score 10,000 international runs during 77-run third-wicket stand with Raut. South Africa were off to a decent start in their chase with the pair of Lee and stand-in skipper Laura Wolvaardt (12) adding 41 runs for the opening wicket.

After Wolvaardt was cleaned up by off-spinner Depti Sharma, Lara Goodall (16) and Lee took the innings forward with

shared unbroken 45 runs for the fifth wicket to take South Africa home.

For India, veteran Jhulan Goswami picked up two wickets giving away just 20 runs in her 9 overs.

Earlier, Raut, who made 62 in a winning cause in the last match, continued her good form after the hosts were put in to bat. She struck 11 boundaries during her knock. This was after India lost big-hitting opener Jemimah Rodrigues (0) in the second delivery of the innings when she nicked an away-swinging one to Sinalo Jafta off Shabnam Ismail (2/46).

Raut joined Smriti Mandhana (25 off 27) at the crease and the duo once again came to India's rescue, sharing 64 runs off 70 balls for the second wicket to take the team forward.

Mandhana, however, couldn't convert her start into a big score. Mithali, only the second internationally to complete 10,000 runs across all formats, departed soon after reaching the major milestone, flicking Anne Bosch delivery straight to Mignon du Preez at mid-wicket.

Raut bounded back by picking two wickets -- du Preez and Marizanne Kapp -- in a span of two overs to even things out by reducing South Africa to 178 for four in the 38th over.

However, the threat was far from over for India as a determined Leestood between the hosts and the victory.

She was in no mood to give up and continued her attacking batting to keep the visitors in tune with the required rate.

Lee found an able partner in Anne Bosch (16 not out) and

shared unbroken 45 runs for the fifth wicket to take South Africa home.

For Mumbai, this will be a first-ever final, but coach Sergio Lobera, and a handful of his players have been here before when FC Goa lost to Bengaluru FC in 2018-19. The team though has looked confident under Lobera.

"They (ATK Mohun Bagan) are a very good team with good players and have the momentum. But the most important thing now is to put the focus on ourselves and try to do our best. We have no specific plan, only small details about the opponent. We need to work 100 per cent on our style of play," said Lobera.

There will be few selection