



JEFF BEZOS  
TO STEP DOWN  
AS AMAZON CEO

P8



MOSCOW COURT  
SENDS NAVALNY  
TO PRISON

P10



FIRST FORMAL CHARGE  
AGAINST SUU KYI

P10



'MY JOB IS TO  
HELP VIRAT'

P12

## WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Light rain/thunderstorm towards evening. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 24 and 11 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

### RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100%	Min: 52%
<b>TEMPERATURE</b>	
Max: 26.1°C (+4)	Min: 10.4°C (+2)
SUN RISES 07:07 hrs	SUN SETS 18:03 hrs
MOON RISES 00:55 hrs	MOON SETS 11:28 hrs

### THUMBNAILS



A farmer works at a mustard farm on the outskirts of Amritsar on Wednesday. ■ IANS

**Post-Budget euphoria:** The BSE Sensex closed above the historic 50,000-mark for the first time ever on Wednesday as the post-Budget euphoria continued for the third straight session amidst a spurt in buying by foreign funds and positive global cues. Banking, finance and pharma counters hogged the limelight, while cement and FMCG stocks succumbed to profit-taking. After touching a record intra-day high of 50,526.39 points, the 30-share BSE benchmark ended at 50,255.75 points.

P8

**PM's brother stages dharna:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi's brother Prahil Modi staged a dharna at the Lucknow airport on Wednesday, alleging that police did not let his supporters reach there and took them into custody. Police, however, have denied the charge. According to authorities at Chaudhary Charan Singh Airport Prahil Modi arrived at Lucknow by an Indigo flight around 4 pm. He sat on a dharna on the airport premises as he was unhappy over police stopping his supporters from reaching there.

## India reports 11,039 new cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 3 FEBRUARY

India becomes the fastest country to reach the 4 million Covid-19 vaccination mark, getting there in 18 days, even as the active Covid-19 caseload dipped below 1.5% of total cases. The Union ministry of health also said on Wednesday that 14 states/UTs have not reported any deaths in the last 24 hours.

India continued its streak of low single-day coronavirus case numbers as 11,039 new infections were reported in the last 24 hours, which took the overall Covid-19 tally to 1,07,77,284, health officials said. There were 110 more Covid-19 fatalities, taking the overall death toll to 1,54,596.

As per the Ministry's data, there are 1,60,057 active cases

at present whereas 1,04,62,631 persons have been discharged so far. The recovery rate has increased to 97.08 per cent, while the fatality rate is down to 1.43 per cent.

As many as 41,38,918 corona vaccine doses have been administered in India since the drive began on January 16.

According to the health ministry, India is in fifth position globally in terms of the vaccine doses administered in the country, despite the fact that many countries had launched their vaccination campaigns before India.

**Delhi adds 150 cases, 6 deaths:** Delhi today registered 150 positive cases of Covid-19 and 6 coronavirus-related fatalities, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. These fresh cases were detected out of 56,658 tests. (SEE P2)



## AstraZeneca first jab cuts coronavirus transmission substantially: UK study

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
LONDON, 3 FEBRUARY

Even just the first of the two-dose Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine can cut coronavirus transmissions by around 67 per cent and therefore have a "substantial effect" on controlling the spread of the deadly virus, according to a new Oxford University study on Wednesday.

The UK government described this as good news for the world because the impact of Covid vaccines on transmission has been a crucial unknown in the fight against the pandemic.

"The data indicate that (the vaccine) may have a substantial impact on transmis-

sion by reducing the number of infected individuals in the population," notes the report from the latest study.

The Oxford Vaccine Trial results, currently under review to be published by *The Lancet*, also found that up to a three-month interval between the two required doses of the jab

proved an effective gap as protection against the virus.

A single standard dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine - which is also being produced in collaboration with the Serum Institute of India - showed 76 per cent efficacy from day 22 to day 90 after the jab, which means protec-

tion is not reduced in the three months between the first and second dose. "This news about the Oxford vaccine is absolutely superb. Two-third reduction in transmission, stronger protection from 12 week gap between doses and no hospitalisations. This vaccine works and works well," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock.

The study found that a single standard dose of the vaccine is 76 per cent effective at protecting from primary symptomatic Covid-19 for the first 90 days post vaccination, once the immune system has built this protection 22 days after the vaccination, with the protection showing little evidence of waning in this period.

## WB: Stadiums, swimming pools to reopen

KOLKATA, 3 FEBRUARY

The state government today gave permission to reopen all stadiums, swimming pools and sports complexes outside containment zones and allowing them to operate at full capacity abiding by Covid protocols. A notification in this regard was issued by state chief secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay yesterday.

On the other hand, universities and colleges will not reopen immediately and instead will continue to take classes and exams in online mode.

Laboratories would be operational for research scholars pursuing PhD courses. SNS

DETAILS ON PAGE 9

## India to spend \$130 bn to modernise military: Rajnath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BENGALURU, 3 FEBRUARY

India is vigilant in the face of attempts to change status quo at its border and prepared to defeat any misadventures to defend its territorial integrity, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday, amid the continued military stand-off with China.

"We have long witnessed unfortunate attempts to employ force to change the status quo at our unresolved borders", he said at the inaugural ceremony of Aero India-2021, the country's premier Defence and aerospace show, at Yelahanka Air Force Station here.

"India is vigilant and prepared to counter and defeat any misadventures to defend our people and territorial



integrity at all costs," the Minister asserted.

China and India are locked in a military stand-off in eastern Ladakh since May 5 last. The two countries have held several rounds of military and diplomatic talks to resolve the face-off, but no significant headway has been made so far.

Dubbed as Asia's largest military aviation exhibition, the three-day Aero India event commenced amid the COVID-19 pandemic with buzz around "Atma-Nirbhār Bharat" (self-reliant India) and "Make in India" push.

With a combination of both physical and virtual exhibi-

tions, the 13th edition of the biennial international event is said to be the world's first hybrid aerospace show.

Singh also said India plans to spend USD 130 billion on Defence modernisation in the next 7-8 years, he added.

The government has since 2014 brought in many reforms in the defence sector to create a conducive ecosystem for exports, Foreign Direct Investment and offset discharge, he noted.

To achieve the twin goals of self-reliance and exports, the government has set a target to achieve a turnover of Rs 1,75,000 crore in the field of Defence manufacturing, including export of Rs 35,000 crore in Aerospace and

Defence goods and services, by 2024, Singh said.

"We plan to spend USD 130 billion on Defence modernisation in the next seven to eight years", he added.

Like many of its friendly countries, India also faces threats and challenges emanating from multiple fronts, the Defence Minister said, adding that the country was a "victim of state-sponsored and state-inflicted terrorism which is now a global threat".

The government has taken several steps to strengthen the country's security apparatus recently.

Domestic manufacturing of bigger and complex defence platforms has now become the focus of our policy under the 'Atma-Nirbhār Bharat Abhiyaan', he said.

## Bihar to bar people taking part in protests from govt jobs, contracts

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PATNA, 3 FEBRUARY

and then is then charged by the police, they will not be eligible for government jobs or any government contract," the circular said.

The move is being described by the opposition as an attempt to stifle democratic rights of the people. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is challenging Hitler and Mussolini by curbing an individual's democratic right to protest via the new order," Bihar opposition leader and RJD legislator Tejashwi Yadav said. He alleged the chief minister on the one hand was not providing employment to the youths, on the other, it was preventing them from staging protests.

As per the order issued by the DGP, Bihar, people found guilty of violating law and order by participating in unwanted protests and then charged by the police were liable to face action. "If any person is found involved in criminal acts during the protests and road blockades,

out with controversial decisions.

Last month, the police's Economic Offenses Wing announced it would take necessary action against those who share offensive and defamatory social media posts about the state government, any ministers or the chief minister. "It has come to light that certain persons and organisations have been making defamatory and offensive comments on social media against the government, respected ministers, parliamentarians, legislators, and government officials," IG NH Khan wrote in the letter.

CM Nitish Kumar had earlier held social media responsible for propagating fake news.





Those winning elections due to EVMS will be defeated if polling for 2024  
Maharashtra Assembly elections is held using ballot papers only

NCPS MAHARASHTRA CHIEF SPOKESPERSON MAHESH TAPASE  
IN A STATEMENT WITHOUT NAMING ANY PARTY OR INDIVIDUAL.

## Delhi govt to help trace missing farmers: CM

Kejriwal says his govt has released a list of 115 protesters lodged in city jails in connection with 26 Jan violence and that he would even approach LG, Centre in tracing missing farmers



SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 3 FEBRUARY

**D**elhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today said his government will help trace the farmers missing since the 26 January violence in the city and that he would, if required, approach the Lieutenant Governor and the Centre in this regard.

The Delhi CM said his government has also released a list of 115 persons lodged in different jails here in connection with the Republic Day violence during the farmers' tractor rally in the national capital.

"We are releasing a list of 115 protesters who were arrested by police in relation to the Republic Day incident and are in different jails in the city. Our government will make every effort to trace the protesters who are missing and I will even speak to the Lt Governor and the central government if the need arises," Kejriwal said at a press conference.

A delegation from the legal team of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha—the umbrella body of many farmer unions protesting against the Centre's controversial farm laws since the last week of November last year have maintained that a number of protesters have been missing since the Republic Day violence. Delhi Police has said that it has arrested 122 protesters so far in connection with the 26 January violence, even as it has filed dozens of FIRs in this regard.

"It is the responsibility of every government to find out the missing people and intimate their families in this regard. Many farmer unions have also reached out to the Delhi government and me. Last evening, a few members of the farmers' unions came to meet me in this regard," the CM said.

He said that the people whose family members were missing could look at this list to know if their family members were among those arrested. If yes, they will get to know the jail where they have been put in. He expressed the hope that many people who have gone missing will be traced through this list.

Kejriwal said, "If we continue to receive reports even after issuing this list, as the chief minister of Delhi, I have assured the farmers' unions that I will try my best to trace the missing persons and connect them with their families. If required, I will also talk to the LG and the Centre in this regard."

The farmer unions protesting at Delhi borders against the Centre's farm laws since the last week of November last year have maintained that a number of protesters have been missing since the Republic Day violence. Delhi Police has said that it has arrested 122 protesters so far in connection with the 26 January violence, even as it has filed dozens of FIRs in this regard.

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*A person who was responsible for the recruitment of 'Bana Sahayaks' in the forest department indulged in corrupt methods. We will investigate it. Everything will be investigated. The person after indulging in corruption has now joined the BJP. He is now lecturing others*

MAMATA BANERJEE

WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

# Amarinder slams Kejriwal over barricading of farmers' sites

Charging that AAP was with BJP against farmers, Punjab CM questions how Delhi's roads were allowed to be dug up to turn farmers' protest sites into fortresses when AAP govt controls city roads

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 3 FEBRUARY

**A** day after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) walked out of the Punjab all-party meeting on the protesting farmers' issue, chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh claimed that the people of Punjab should not expect anything better from a party "whose chief was on record touting the farm laws as the most revolutionary step in the agriculture sector in 70 years".

The act of the AAP walk-out had not only shown the party in its "true colours" but also bared their "lie" on AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal's video, which purportedly showed the Delhi CM narrating the "benefits" of the Centre's controversial farm laws in a media interview, charged Capt Amarinder. The AAP has rejected this video as "doctored".

Dismissing the AAP's assertion about the video being doctored, the Punjab CM said that "given their track record of repeated U-turns on the issue, it was amply clear where the party's sympathies lie on this issue".

"How can one believe them after their continued theatrics over the farm laws and the farmers' agitation, including their walk-out from yesterday's meeting?" Capt Amarinder asked, claiming that this was not the first time the AAP has shown its "double standards" on the



issue.

Citing the presence of Punjab AAP member Amrik Mickey at the Red Fort during the violence in Delhi on 26 January in the course of protesting farmers' tractor rally, the CM charged that there was "no doubt" now that the AAP was "hand-in-glove with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)" in the alleged conspiracy to destabilise and sabotage the farmers' peaceful agitation against the Centre's farm laws.

"What have they done to help or support the farmers in

all these months?" Amarinder asked, charging that the string of AAP actions in recent weeks proved that their sympathies were not with the farmers but with the BJP and their crony capitalists.

"Why else did the Kejriwal government in Delhi notify the implementation of one of the black farm laws back in November? Why else have they allowed the national capital's roads to be dug up and the farmers' protest sites be barricaded like fortresses, instead of exercising their powers since the control of the

city's roads lies with the Delhi government and not with the Centre?" Capt Amarinder asked.

"It is ridiculous that a party which cannot stop its own property from being taken over in this shocking manner, in a state where it is in power, should walk out from a pro-farmer meeting in Punjab demanding that our police should go to their state, against all rules and laws," the Punjab CM remarked.

It's evident that the "whole drama" over security deployment at the Delhi border

was enacted by the AAP only to divert attention from its own lapses and role in the events triggered by the farmers' protest in Delhi over the past few days, he added.

Capt Amarinder also took a dig at the Delhi CM for taking more than a week to release the list of farmers thrown under the Delhi government's very nose, into the Tihar Jail, which is also under their own control.

"And yet you have the gall to claim you care for, and are concerned about the farmers," he said.

## PERFECT FRAME



Tourists taking a selfie during hailstorm at the Ridge in Shimla on Wednesday.

## 'Swarnim Vatikas' to be set up across HP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 3 FEBRUARY

department and lauded the department for taking the initiative.

"The initiative will create aesthetic spots near the habitation for people to relax, enjoy and get them educated regarding the significance of nature and its conservation."

The initiative will also enhance forest cover of the state and will sensitize and educate the people of the urban and semi-urban community about the importance of forests and its conservation.

by involving them in the plantation activities.

These Vatikas will also provide people an area for recreation, where walking trails, resting and sitting places would be provided to the locals," he added.

State Urban Development Minister Suresh Bhardwaj, Forest, Youth Services and Sports Minister Rakesh Pathania, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests Dr Savita were also present on the occasion among others.

## Covid pandemic has forced all to rethink health strategies: Jai Ram

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 3 FEBRUARY

**He said Pharma industries were flourishing in Himachal Pradesh due to the solid foundation of industrial package provided to the state by the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2003.**

Addressing a webinar on 'Changing Landscape of Indian Pharma Sector' organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) from Shimla, Thakur said the changing scenario had led to the Union government making an increase of 137 per cent in its allocation for the health sector in the Budget for 2021-22.

"Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has effectively handled Covid pandemic. Today India has not become self-sufficient in fighting the virus but is also exporting equipment such as PPE kits, ventilators and N95 masks to several countries," he added.

He said Pharma industries were flourishing in Himachal Pradesh due to the solid foun-

state not only provided medicines to the whole country but also delivered medicines to over 30 countries of the world.

"The government is hopeful of getting a Bulk Drug Pharma Park for the state as several incentives are being offered to entrepreneurs such as adequate availability of land, surplus power supply, investors' friendly policies which the investors cannot find elsewhere," he added.

Thakur further stated that the state government had actively bid under the Bulk Drug Park Scheme of the Union government and had sent a project proposal of Rs 1,190 crore for setting up of the park on 1,405 acres of land in Una district.

"The investment of about Rs 8,000 crores would ensure turnover of Rs 50,000 crore and this park would also provide direct employment to about 15,000 youth of the state."

Besides, the government has also sent a proposal for setting up of Medical Devices Park to be built at a cost of Rs 261 crore on 265 acres of land

in Nalagarh area of Solan district.

This would ensure investment of about Rs 4,000 to 5,000 crore and turnover of about Rs 20,000 crore would happen and estimated 10,000 people would get employment opportunities.

If both these proposals of the government are successful, not only the state but the pharmaceutical sector of the country would be immensely benefited," he added.

He also thanked the Pharma producers of the state for making generous contributions towards the PM CARES and CM COVID Fund and said due to the production of active pharmaceutical ingredients in the state itself, the country's dependence on foreign countries has reduced.

State Industries Minister Bikram Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Industries Ram Subhag Singh, Joint Secretary, Govt of India Randeep Riwana, CII Chairman Dr Dinesh Dua were also present on the occasion among others.

## Haryana Cong to move resolution in Assembly to reject Centre's farm laws

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 3 FEBRUARY

The Opposition Congress will bring a resolution in the forthcoming Budget Session of the Haryana Assembly, rejecting the Centre's three controversial farm laws.

Apart from this, the Haryana Congress will also press for amending the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act so that farmers could get guaranteed minimum support price (MSP) and if anyone buys crops less than the MSP, legal action could be taken.

This decision was taken in the Congress Legislature Party meeting on Wednesday. The meeting was chaired by former Chief Minister and Leader of Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda in Chandigarh today.

In the meeting, all the Congress legislators reiterated their commitment to giving full support to the farmers' movement against the Centre's three agric



laws. Hooda said the movement is completely non-political and farmers' organisations are receiving support from all sections of the society.

The Congress stands firmly with the demands of the farmers and their peaceful agitation, the former CM said adding the Centre government was trying to suppress the movement.

The Leader of Opposition said that the Congress is constant-

said. The Leader of Opposition reiterated that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Janayak Janata party (JJP) coalition government had lost the confidence of the public.

"Congress is going to bring a no-confidence motion against the government in the coming session. Voices of dissent are also

heard among the MLAs who are supporting the government. They are constantly making statements against the government and in support of the farmers. The no-confidence motion will let people know which Member of Legislative Assembly stands with the government and which MLA stands with the people," he added.

Hooda said the farmers' agitation has become a people's movement, not just of the farmers as the three agricultural laws are not only anti-farmer but also will cause huge loss to the common consumers, whether it is buying ration from the market or with ration card.

SAD demands Punjab's SEC be wound up

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 3 FEBRUARY

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Wednesday charged that Punjab's State Election Commission (SEC) had "utterly failed" in doing its duty to protect the life and liberty of the people in the run up to the municipal elections and should be wound up immediately.

Speaking to reporters after meeting the SEC commissioner Jagpal Singh Sandhu, former minister Dr Daljit Singh Cheema said the former was proving to be a burden on the state exchequer as he had openly expressed his helplessness in giving any relief against even murderous attacks on Akali workers as well as SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal.

Sandhu had assured to seek a report on the attack on the SAD president by Congress goons when we met him yesterday. However today he told us that no report had come and that all he could do was dispatch a reminder for submission of the report," he added.

Stating that there was no need for such a toothless Commission which was proving to



be a white elephant for the state, Dr Cheema said the Commission should be wound up immediately. "The commissioner should also not transfer his inefficiencies on the people by wasting his time in fooling them and should put in his papers immediately," he said.

Dr Cheema also requested Punjab Governor VP Singh Badnore to come out of the Raj Bhawan to experience the condition of the state. He said the Congress party and its goons were even challenging the Governor's constitutional author-

ity and he should take note of the developments in the state and take suitable action.

"No right-thinking person can condone and remain silent when a Z plus protegee who has served as a deputy chief minister and is heading a political party is subject to a murderous attack", he added.

The SAD also took strong note of the murder of democracy in Zira today. It said even though the police administration had assured that Akali candidates would be allowed to file their nomination papers it remained a silent spectator to violence unleashed by Congressmen. Dr Cheema said first the police stood silently as Congressmen put dummy candidates in long queues to thwart Akali candidates from filing their nominations in Zira.

"Later in the day Congressmen resorted to stoning to force Akali candidates to flee the spot due to which the Opposition could not file a single nomination," he said adding even in this case the Ferozepur administration had not given a factual report to the SEC which was unaware of what was going on at the ground level.



The Home Ministry's statement on CAA in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday has brought to light the saffron camp's fake politics to woo the Matua community in the state.

STATE MINISTER BRATY BASU

ON EXTENSION OF DEADLINE FOR FRAMING CAA RULES TILL JULY BY THE CENTRE

**i**ndia

THUMBNAILS



An NGO official with children from a slum in Delhi on Wednesday. ■ IANS

**Raj Cabinet expansion:** AICC general secretary in-charge for Rajasthan Ajay Maken ruled out expansion of the state Cabinet as of now but said nearly 30,000 district-level political appointments will be made in the first half of the current month. He said the Cabinet expansion will not take place as of now in view of the upcoming Budget session of the state. ■ PTI

**Earthquake hits Ladakh:** An earthquake of 4.5 magnitude hit the UT of Ladakh on Wednesday evening, an official of the Meteorological Department said. A police official said there was no report of damage from anywhere. "The earthquake was probably of low intensity and did not cause panic," he said. ■ PTI

**Chabahar-Zahedan project:** The government on Wednesday said it remained engaged with Iran on the modalities of implementing the Chabahar-Zahedan railway project as well as other developmental initiatives in the Gulf nation. In the Union Budget, Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has made an allocation of Rs 100 crore for the development of the Chabahar Port. ■ PTI

# Fresh NRC updation after SC nod: Himanta

Accuses Congress of bringing the level of political debate to a 'very low level'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUWAHATI, 3 FEBRUARY

The Assam government is waiting for the Supreme Court's permission to initiate a fresh drive to update National Register of Citizens (NRC), health, education and finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday.

The state NRC coordinator has already submitted "a very good affidavit" in the Gauhati High Court highlighting why we need a fresh update of NRC, the minister said at a Press brief here.

The final NRC was published on 31 August, 2019 by excluding 19,06,657 persons with a total of 3,11,21,004 names included out of the 3,30,27,661 applicants.

After publication of the final NRC, almost all the stakeholders and political parties had criticised it as a faulty document, citing many cases of exclusion of indigenous people and inclusion of illegal migrants.

Sarma said in Assam there are two types of Muslims - the indigenous or Assamese Muslims and the migrants or 'miya' Muslims - with the former inextricably linked with the culture and traditions of the state while to determine the status of the latter, the NRC is not yet done properly".

The Supreme Court had on 29 January last issued notice to the Assam NRC state coordinator, Hitesh Dev Sarma, on a plea seeking directions issued by him for unilaterally deleting names from the final NRC.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India SA Bobde heard the submissions of senior advocate Kapil Sibal, who appeared on behalf of the



petitioners, Jamaat-e-Ulema and All Assam Minorities Students Union (AAMSU), and is said.

"During the last six months and even during the Covid-19 situation, we have taken up so many developmental works that people are happy with what the BJP has done in the state", Sarma claimed.

A politician should never hesitate to go to the people and "just like Sachin Tendulkar was liked for the runs he scored, we are liked by the people when we go to them", he said exuding confidence before elections expected in March-April.

He said that the BJP government has done developmental work in all areas of the state, including in the Muslim-dominated areas where "we know people will not vote for us".

"We'll continue with our development works in all areas and may be when education, health and other schemes reach these areas, the communal element or religious intolerance will decrease but this will take time", he added.

Referring to the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination programme, Sarma said Assam is "doing extremely well" and is jabbing more than expected with the daily target being exceeded in most of the places.

Modi to visit poll-bound Assam on 7 Feb

GUWAHATI, 3 FEBRUARY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Assam on 7 February and lay the foundation of two medical colleges and launch the scheme for the upgradation of the state highways, state finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Wednesday.

This will be Modi's second visit to the poll-bound state in a fortnight.

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is scheduled to visit Guwahati on 6 February and will be present at a programme where money will be given to the bank accounts of eight lakh tea garden workers in the state, Sarma told a Press conference here.

The Prime Minister will visit Dhekaijuli from where he will lay the foundation of two medical colleges in Charaideo and Bishwanath districts.

He will also launch the 'Assam Mala' scheme under which the state public works department will upgrade the state highways.

Work in 2,500-km to be taken up at the initial stage, he said and added the estimated Rs 5,000-crore project is expected to be completed within 15 years.

A major event lined up for

Friday is appointment of

29,701 teachers and non-teaching staff by the state government, Sarma said.

He added a blue-print is being prepared to appoint language teachers with focus on tribal languages and of tea garden communities. ■ PTI

## FLYING HIGH



Indian Air Force's aerobatic team 'Sarang' performs during the inauguration of the 13th edition of Aero India, at Yelahanka air base in Bengaluru on Wednesday. ■ IANS

## Suspended IAS officer Sivasankar gets bail in dollar smuggling case, released from jail

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOCHI, 3 FEBRUARY

A court in Kerala on Wednesday granted bail to suspended IAS officer M Sivasankar in the dollar smuggling case, observing that the offence against him was "serious" in nature and "required intensive probe".

Sivasankar, former principal secretary of chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, was released by 3 pm from prison after 98 days in judicial custody.

The dollar case had come to light during the probe into the gold smuggling racket in Kerala in which Sivasankar is also accused.

Granting bail, the additional chief judicial magistrate court (Economic Offences) said: "Truly, the offence against the petitioner is serious in nature and requires intensive probe".

Pointing out that Sivasankar had "sufficient knowledge" about smuggling of foreign currencies perpetrated with the help of the prime accused, the court said: "Such knowl-



edge and his culpable failure to bring the smuggling to the notice of appropriate authority despite the fact that he was a senior civil servant during relevant time, shall be viewed seriously".

The court directed him to execute a bond of Rs 1 lakh, with two sureties for the like amount and appear before the investigating officers as and when required.

The judge observed that further detention of Sivasankar, who was a cancer survivor and had undergone surgery, was no longer essential for the investigation in the case.

The Customs had arrested Sivasankar in the dollar smuggling case on 23 January.

Television visuals showed the IAS officer walking out of the Ernakulam district jail with a backpack and carrying books in his arms around 3 pm. He refused to talk to the media and left in the car of a relative.

Reacting to Sivasankar's bail, senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala said proper investigation was not going on in the gold smuggling case and alleged that BJP and the CPI(M) were trying to sabotage the case and there was some secret understanding between them.

Sivasankar was in judicial custody for over three months days following his arrest by the Enforcement Directorate and Customs in the cases relating to the gold smuggling through diplomatic channel, money trail and dollar smuggling.

Prime accused in the gold smuggling case Swapna Suresh and Sarithi PS are also allegedly involved in the dollar case and had already been arrested by the Customs. Sivasankar was suspended after his links to Suresh surfaced.

## LDF and UDF are two sides of the same coin: Nadda

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 3 FEBRUARY

BJP national president JP Nadda has on Wednesday slammed both the CPI-M-led ruling LDF and the Congress-led Opposition UDF, saying that they are two sides of the same coin and has claimed that the BJP has grown into a third force in Kerala.

Nadda, who began his two-day visit to Kerala on Wednesday to launch the NDA's assembly election campaign in the state, at a press conference here said, both the fronts have no vision for the people of Kerala, both are power seekers, to get into power that is their only aim.

"Both are corrupt, both are visionless, both are only power seekers, both lost their credibility. They are fighting each other in Kerala, but they are allies in West Bengal and fighting elections together," Nadda said.

Coming out against the state chief minister, the BJP national president said chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan has lost his credibility, he has been attacking constitutional bodies and his government is indulged in large scale back door appointments in government services.

Blaming the LDF government for the increase in the number of Covid-19 cases in the state, Nadda said the ineffective policy of the state government has made Kerala among largest number of Covid patients in the country.

"The state government has no strategy to contain Covid cases. I regret to say it is because of the ineffectiveness of the political leadership that has led to steep increase in the number of Covid cases in the state. Half of the Covid cases now in the country are from Kerala", Nadda said.

He alleged that the involvement of M Sivasankar, former private secretary to chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, in the gold smuggling case, shows that corruption has patronage of the highest office.

## Atrocities against SC/STs up in 2019: Government to Rajya Sabha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 3 FEBRUARY

The government on Wednesday told the Rajya Sabha that crimes against members of Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the country increased by 7.3 per cent and 26.5 per cent respec-

tively in 2019.

Union minister of state for home G Kishan Reddy, however, said police and public order are state subjects under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution and the responsibilities to maintain law and order, protection of life and property of citizens,

including investigation and prosecution of crime against members of SCs and STs, rest with respective state governments. "Yes, sir," was the reply of Reddy when asked whether it is a fact that crimes against members of SCs and STs communities have increased by 7.3 per cent and 26.5 per cent, respectively in 2019 as per the latest 'Crime in India-2019' report of the National Crime Records Bureau. The written question was asked by Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge.

Reddy said the state governments are competent to deal with such offences under the extant provisions of laws.

## TENDER

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR HOWRAH - 711103  
(An Institute of National Importance under MHRD, Govt. of India)  
Date: 29.01.2021  
Advt. No. MT 1643  
Applications are invited for two Post-Doctoral Fellows / Senior Research Associates (Engineering / Technology) for two collaborative Projects sponsored by Tata Steel Ltd. Please visit the website <http://www.iiests.ac.in> (W. Code DRC-01/20-21) under "Employment" for details.  
Dean (R&E)

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR HOWRAH - 711103  
(An Institute of National Importance under MHRD, Govt. of India)  
Date: 28.01.2021  
Advt. No. MT 1643  
Applications are invited for two Post-Doctoral Fellows / Senior Research Associates (Engineering / Technology) for two collaborative Projects sponsored by Tata Steel Ltd. Please visit the website <http://www.iiests.ac.in> (W. Code DRC-01/20-21) under "Employment" for details.  
Dean (R&E)

Quotations are invited for supply and installation of 'Rotary Evaporator' in the Department of Chemistry. For details visit: [www.iiests.ac.in](http://www.iiests.ac.in) and <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Last Date : 17.02.2021 at 06:00 pm. (A. Code DRC-T020/20-21).  
Dean (R&E)

■ The tenderer's must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in the e-tender system. ■ For all terms and conditions, please refer tender document. ■ No manual offers are acceptable. ■ Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT/38/2020-21/W-3/Dated : 03.02.2021 25/2/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY  
OPEN-E-TENDER NOTICE

The Sr. Divisional Engineer-II, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work.

1. Name of work Annual Zone for maintenance of track work in the section of SSE/P/Way/DLI under ADEN/IDL.

2. Approx cost of work Rs. 9883033.25/- (Rupees Ninety Eight Lakh Eighty Three Thousand Thirty Three and pata Twenty Five only)

3. Earnest Money to be deposited Rs. 0.00

4. Cost of tender document Rs. 0/-

5. Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender 26.02.2021 @ 15:00 hrs.

6. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)

■ The tenderer's must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for participating in the e-tender system. ■ For all terms and conditions, please refer tender document. ■ No manual offers are acceptable. ■ Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. No. 128-W/280/e Tender Notice/NIT/38/2020-21/W-3/Dated : 03.02.2021 25/2/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION  
Office of the Executive Engineer-(E&M)

Disaster Management Centre, Ghazipur, Delhi-96

PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Dated : 01.02.2021

The Executive Engineer (E&M) on behalf of Commissioner, EDMC invites tenders in e-tendering in two stage system i.e. Stage -1 Documents related to eligibility criteria and Stage -2 Financial bid for

Name of Work :- (1) Installation of Surveillance system (CCTV) for monitoring of trommels, machineries, weighbridge operation and allied locations at SLF Ghazipur. Head of Account : DPCC EDMC, SWM ESCROW. Tender Amount : Item Rate, Earnest Money : Rs. 1,14,800/-, Tender Cost : Rs. 1,000/-, Time of Completion : 2 Months for SITC & 4 Years for AMC (after 1 year defect liability period). Rate shall hold good for : 120 days, Tender No. : 319553. The last date of re-encryption of online bid is 17.02.2021 upto 1500 Hrs. Non EDMC registered contractors opting for e-tendering will have to register in the e-tendering system of EDMC. Other details/information can be seen on website [www.mcdtenders.com](http://www.mcdtenders.com)

R.O. No. 82/DPI/East/2020-21

Ex. Engineer (E&M)

EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. : 155303



A worker collects sun-dried chillies at a farm in Shertha village on the outskirts of Ahmedabad on Wednesday. ■ IANS

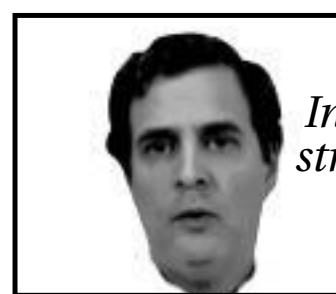
RED HOT

A worker collects sun-dried chillies at a farm in Shertha village on the outskirts of Ahmedabad on Wednesday. ■ IANS

A worker collects sun-dried chillies at a farm in Shertha village on the outskirts of Ahmedabad on Wednesday. ■ IANS

A worker collects sun-dried chillies at a farm in Shertha village on the outskirts of Ahmedabad on Wednesday. ■ IANS

A worker collects sun-dried chillies at a farm in



India's reputation has taken a massive hit and its biggest strength, its soft power, has been shattered by the BJP and the RSS.

**CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI,**  
ON FARMERS PROTEST

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 04 FEBRUARY 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



Samajwadi Party MPs Ram Gopal Yadav at Parliament, in New Delhi on Wednesday.

PTI

**Man accused of killing cow:** The police in Manipur's Ukhrahl district have registered an FIR against a man who shot and killed a cow a few days ago. The case was registered after the PETA wrote to the district's SP, on the basis of a viral video showing the unidentified man firing at the bovine creature.

SNS

**Sandstone for Ayodhya:** A standing committee of the Rajasthan Wildlife Board has cleared a proposal to allow the mining of a special sandstone, much sought after by builders, including those constructing the Ram temple in Ayodhya, from Bharatpur's Barndh Bartha sanctuary.

PTI

**Bangladeshi man held:** A 24-year-old Bangladeshi national was arrested on Wednesday for illegal stay from the Malwan area of western suburb of Malad, police said. Acting on a tip-off, the police nabbed Rubel Jonu Sheikh, a native of Jasur district in Bangladesh, from Malwan, an official said. Sheikh has allegedly been living illegally in India since the last 10 years, the official said.

PTI

**Ahmedabad civic polls:** The Congress in Gujarat has released the second list of 38 candidates for ten wards of the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation which will go to the polls along with other local bodies later this month. The Congress has declared the names of 180 candidates for various wards.

PTI

**Bihar murder case:** Bihar Police on Wednesday arrested a person in connection with Indigo station manager Rupesh Kumar Singh's murder, which it claimed to be the outcome of a road rage. Police have seized the weapon used in the murder, the SSP said adding that police will send it to the Forensic Science Laboratory.

PTI

**C'garh smuggling case:** A 62-year-old man was arrested for allegedly smuggling diamonds worth over Rs 22 lakh in Chhattisgarh's Gariaband district, a police official said on Wednesday. As many as 221 pieces of rough diamonds were seized from him, he said.

PTI

# Fortification continues at Ghazipur border

Ghaziabad SP Gyanendra Singh says Net services have been restored but there could be glitches or slow speed due to crowd at the site

## Tikait warns govt of 'gaddi wapsi' demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GHAZIABAD, 3 FEBRUARY

**S**trict security continued on Wednesday at Ghazipur on the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border, one of the key protest sites where thousands of farmers are camping with a demand that the Centre repeal the new agri-marketing laws enacted last September.

Internet services remained disrupted for the fifth day at the site on Delhi's outskirts where protesters are occupying a stretch of the Delhi-Meerut highway since November, even as a Ghaziabad Police officer said that online connectivity has been restored but there could be glitches.

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs had announced suspension of internet services at the three border points of Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur and their adjoining areas from 11 pm on January 29 effective till 11 pm on January 31.

Later it extended the suspension till 11 pm on February 2. There has been no further extension of internet suspension at these sites as of now, a Home Ministry official said on Wednesday.

JKU's Meerut zone president Pawan Khatana said the internet was inaccessible at Ghazipur early on Wednesday till the time he left for a mahapanchayat in Haryana's Jind with union leader Rakesh Tikait and other supporters.

Ghaziabad Superintendent of Police (City 2) Gyanendra Singh said, Internet services have been restored but there could be glitches or slow speed due to crowd at the protest site.

Iron nails studded on roads,



Bharatiya Kisan Union spokesperson Rakesh Tikait along with other farmer leaders during 'Kisan Mahapanchayat' against the new farm laws, in Jind district on Wednesday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JIND (HARYANA), 3 FEBRUARY

In a show of strength here by protesting farmers, Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait on Wednesday warned the government that it could find it difficult to stay on in power if the new agri-mar-

keting laws are not repealed.

Just before Tikait was to begin his speech at the 'mahapanchayat' in Kandela village, the stage on which the farmer leaders had gathered collapsed under their weight.

Nobody was reported hurt and the BKU leader went on to address the large gather-

ing. Calling for a wapsi (withdrawal) of the three new central laws, the BKU leader indirectly warned the Narendra Modi government that it could lose its gaddi (power) if the agitation continues.

We have so far talked about 'bill wapsi' (repealing the farm laws). The government should

multi-layer iron and concrete barricades, concertina wires remained fixed as large number of security personnel were deployed as fortification of Ghazipur continued to prevent protesters' movement to Delhi.

On the security apparatus at the protest sites, Delhi Police Commissioner S N

Shrivastava had told media, We have only strengthened the barricading so that it is not broken again.

**AAP MPs marshalled out of:** Three Aam Aadmi Party MPs, including Sanjay Singh, were on Wednesday marshalled out of Rajya Sabha after they disrupted proceedings over the three contentious

farm reform laws and refused to heed to Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu's plea for order.

**BJP says Rahul conspiring with anti-India elements:** With many international personalities, including celebrities, lending their support to India's protesting farmers, the BJP on Wednesday lashed

out at "propaganda and fake narratives" and also attacked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, alleging that he conspires with anti-India elements during his trip abroad. "We stand together. We stand United against all attempts to malign India through propaganda and fake narratives," BJP president J P Nadda tweeted.

## Criminal with ₹1 lakh bounty shot dead in UP



On Tuesday, information was received that Zaved was coming in a car near Gol Tubewell at Binali-Meerut Road between 10 pm to 11 pm, a senior police officer said

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MEERUT, 3 FEBRUARY

A criminal involved in multiple cases of loot and murder, carrying a bounty of more than rupees 1 lakh on his head, was shot dead in an encounter in Baghpat district of Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, said police. Cops said his aide managed to escape during the operation.

The accused was identified as Zaved alias Rashid (38), a resident of Ghaziabad.

A team of Delhi Police Special Cell was in Baraut. According to Baghpat police, the encounter was done by a joint team of Delhi and Baraut Kotwali police at Binauli road near Mandi in Baraut town of District Baghpat late night on Tuesday.

On Tuesday, information was received that Zaved was coming in a car near Gol Tubewell at Binali-Meerut Road between 10 pm to 11 pm, a senior police officer said.

Police said a pistol, live cartridges and a motorcycle were recovered from the encounter site.

According to the station house officer of Doghat station, he and his team spotted two criminals while patrolling on Saturday morning and asked them to stop. Javed was wanted in 19 cases of loot, murder and extortion in different police stations of the area.

Javed was also wanted in 19 criminal cases including that of murder and loot in Delhi and NCR, police said.

A pistol, cartridges and a car without a number plate was recovered by the police. Javed, who was a resident of Ghaziabad, had killed constable Manish Yadav in October last year.

'PM must do his job and protect farmers'



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 3 FEBRUARY

farmers work hard for the country and should not be treated in this manner.

"My constant request to the prime minister is 'do your job'. Your job is not to sell this country to one percent of the population. Your job is to protect the farmers who are standing outside (Delhi). Go hold their hand, give them a hug and tell them 'what is it that I can do for you,'" the former Congress chief said.

"So the PM has basically given up, he is now on a different plane...we are going somewhere else now and the country is not being run. It is my request to the prime minister that please gather up your courage and run the country," he said.

Gandhi said the prime minister's offer of postponing the implementation of the laws does not mean anything as the laws should be done away with once and for all.

"...Why is the government not resolving this problem? It is not good for the peace and harmony of our country. It is not good for the future of our 'kisans' (farmers)," he said.

Asked about the events that took place at the Red Fort on the Republic Day, he said the Home Minister Amit Shah needs to explain how the people entered the monument.

Gandhi alleged that the government is unable to control the situation and its "incompetence is now coming to the fore".

"They have messed up the economy, they have messed up the harmony, they have messed up the defence and they want to keep distracting India with non-events. I am saying that the country is in a dangerous position," he alleged.

## JAGATJIT INDUSTRIES LTD.

Corporate Identity Number: L15520PB194PLC001970  
Registered Office: Jagatjit Nagar,  
District Kapurthala - 144 802, Punjab  
Corporate Office: 4th Floor, Bhandari House,  
91, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019  
Telephone: (0181) 2783112, Fax: (0181) 2783118,  
Email: jil@jagatjit.com, Website: www.jagatjit.com

### NOTICE

Pursuant to the provisions of Regulation 47 read with Regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, notice is hereby given that a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, 10th February, 2021 at New Delhi, to inter alia consider and approve the unaudited Standalone and Consolidated Financial Results for the quarter and period ended on 31st December, 2020.

Further, in accordance to the Regulation 46 of LODR, details of the aforesaid meeting are available on website of the Company i.e. www.jagatjit.com and also on website of Stock Exchange i.e. www.bseindia.com for JAGATJIT INDUSTRIES LTD.

Sd/-

Roopesh Kumar  
(Company Secretary)

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one person namely **Sunil Kumar Verma alias Chilly** S/o Lt. Sh. Sham Lal Verma R/o E-61, Sector 55, Noida, U.P. has been missing/kidnapped since 01.10.2014 from area of P.S. Prasad Nagar, New Delhi. In this regard a case FIR No. 626/14 u/s 365 IPC has been registered at P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi. The description of the missing/kidnapped person as on 01.10.2014 is as under: Age: About 47 years (now about 53 years), Height: 5'5", Face: Round, Complexion: Fair, Built: Strong, ID Mark: Old stitches mark on ear, Wearing: Blue T-shirt with white stripes, blue jeans and grey leather shoes. A reward of Rs. 1,00,000/- is declared for providing clue about the missing person. Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-mail Id - [cib@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cib@cbi.gov.in)  
Phone: 011-24368638, 24368641  
Fax No. 011-24368639 Crime Branch, Sector 16 Rohini, New Delhi, Mob. 981288287, Ph.: 011-27892844.

## PERFORMING ART



NCC cadets perform during an award presentation ceremony, in Lucknow on Wednesday. ■ IANS

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, 3 FEBRUARY

Andhra Pradesh State Election Commissioner (SEC) N Ramesh Kumar today launched a special app for the voters to report grievances even as the state government moved High Court against the move citing malafide intentions.

The ruling YSRCP has been opposing the app e-Watch even before it was launched and the state government has raised safety

issues, pointing out that the SEC could have used available government app such as Nigra or C-Vigil of Election Commission of India. However, the SEC has brushed aside these concerns. According to the commission the app and its dashboard development was completely in house. It was very user friendly and anybody from anywhere can lodge complaints for the upcoming Panchayat vote. Available both on the web and mobile phone it would

launched by SEC but court is yet to hear the matter. YSRCP also wrote to the SEC raising their objections against the app and accused it of taking biased decisions to misguide the people. It said the SEC was resorting to clandestine means by developing an election surveillance app without following proper regulations. It questioned the use of private servers and pointed out any data breach would lead to grave violation of citizen rights. Meanwhile

YSRCP spokesperson Ambati Rambabu alleged the app was developed in TDP office. In the past the ruling party has accused Ramesh Kumar of being biased towards TDP as he was appointed by the previous regime. President to visit Karnataka, Andhra: President Ram Nath Kovind will visit Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh from 4 to 7 February, according to an official communiqué issued on Wednesday.

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issues, pointing out that the SEC could have used available government app such as Nigra or C-Vigil of Election Commission of India. However, the SEC has brushed aside these concerns. According to the commission the app and its dashboard development was completely in house. It was very user friendly and anybody from anywhere can lodge complaints for the upcoming Panch

## Indian interest

“France’s state-led dirigiste (interventionist) development strategy, with its focus on fostering big national champion engineering firms, left it well placed to succeed in highly regulated sectors such as infrastructure, energy, and defence in countries such as India, where state support and centralized investment decisions still play an outsized role in economic development. And India is an ideal low-cost base from which to export to the rest of the emerging Indo-Pacific, as the region is understood by both India and France.” The above intervention by foreign policy expert and scholar at the Centre for Independent Studies in Sydney Salvatore Babones, ought to get the Indian establishment thinking. Facing a Democratic Administration under US President Joe Biden which has already started making noises on China, Pakistan, security, terrorism, liberal values, human rights, and identity politics which are at variance from New Delhi’s perception of these issues, India needs all the leverage it can get in terms of its relationships with the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council sans China. While it is fashionable nowadays to assert that the global balance of power is shifting, and there certainly is a lot of flux, there’s no getting around the fact that the P-5 still dominate the global high table. So, with Beijing making no secret of its ambition to supplant the USA as the foremost global power in which effort it sees India as a relatively minor irritant, Moscow now increasingly transactional in its approach towards India, and the United Kingdom focussed almost exclusively on striking trade deals with all-comers post-Brexit to prevent economic ruin, Paris beckons. For Washington, many argue, the Indo-Pacific is but an extension of the Pacific Ocean area patrolled by its Japan-based 7th Fleet; for its allies Japan and Australia, too, the Pacific comes first. But for France, the Indo-Pacific begins east of Africa and continues to the Western American seaboard, mirroring India’s understanding of geography. “While the USA and its Quadrilateral Security Dialogue partners Australia and Japan see Indo-Pacific strategy as a way to draw India into their geopolitical standoff with China, France has taken the term at face value and put India at its centre,” writes Babones. France’s Indo-Pacific strategy document emphasizes the country’s role as a “mediating, inclusive and stabilising power” in the region. There is an element of discomfort among some in the region given France’s colonial past, but it is not a deal-breaker. Paris too has gone out of its way to assuage such concerns – successfully, as its elevation last month to full-member status of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (with India’s strong backing) showed. President Emmanuel Macron has spoken passionately in public of answering the “call of history” to fulfil France’s Indo-Pacific “destiny.” But it’s not just about French flair with words. France has 8,000 troops in the region and a highly capable nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to back them up. The only rule in contemporary geopolitics is that there are no rules when it comes to protecting and promoting the national interest. As things stand, New Delhi might do well to consider a pivot from Washington towards Paris in the Indo-Pacific.

## Trump's legal team

Donald Trump is going through a rough patch in the courts and ahead of the impeachment proceedings. The boat has been rocked even before the trial starts. His defence team has collapsed. Remarkably enough, within 24 hours he has named two new lawyers for the impeachment trial. Trump’s office has announced that David Schoen and Bruce L. Castor, Jr. will now head the legal team for his second impeachment trial. One major point of friction with his previous team was that the former President wanted the attorneys to focus on his election fraud claims rather than the constitutionality of convicting a former President. In the net, the impeachment defence team left less than two weeks before the trial. Trump has struggled to find lawyers willing to take his case as he refuses to budge from his false claims. His advisers have been talking to him about his legal strategy and he keeps bringing up election fraud for his defence. They have repeatedly tried to steer him away from that. It is rather unusual for the client to be so unmindful of counsel. Yet so it has been in the United States. The parting of ways with the previous team has been described as a “mutual decision”, which underscored a difference of opinion on the direction of the case. The development renders the defence strategy still more uncertain as the former President gears up to face charges that he incited the insurrection at the Capitol on 6 January. However, all but five Senate Republicans have this week voted in favour of an effort to dismiss the trial even before it starts. Greg Harris and Johnny Gasser, two former federal prosecutors from South Carolina, have left the team. Butch Bowers and Deborah Barbier resigned because Trump wanted them to use election fraud as a defence. The former President has been straining his nerves to find attorneys who are willing to defend him after becoming the first President in American history to be impeached twice. He is scheduled to stand trial in the week beginning 8 February on a charge that he incited his supporters to vandalise Congress before Joe Biden’s inauguration as President. This was quite distinctly an attempt to disrupt the peaceful transition of power. Numerous attorneys, who had defended him previously, declined to take on the case. Bowers, said to be a familiar figure in Republican legal circles, has years of experience representing elected officials and political candidates including the Governor of South Carolina, Mark Sanford, against a failed impeachment effort that became a probe into matters ethical. The parting of the ways with the previous team of lawyers hasn’t really strengthened Trump’s defences. He will have to rethink his strategy if he is to succeed in thwarting his prosecutors from ensuring he becomes ineligible for public office.

# Culture of Inveracity

The understanding of the fine difference between the government and the country is key. India needs to develop its own credibility of media (especially Social Media) so that more civilized, decorous, and transformative discussions can take place



The Washington Post Fact checker team catalogued a sum of 30,573 false or misleading statements attributed to Donald Trump himself, whilst in office as the President of United States of America. A staggering 21.9 untruths daily!

The desperation had peaked on the last day before voting i.e. 2 November, when he is said to have made 503 untruths in a single day, all to swing elections. Such damning statistics from independent media (often derided as ‘fake news’) and watchdog agencies were up and running from day one of the Trump tenure, owing to the constitutionally protected right to express views, without fear of persecution from the government.

Despite Trump’s bare-knuckled attempts to intimidate and stifle uncomfortable facts with sham aspersions like ‘the enemy of the American people’ – portions of the press, citizenry and constitutional institutions refused to compromise or get enthralled by Trumpism and kept invoking the First Amendment. Nothing exemplifies the size-of-fight inherent in a democracy struggling with untruths from its highest offices more than the fact that despite an active and organised opposition, armed with facts and figures, Trump did garner 74.2 million votes or 46.9 per cent as opposed to the winning 51.3 per cent for Joe Biden. It was touch-and-go. The unbelievable power of 21.9 average daily untruths, almost lost the day for a country with 99 per cent literacy rate and a GDP per capita that is 34 times that of India!

Similarly, democracies like India are predicated on the principle of rule of the people, by the people. Herein too, the access and quality of information and informed citizenry is a pivotal pillar of effective functioning. The hallmark of the Indian civilisational truth is what the Nobel laureate, Dr Amartya Sen, aptly called ‘The Argumentative Indian’ – one who traditionally sought pluralistic, contrarian and

unfiltered debate, as an existential necessity, much before the formal conceptualization of ‘democracy’. However today that embedded instinct demands an enabling environment that affords multiplicity of sources to table the relevant and necessary facts and opinions, that are beyond manipulation or control. The marketplace of ideas is essential to nuance, develop, compromise and even align understanding into making the citizenry take more informed choices and reasoned opinions – as that allows the activism and dynamism to question various governance or judicial decisions. The spirit of much-needed transparency was inherent in the transformative Right to Information Act, empowering citizenry to seek clarifications and demand accountability.

Comparisons of Indian democracy with the United States are perhaps unfair as India has a considerably lower literacy rate and socio-economic evolution as that of the United States, and the problem is further magnified by a restless mass that is four times that of the US. Even India’s constitutional lifespan is less than a third of the United States, though the framers of the Indian Constitution drafted a truly visionary content, given the backdrop and political temptations, that may have existed then. The Indian Constitution is an exemplar of democratic thought which is far more progressive and enabling towards even more modernist reforms – only if it is allowed to be so, as envisaged.

However, there is a topical air of revisionism and nativism that seeks to exploit the democracy’s holiest grail i.e. popular mandate, towards majoritarianism that can undo the fundamental spirit of ‘unity in diversity’

and instead drive, singularity. Such winds naturally disdain contrarian opinion (e.g. recklessly casting labels like ‘anti-national’), abhor transparency (e.g. diminishing provisions of acts like RTI), and even ‘normalise’ implicit threats and violence in casual conversations, all towards compromising factual information for citizenry to make preferences on the basis of manufactured perceptions, and not reality. This militates against the Prime Minister’s thoughtful reassurance that the Indian Constitution is the government’s only ‘holy book’.

Such a denialist and vitiated environment opens space for building ‘new normals’ which can be shaped by those who have the ‘monopoly on truth’ (read, dominating leverage over media). Anyone interfering with that ‘monopoly’ can then be subjected to a barrage of counter tactics – immediate and open attack by so-called ‘fringe’, unrelated coercive means on individuals/institutions, and unwarranted contextualisation that may not suggest a position overtly, but certainly builds a monopoly-friendly narrative, surreptitiously and eventually. All these does not require direct statements from the leadership of the ‘monopoly’ forces who can instead offer invaluable narrative-building support through telling silences, downplaying, deflections, ‘selectivism’ and even mealy-mouthed denials, after not having said anything controversial personally. But the charade goes on, the picture is painted, nonetheless. The contrast of dialed-up outrage when an element of the monopoly-challenger force does indeed make wrong statements (immediately attributing that wrong to the entire monopoly-challenger move-

ment), as opposed to the convenient attribution to a ‘fringe’ when such a wrong emanates from a monoply-friendly mass, is all pervasive.

Democracy triumphs only if facts pertaining to situations are readily available and factually verifiable (by unpartisan sources) – neither of which is reflective of the environment in India, today. The Press Freedom Index ranks the world’s largest democracy i.e. India, at an embarrassing 142 (down from 80 in 2002) – putting it below Nepal, Afghanistan, Myanmar etc. With the double-edged and vulnerable platform of ‘Social Media’ emerging as the most used and convincing source of ‘information’ for over 375 million users in India ~ those with the ‘monopoly on truth’ have an added advantage to muscle their extraordinary resources and potential untruths towards partisan advantage. This disadvantage gets magnified as the monopoly-opponents have to ‘slip’ just once, directly or through one of their affiliates (who could also be planted) for that ‘slip’ to be amplified, looped and dramatised to absurd levels of suggestiveness, all very convincingly. Social Media is flooded with divisive and violent opinions (normalising causal statements like ‘these guys should be shot’) – all without any credible factcheck or veracity. For a democracy that suffered the shame of Emergency, talks about ‘too much democracy’ are unbelievably omnipresent. Opinions coming from governmental sources, however senior they may be in the official hierarchy, is still partisan – the lesson from the United States was that the citizenry called out the lies of the highest constitutional office of the land, without fear of retribution or getting cast as ‘anti-nationals’. The understanding of the fine difference between the government and the country was key. India needs to develop its own credibility of media (especially Social Media) so that more civilized, decorous, and transformative discussions can take place.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

**Save the wetlands**

That is what makes World Wetlands Day an important occasion. As the most essential sources of water, wetland ecosystems are the key to the existence of humans, animals and biodiversity. Apart from having a special place in the aquatic ecosystem, wetlands are an antidote to industrialisation as they help in maintaining temperature and fighting climate change. However, wetlands across the world are in danger of extinction. Almost 90 percent of the world’s wetlands have disappeared since the 1700s, and those that remain are disappearing three times faster than forests.

Since the depletion of global wetlands has mostly to do with human activity, there is no other way than for humans to change their ways to save the wetlands.

As the world braces itself for future wars over water, the best time to spring into action to conserve the last of the wetlands is now. As per a recent census, Nepal has seen depletion in the number of aquatic birds due to the degradation of wetlands. Of the over 150 kinds of the migratory birds that visit Nepal each year, over 100 are aquatic birds that make the country’s wetlands their home.

This is also why we must put a check on human activities that are detrimental to the existence of wetlands, including urban expansion and pollution.

Nepal signed the Ramsar Convention in 1987, and has committed itself to protecting its wetlands that cover

**THE KATHMANDU POST**

nearly 5.5 percent of the country’s total land area, including the 10 wetlands of international significance. However, in Nepal, rapid urbanisation and expansion of tourist activities have led to encroachment and eventual depletion of wetlands over the years. A case in point is the ever-growing encroachment of the Phewa Lake, a major Ramsar site in Pokhara, with hundreds of new concrete structures coming up each year even as government agencies neglect their duty to preserve the area.

Nepal must deliver on its policies and strategies that seek to streamline the conservation of Ramsar sites in Nepal by effectively engaging federal, provincial and local stakeholders. It must also create awareness among the people about the social, cultural, ecological and economic imperatives of wetland conservation.

**IN MEMORIAM**

**BANERJI AMARNATH** — Solicitor, High Court, Calcutta. In loving memory of our beloved father of ‘Indralaya’, Gangatikuri, Burdwan, who left us this day in 1988. — Prince and Twarita.

**CHATTERJEE MAKHAN and RENU** — In loving memory of our parents. — Daughters Sikha, Tapati, Leena; sons-in-law Deboprasad, Soumitra, Abhijit; grandchildren Chayan, Mayukh, Shayontani, Abhimanyu.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Reflections on Swamiji & Netaji

SIR, This refers to the brilliant article “A modern saint”

his life in very much quiet atmosphere. He sat quiet

who sought salvation through meditation and



(31 January) by Sankar Sen. I want to mention that Swamiji was a great patriot and a spiritual guru in the life of Netaji who was influenced by his religious teachings and his unbounded love for his country and countrymen. Though he was a political leader for his revolutionary struggle for independence for his country he expressed his hate and anguish against the nature of politics of the congress party. Sometimes he behaved mysteriously like a sannyasi and it was not understood whether he was a sannyasi or a political leader. After his release from prison he spent

alone in his room. He did not meet anybody even with his family members. He kept himself busy with religious rites for hours. Many days his food was only milk and fruit juice. Sitting on the tiger’s skin he read out *Gita*, *Chandi* and other religious books and passed his time in deep meditation for hours with a portrait of Swamiji. At that time everyone who came near him was amazed to see the new outlook of this great hero. He felt that only sannyasis could free the country from the bondage of servitude what the writer said about Swamiji that “Many of his brother monks

penance were against this idea of social service, but Vivekananda could convince them that duty was to serve others as the visible manifestation of god”. Netaji also wanted to arouse the nation from the vicious grip of lethargy and superstition with the ideals of Swamiji. Swamiji wanted brave and bold men who had vigour in their blood, strength in their nerves, iron muscles and nerves of steel. Netaji also wanted to organise the youth of the country who have vigour in the blood, strength in the nerves for awakening national life. So his slogan for winning inde-

pendence was “Give me blood, I will give you freedom.”

Yours, etc., Dilip Kr Dutta, Midnapore, 2 February.

### HEALTHCARE BUDGET

**SIR**, As expected, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gave special consideration to the health sector while presenting the budget of FY 2021-22 in this phase of struggle with the Corona epidemic. Healthcare budget has been increased manifold from Rs 94,000 crore to Rs 2.46 lakh crore. However, it remains to be clear how and what items this huge budget amount will be spent. At a time when farmers are agitating against agrarian reform, it was necessary to pay attention to the agriculture sector. But it is not that farmers have been given that. There was also talk of increasing the money received in the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme, but this did not happen. Presently eleven and a half crore farmers are taking advantage of this scheme. However, several steps have been taken to strengthen the agriculture sector and to increase the income of farmers. To strengthen the MSP, a provision has been made to help the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund, for which agricultural infrastructure cess was

### OXFARM REPORT

**SIR**, The report released by Oxfarm makes some telltale revelations. The report says that India’s 100 top billionaires increased their wealth by nearly Rs 13 lakh crore during the pandemic, which is enough to give Rs 1 lakh to each of 130 million of India’s poorest. About 75 per cent of 122 million who lost their jobs are in the informal sector, which is home to the weakest and poorest among workers. The unequal impact of the pandemic has also been seen in other sectors like education, healthcare, access to public facilities and social life. Everything in the world of the poorest people and families has shrunk, and the biggest challenge for the world is to lift them up to the pre-pandemic levels at the earliest, and to reduce the glaring inequalities. Growing inequalities will fuel greater strife and unrest, with severe consequences. We expected that through the Union Budget the government will take up economic policies which will focus on reducing disparities and on better and fairer distribution of wealth and income. But there are no indicators that the government is keen on imperatives like sustainable development and social security. Actually the solution to the problem will also have to go beyond fiscal and financial measures. The Union Budget have miserably failed to make a beginning in that respect.

Yours, etc., Shovonlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 2 February. levied on some items. The scheme of interest rebate on farmers loans up to Rs 1.5 lakh has been extended for one year. In the midst of the unusual challenges that this budget has come up with, it is natural that the government has bypassed the traditional budget norms and norms for some time. As a result, despite forecasting a fiscal deficit of 9.5 per cent in 2021, bringing it down to the earliest was more important to speed up the pace of development by increasing government spending. The goal of reducing the fiscal deficit in a phased manner has been set to bring it down to four per cent by the year 2025-26 and at present the emphasis is on creating assets and generating employment through infrastructure projects. Also to raise additional resources, the government has expressed its intention to promote disinvestment.

Yours, etc., Abhijit Roy, Jamshedpur, 2 February.

SPECIAL TO ANN

**F**rom leadership to China, the economy, Covid-19 and press freedom, Myanmar is in a tight spot on many fronts. We examine some of these.

NLD's relations with the military: Most of Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian ministerial appointees were political prisoners during the long decades of military rule. But they remained "activist" by nature and proved to be "ineffective" administrators - fuelling rumours throughout the past few years of an eventual coup. The NLD team's performance was always compared that of its predecessor Gen Thein Sein who began the democratization and liberalization process which led to the 2015 national elections won by the National League for Democracy.

Following the 2 November 2020 election, the military-backed USDP party and the military started to criticise the election process and claimed that massive fraud had taken place in NLD's second landslide win. The call for investigation was rejected by both the Election Commission and the government.

On January 31, the military press team issued a release citing over 10 million instances of vote fraud and requested the Election Commission to release a comprehensive election roll call, a request that was quickly again rejected by the government and the commission. There is no love lost between the military and NLD politicians most of whom are now under house arrest.

**Peace Talks:** Uniting different ethnic factions - especially armed groups - was Aung San Suu Kyi's flagship policy. But it progressed at a snail's pace and had stalled over the past few years. All was not going well and the increase in activities by insurgency groups such as the Arakan Army fueled further conflicts from eastern to western borders. But Suu Kyi appeared to have thrown all her energy into making it work. She was truly her "father's daughter". But many critics said the effort was a strategic mistake, suggesting that the economy should have been the priority as a prelude to bringing about peace among the different factions.

It's difficult to say anything about the future of peace talks. The ethnic groups probably preferred to negotiate with the civilian government rather than the military hardliners but the latter was always going to have the final say. As of now, the coup has been condemned by large ethnic groups with armed factions such as the Karen National Union.

**Rohingya:** This is one of the few issues on which Aung San Suu Kyi saw completely eye-to-eye with the military. But her personal defense of Myanmar's back-to-the-wall Rohingya policy isolated the State Counsellor from the world completely. She might have gone to the World Criminal Court in the Hague but never once did she visit Rakhine State. The repatriation of millions of displaced person - not only those in

# The many challenges before Myanmar

Bangladesh but within Rakhine State itself - will keep pressure on Myanmar politically, economically and socially. The military is unlikely to give way as it has always used this as a populist tool for domestic support.

**Covid-19:** Myanmar's poor public health system meant that infections were going to run away. The number of cases now stand at 140,354 with 3,318 deaths. Of these 125,324 had recovered. Dr Thet Khine Win, a Secretary of the Ministry of Health, has been appointed as Minister of Health and Sports, signaling a continuation of the Covid containment strategy under the new military government. Vaccines just began to arrive in Myanmar last week through the Covishield programme from India. A concerted vaccination effort has not yet taken off. Overall, Myanmar is dealing with a reduction in the second wave of Covid infections. The economy has been badly hit by Covid-19. GDP growth has been stagnant over the past year, but poverty has increased in the country.

**Economy:** This was the NLD led government's Achilles Heel in the past four years as the economy played second fiddle to ethnic peace efforts. Sentiment was further dampened by the Rohingya exodus crisis and a sharp drop in tourism in 2019 while in 2020, the business was further hit by Covid-19. But the welfare of those at the grassroots has not seen much improvement and Covid-19 pushed many into poverty.

Some political pundits have suggested that NLD would have lost more seats in the November 2020 elections if it hadn't played the "return to military rule" card in an effort to woo voters. The economy grew at about 6 per cent in 2019, somewhat below expectations of an investment hungry nation.



China: Relations with China during the past four years heightened with Myanmar's isolation because of the Rohingya crisis. Aung San Suu Kyi was drawn into China's orbit alongside the military. China continues to tread with the policy of non-interference. Along with Russia, China looks to continue to defend Myanmar at the UN Security Council.

**Leadership:** Aung San Suu Kyi's leadership reference was always made against that of her predecessor and former president Thein Sein who was credited with Myanmar's opening up on political and economic fronts. She was not seen as a competent leader but more as a popular icon.

Myanmar's long years of education collapse meant that the inexperienced civilian ministers and inefficient bureaucracy could not advance Thein Sein's achievements. Senior General Min Aung Hlaing now controls the executive, military, and judiciary. His ambition to become the president is well noted and he could run in the next election which the military appears to

aim for in a year.

Min Aung Hlaing's style of governance is still not quite clear, but it looks as though he aims to improve the economy and get Covid under control, according to his initial statements. His quickly-announced cabinet include 11 new members. Many of them are former ministers of the USDP government under Thein Sein or former military officials.

**China:** Relations with China during the past four years heightened with Myanmar's isolation because of the Rohingya crisis. Aung San Suu Kyi was drawn into China's orbit alongside the military. China continues to tread with the policy of non-interference. Along with Russia, China looks to continue to defend Myanmar at the UN Security Council.

China does not want to see Myanmar plunged into political instability and chaos especially at its borders as many projects are now being negotiated under the Belt and Road Initiative. Myanmar is important to China's strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and to future development of the Yunnan Province as well as energy supply from the Bay of Bengal.

The US has indicated the looming threat of sanctions. On paper, Singapore accounts for highest percentage of FDI to Myanmar, but a lot of the investors are American companies investing through Singapore. With sanctions, Myanmar could become more dependent on China. American sanctions are thus seen as bad for Myanmar and could prove to be counterproductive.

**World:** The arrests of Ang San Suu Kyi and senior NLD members is a watershed moment in Myanmar's relations with the world. She herself is unpopular with other world leaders because of her stance on the Rohingya and was seen as an ineffective, stubborn and self-serving leader. But many will also feel disappointment as Myanmar steps back from democracy - having come so far - to another possible long military-rule era. The military will propel economic management to the forefront as they have more capable people than Suu Kyi in this area. The military may reach out to the US to try and avoid sanctions. Even if they show progress, it will be not easy. The Rohingya crisis will be pivotal.

and start-ups who are doing what they can to amalgamate solar charging with EV technology. Such efforts are appreciated and need recognition. But what they also need are support from government policies and regulations that incentivize EV manufacturing, keeping solar charging in full view.

The manual charging of an EV is a key roadblock to its adoption. With suitable solar charging integration, which can be possible only with suitable EV manufacturing policy, we can have a much more user-friendly and eco-friendly vehicle. The government can begin this transition by ensuring that the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy plays a much bigger role in EV implementation in India. The Ministry's focus should shift from merely energy efficiency to a complete transition to sustainable transportation.

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

NO 28815

## A confused EV policy

GOVIND SINGH AND ARMIN ROSENCRANZ

**T**he Electric Vehicles (EV) segment is trying to make a dent in the automobile industry. The EV market in India has grown steadily in the last three years. In 2018, a key notification issued by the Ministry of Power clarified that electric charging of EVs does not fall under the provision of the Electricity Act 2003. What this meant was that setting up charging infrastructure for EVs was kept free from licensing. The notification clarified that charging of EV batteries is not the same as "transmission, distribution and trading of electricity which require license under the provisions of the (Electricity) Act."

However a year later, in February 2019, a Gazette notification issued under the Central Electricity Authority clarified the difference between a "charging point" and a "charging sta-

tion". The former was for charging private EVs and the latter for commercial use or public use. In the same month, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs released its Model Building Bye-Laws Amendments for accommodating EV charging infrastructure.

In October 2019, the Ministry of Power - through another notification - continued to maintain that "setting up of Public Charging Stations (PCS) shall be a de-licensed activity." While the notification began with the objective of "enabling faster adoption of EVs," it initiated the shift towards tariffs.

In June 2020, the Ministry of Power introduced amendments in its revised guidelines. With these amendments, the tariff for supplying electricity to EV PCs became applicable under Section 3 (Tariff Policy) of the Electricity Act, 2003. The revised guidelines further warranted that the tariff would not be more than the

average cost of supply plus 15 per cent, unless otherwise specified by the Tariff Policy.

With these tariff-filled regulatory notifications, electric vehicles in India have now entered the transport market. The EV segment will, in fact, remain alive in the twists and turns of these government-issued guidelines, amendments and notifications. The automobile sector has been watching closely. All leading automobile manufacturers are trying to put at least one electric-powered car in the market.

But there is something missing in this recent growth story of the EV segment. The initial push for EV a decade ago was backed by the idea of decentralized solar charging stations. The words EV and solar charging were often used together. The recent push for EV seems entirely focused on conventional fossil-fuel electricity. This is concerning since three-fourth of India's energy continues to be gener-

ated by burning fossil fuels, big dams and nuclear fission. Less than 25 per cent of the power in India is generated using renewable energy sources. And there are no mechanisms to ensure that it is this renewable energy that will power EVs.

This puts a big question mark on the perceived environmental benefits of EVs. EVs will lead to an increase in the use of fossil fuels in coming years. Less polluted cities may come at the cost of additional mining, spoiled forests and degraded countryside. One can argue that we can let the existing system continue and then work to shift away from conventional electricity to renewable energy sources to power the EVs. It has not been easy to shift away from the oil economy. It will similarly not be easy to shift from using conventional electricity-powered EVs to solar charging ones after the former dominates the market.

Government notifications have been silent on including solar charging in EVs. There are private players

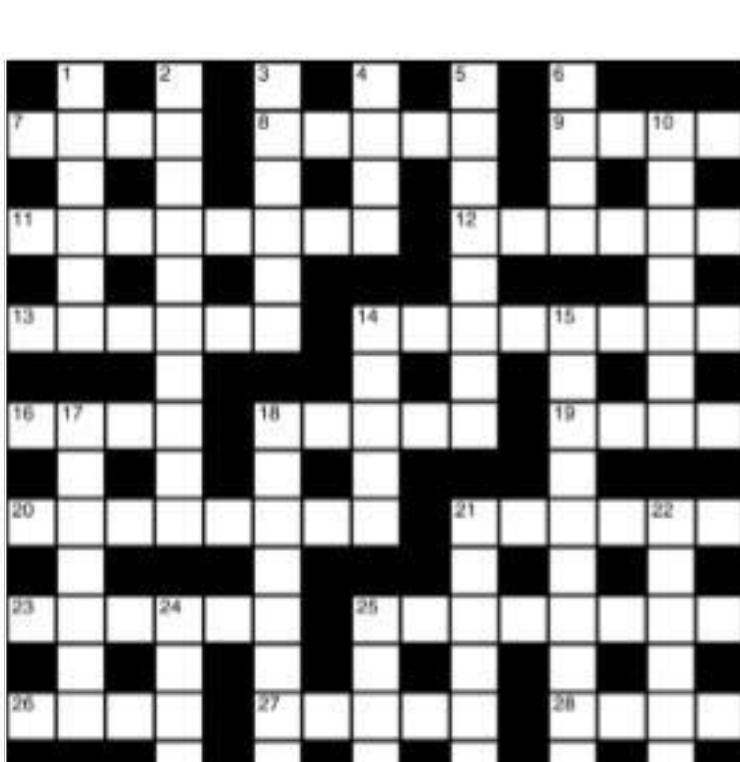
and start-ups who are doing what they can to amalgamate solar charging with EV technology. Such efforts are appreciated and need recognition. But what they also need are support from government policies and regulations that incentivize EV manufacturing, keeping solar charging in full view.

The manual charging of an EV is a key roadblock to its adoption. With suitable solar charging integration, which can be possible only with suitable EV manufacturing policy, we can have a much more user-friendly and eco-friendly vehicle. The government can begin this transition by ensuring that the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy plays a much bigger role in EV implementation in India. The Ministry's focus should shift from merely energy efficiency to a complete transition to sustainable transportation.

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NO 28815

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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100 YEARS AGO

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

A curious fact has emerged from the police reports regarding drunkenness during the Christmas and New Year holidays in Scotland. The number of arrests for breaches of the peace has been relatively small compared with the arrests of persons charged with being drunk and incapable. The result is not due to any change in the situation regarding the sale of liquor. The net result of the recent vote under the Temperance Act in Scotland is that altogether 329 public houses will be closed, but this will not come into operation for several months. The explanation which has been given for the absence of disorderliness along with drunkenness is that the people have been taking to the drinking of American spirits. Alcohol of a kind which is being imported from America has a very sudden and drastic effect. The characteristic feature of its effects on the drinker is his sudden and complete collapse into a condition of helplessness. There is practically no transition stage of excitement or violence. One result is that persons who have not been regarded hitherto as habitual inebriates suddenly become "drunk and incapable" without any warning, and have required the services of the police. There may be no improvement from the moral point of view, but the effect has been to make the streets quieter, or at least less noisy.

### NEWS ITEMS

#### THE TYPHUS EPIDEMIC IN POLAND

The Government of India have received through the Secretary of State an urgent appeal from the committee appointed by the Assembly of the League of Nations, asking for a contribution from India in the most generous manner possible, towards the estimated cost (pound 2,000,000) of the scheme for assisting Poland to deal with the typhus epidemic. The Council of the League of Nations consider that every country in the world is concerned in the scheme, either for reasons of geographical propinquity or trade interests, or on broad humanitarian grounds. The distress in Poland is, however, very severe and there are no doubt many charitably disposed persons in India, European and Indian, who would be glad to assist the people of Poland in their suffering.

#### INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS

A discussion on the subject of earth movements as recorded by seismographs was opened with an interesting address by Dr. S.K. Banerji, Professor of Applied Mathematics in the Calcutta University. After mentioning the various types of seismographs and the difficulties in interpreting their records introduced by instrumental complications Professor Banerji gave an account of the physical theory of the propagation of earthquake waves. Three types of wave propagation are recognised, namely, the compressional waves and the distortion waves which pass through the body of the earth, and the surface waves which travel over the superficial crust, in each case with a different velocity. The reflections which occur when these waves meet at the curved surface of the earth also introduce complications.

#### CHIEF SCOUT AT A DELHI RALLY

There was a large gathering in the grounds of the Government High School at Delhi this afternoon on the occasion of a boy scouts' rally and display. The grounds were nicely arranged and excellent arrangements were made for the spectators who came to witness the various items on a capital programme. The object of the rally was to introduce to the scouts their Chief Scout, General Sir Robert Baden Powell and the Chief Guide, Lady Baden Powell, who arrived shortly after half-past four. After the Chief Scout had inspected the lads a well executed march past took place, followed by the salute for the flag the band playing the National Anthem. The trail past followed, and then a squad of scouts came forward and sang Indian songs.

#### DECONTROL OF COAL

In view of the increased output and slackened home demand, and the fact that the export prices are now approximately the same as home prices the Government have decided to decontrol coal as from March 1 all restrictions with regard to pit-head prices and distribution in the United Kingdom will be abolished. The position is unchanged with regard to foreign bunker exports, which are freely allowed, subject to one slight restriction. This decontrolling is obviously a step giving effect to the Government's declared policy of releasing the industry from bureaucratic control as soon as possible. The control was originally imposed to guard against shortage of inland supplies in consequence of the very high export prices. Experts are uncertain as to the effects of this decontrolling.

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



India is well on the way to breaking into new frontiers and exporting goods such as mobile phones and other electronic goods

ANUP WADHAWAN  
COMMERCE SECRETARY, GOVT OF INDIA

## THUMBNAILS

**Sebi fines Beckons:** The Securities and Exchange Board of India on Wednesday slapped a total fine of Rs 11.8 crore on Beckons Industries Ltd and its four officials in a matter pertaining to manipulation in the issuance of global depository receipts (GDRs). Beckons issued GDRs worth \$5 million in July 2008, with the objective of establishing a subsidiary in the UAE. An investigation by Sebi found that Vintage FZE was the sole subscriber to the GDRs of Beckons, and the firm had pledged the GDR proceeds as collateral against loan availed by Vintage. Beckons also failed to inform the BSE about delisting of the GDRs from the Luxembourg Stock Exchange. PTI

**RBI NBFC norms:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday unveiled the risk-based internal audit (RBA) system for select non-bank lenders and urban co-operative banks, with a view to enhance the quality and effectiveness of their internal audit system. All the deposit-taking non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and the ones with an asset size of over Rs 5,000 crore, and urban co-operative banks (UCBs) with assets of over Rs 500 crore will have to migrate to the new system, the RBI said. PTI

**LIC premium record:** LIC pension and group schemes vertical, looking after group schemes and superannuation business of the Corporation, created a record by clocking more than Rs 1 lakh crore premium income during the first 10 months of the current financial year 2020-21. This is first time ever any single vertical of the insurer has crossed such a gigantic premium income figure successively for two years, according to a Press release. SNS

**Colgate move:** Colgate-Palmolive (India) Limited has collaborated with Padma Shri awardee and internationally acclaimed sand artist from Odisha, Sudarsan Pattnaik, to create a stunning sand sculpture for Colgate Vedshakti toothpaste at Puri Beach in Odisha. The sand art aims to increase awareness about optimal oral care, said a Press release from the company. SNS

**SKF India:** SKF India has launched e-shop ~ eshop.skf.co.in ~ an online store offering products from automotive and industrial business for retail and industrial buyers. The launch is in line with SKF's commitment of expanding reach to customers across market segments while further boosting country's "Digital India" initiative, according to a Press release. SNS

**Reliance oil:** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd has sourced the world's first consignment of "carbon-neutral oil" from the US as it looks to become a net zero-carbon company by 2035. PTI

# Sensex makes history, ends above 50,000 for first time

Post-Budget euphoria continues for the third straight session amidst positive global developments

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 3 FEBRUARY

## BULL RUN

► After touching a record intra-day high of 50,526.39 points, the 30-share BSE benchmark ended at 50,255.75 points, up 458.03 points or 0.92 per cent.

► Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 142.10 points or 0.97 per cent to its fresh closing record of 14,789.95 points. It touched an all-time high of 14,868.85 points during the day.

► "Domestic equities con-



tinued to remain in the grip of bulls and broader indices made fresh record highs today," said Binod Modi, head strategy at Reliance Securities.

Tech Cement, Maruti, ITC,

measures in the Union Bud-

Kotak Bank, Asian Paints, Nestle India and TCS were among the losers, slipping up to 0.90 per cent.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 142.10 points or 0.97 per cent to its fresh closing record of 14,789.95 points. It touched an all-time high of 14,868.85 points during the day.

IndusInd Bank topped the Sensex gainers' chart, zooming 7.65 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, Dr Reddy's, Sun Pharma, NTPC and Axis Bank.

On the other hand, bold

optimism created after the announcement of bold

measures in the Union Bud-

get continued to attract investors. Favourable global cues also supported the market rally. Notably, market cap of Indian market is just fraction away from surpassing Rs 200 trillion levels, he added.

"Given sharp increase in capital expenditure along with a number of reforms to give impetus to investment activi-

ties, momentum in corporate

earnings is expected to sus-

tain in subsequent quarters.

Further, higher fiscal stimu-

lus in the US, persistent soft

monetary policy stance of

global bankers and weak dol-

lar should continue to act as key tailwinds for FPIs flows.

"In the near term, mon-

etary policy outcome will be a

key focus area for market,

which is broadly expected to

remain favourable," he noted.

Broader BSE mid-cap and

small-cap indices rallied up to

1.47 per cent.

Global markets marched

higher following renewed

hopes for the passage of the

\$1.9-trillion Covid-19 relief

Bill in the US.

In rest of Asia, bourses in

Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo

ended with gains, while Shang-

hai was in the red.

Stock exchanges in Europe

were also trading on a posi-

tive note in early deals.

Meanwhile, the global oil

benchmark Brent crude was

trading 0.36 per cent higher

at \$58.01 per barrel.

Stepping up their purchase

of domestic shares, foreign

institutional investors were net

buyers to the tune of Rs

6,181.56 crore on Tuesday,

according to exchange data.

The Indian rupee ended on

a flat note and settled 1 paisa

higher at 72.95 against the US

dollar. At the interbank forex

market, the local unit opened

at 72.96 against the greenback

and witnessed an intra-day

high of 72.92 and a low of 72.98.

The dollar index, which

gauges the greenback's

strength against a basket of six

currencies, declined 0.03 per

cent to 91.17.

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I hope that with the Biden administration...  
cooperation on the (nuclear) issue is restored

TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER MEVLUT CAVUSOGLU  
EXPRESSING HOPE THAT THE USA WILL REJOIN THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL

NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 04 FEBRUARY 2021

09

## THUMBNAILS



Left Trade Union activists during a rally in support of their demands in Kolkata on Wednesday.

■ BISWAJIT GHOSHAL

**Air station visit:** Air Marshal Amit Dev, chief of Eastern Air Command of IAF visited air force stations Kalakunda and Salua. He reviewed the operational, maintenance and administrative preparedness of the bases and emphasised on operational training, readiness and quick response to threat scenario. The chief also visited Covid facilities at 4 Air Force Hospital. SNS

**Bengal BJP's Brigade rally:** The state BJP will organise brigade rally in March after completing five ratha yatras in West Bengal during February and March. It has been learnt that prime minister Narendra Modi will address the rally. The fate of ratha yatra is uncertain as the state has asked BJP to approach local authorities in the districts concerned for permission. SNS

## Highest outlays for SWM in KMC interim budget

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 3 FEBRUARY

A vote on account budget of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) for the first two quarters in the financial year 2021-22 was placed today and according to which the highest expenditure will be made in the solid waste management department.

As the elections of the KMC are still due, a final budget could not be placed but a vote account budget was placed instead to run the civic body from April to September 2021. The budget cites an expenditure target of Rs

2149.185 crore while the civic body aims to earn revenue of Rs 2063.855 crores. The budget has a deficit of approximately Rs 85 crores.

It may be noted that the interim budget contains only

the income and expenditure required for day to day functioning of the civic body in the first six months of the financial year 2021-22. A final budget can only be placed once the KMC elections are over which will determine which party wins the board to run the civic body.

The KMC has set a revenue

target from property taxes at Rs 608 crore approximately. It also looks forward to earn Rs 63.15 crore from building plan sanction fees. On the other hand, it is also expecting to earn Rs 24.01 crore from water supply and from drainage and sewerage it is 16.045 crores.

In the budget, the highest expenditure has been allocated to the solid waste management (SWM) department which is 303.125 crore while for water supply, a sum of Rs 204.06 crore will be spent. With the pandemic outbreak last year, the civic body has this time decided to spend Rs 81.73 crores

approximately for the health department.

Meanwhile, commenting on the deficit budget, the KMC board chairman Firhad Hakim said that the civic body intends to bridge the deficit gap with property taxes which are due to be received.

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of the biggest asset additions of ER.

The ER has also received Rs 30 cr for the new line construction between Tarkeshwar-Bishnupur with extension upto Dhanikhal, Arambagh, Iphala, Iphala-Ghatal, Arambagh-Champadanga and Bishnupur-Uparosal and new material modification for Myanpur-

Kumarpukuria Birsha. The zonal railway has been allocated Rs 55 cr for construction of new lines from Rampurhat-Mandalbari via Dumka with new material modification for Rampurhat-Murari.

Apart from this, the zonal railway has received Rs 145.441 cr for construction of new lines against last year's Rs 70 cr, Rs 1028.18 crores

which is also more than the previous year.

Meanwhile the South Eastern Railway has received a gross amount of Rs 6,120 cr including Extra Budgetary Resources (EBR) for infrastructural development and ongoing projects and works against last year's allocation of Rs 5,401 cr.

## Centre allocates ₹439.51 cr for Dankuni coaching terminal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 3 FEBRUARY

Union Budget 2021-22 allowing a share for the development of Dankuni as an important transit hub has come as the main bonanza for the state this year. Apart from the Dedicated Freight Corridors (DFC), Dankuni has received

fund allocations of Rs 439.51 cr from the Centre for construction of a new coaching terminal.

The Union finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman presenting the Union Budget 2021-22, proposed new railway freight corridors. Apart from other DFC, the Budget includes a 538-km extension of the Eastern DFC

from Sonnagar to Dankuni and East-West corridor from Bhusaval to Kharagpur to Dankuni. However, the allocation of 439.51 cr by central government is being seen as a significant part of the sanctions received by the ER this year. According to sources in the Railways, the coaching terminal at Dankuni is expected to be one

of the biggest asset additions of ER.

The ER has also received Rs 30 cr for the new line construction between Tarkeshwar-Bishnupur with extension upto Dhanikhal, Arambagh, Iphala, Iphala-Ghatal, Arambagh-Champadanga and Bishnupur-Uparosal and new material modification for Myanpur-

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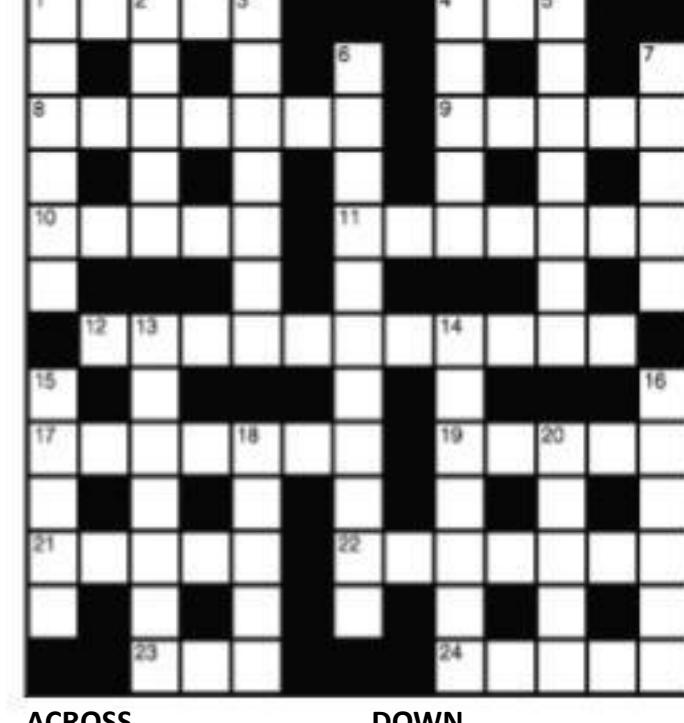
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## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



#### SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Condescend (5)	1 Infer (6)
2 Beverage (3)	2 Unintelligent (5)
8 Current of air (7)	3 Nullified (7)
9 Hearing (5)	4 Teacher (5)
10 Ridge (5)	5 Stir (7)
11 Ground (7)	6 Medical instrument (11)
12 Hawks, eagles, etc (5,2,4)	7 Side (5)
17 Produced without chemicals (7)	13 Entrance (7)
19 Give up (5)	14 Science (7)
21 Box (5)	15 Sofa (5)
22 Easily bent (7)	16 Stick (6)
23 Unhappy (3)	18 Famous (5)
24 Be of use (5)	20 Glowing coal (5)

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

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000047
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23253230

##### RAILWAY INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511 & SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

##### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 018001801407
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383338, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

##### FLIGHT INQUIRY

- AIR CANADA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181
- AIR FRANCE Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport)
- KUWAIT AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

##### SCRABBLE BRAND

22586262, 22585007

##### RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

& SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

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AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 018001801407

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383338, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

##### FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD

D I V E R S I T Y H I B R I D I C A R P A T S O R

RACK 1 = 12 RACK 2 = 10 RACK 3 = 101 RACK 4 = 19 JUDD'S TOTAL = 133

PAR SCORE 120-130 by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

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PAR SCORE 120-130 by JUDD

FOUR RACK



We know that China is engaged in a range of conduct that hurts American workers... We are in serious competition with China

US STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON NED PRICE

VOWING TO COUNTER BEIJING'S AGGRESSIVE AND COERCIVE ACTIONS

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	31	24 H
HONG KONG	20	15 CL
TOKYO	13	2 H
LONDON	10	6 H
DUBAI	24	17 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	12	7 S
NEW YORK	2	-2 H
MOSCOW	-3	-12 H

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

## THUMBNAILS



A fire near Wooroloo, northeast of Perth, Australia. An out-of-control wildfire burning northeast of the city of Perth has destroyed dozens of homes and was threatening more. #AGENCIES

**Australia allows Pfizer vaccine:** Australian regulators have decided to place no upper age limit on use of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine despite reports of dozens of deaths among the elderly in Norway. Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration said in a statement Tuesday that it received reports on January 14 of about 30 deaths in more than 40,000 elderly people vaccinated with Pfizer.

**32 killed in Uganda:** The Red Cross in Uganda says 32 bodies have been recovered from the scene of a traffic accident involving five vehicles. The crash happened Tuesday night in a remote district in the East African country's western region.

**Sailors to be released:** The sailors from a South Korean tanker seized in the Persian Gulf by Iranian troops last month are free to leave the country on humanitarian grounds, Iran's state TV said.

**Moscow court orders Kremlin foe Navalny to prison**

MOSCOW, 3 FEBRUARY

A Moscow court on Tuesday ordered Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny to prison for more than two-and-a-half years, finding that he violated the terms of his probation while recuperating in Germany from nerve-agent poisoning. The ruling ignited protests in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Navalny, who is the most prominent critic of President Vladimir Putin, had denounced the proceedings as a vain attempt by the Kremlin to scare millions of Russians into submission.

After the verdict that was announced about 8 pm, protesters converged on areas of central Moscow and gathered on St. Petersburg's main avenue, Nevsky Prospekt.

Helmeted riot police grabbed demonstrators without obvious provocation and put them in police vehicles. The Meduza website showed a video of police roughly pulling a passenger and driver out of a taxi.

The ruling came despite massive protests across Russia over the past two weekends and Western calls to free the 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner.

"We reiterate our call for the Russian government to immediately and unconditionally release Mr Navalny, as well as the hundreds of other Russian citizens wrongfully detained in recent weeks for exercising their rights, including the right to freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said after the ruling.

The protests lasted until about 1 am. About 650 people were arrested, according to OVD-Info, a group that monitors political arrests.

# WHO team visits lab at centre of speculation

the WHO team that includes experts from 10 nations has visited hospitals, research institutes and a wet market linked to many of the first cases

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WUHAN, 3 FEBRUARY

World Health Organisation investigators on Wednesday visited a research centre in the Chinese city of Wuhan that has been the subject of speculation about the origins of the coronavirus, with one member saying they'd intended to meet key staff and press them on critical issues.

The WHO team's visit to the Wuhan Institute of Virology was a highlight of their mission to gather data and search for clues as to where the virus originated and how it spread.

We're looking forward to meeting with all the key people here and asking all the important questions that need to be asked, zoologist and team member Peter Daszak said, according to footage run by Japanese broadcaster TBS.

Reporters followed the team to the high security facility, but as with past visits, there was little direct access



to team members, who have given scant details of their discussions and visits thus far. Uniformed and plainclothes security guards stood watch along the facility's gated front entrance, but there was no sign of the protective suits team members had donned Tuesday during a visit to an animal disease research center. It wasn't clear what protective gear was worn inside the institute. The team left after around three hours without speaking to waiting journalists.

Following two weeks in quarantine, the WHO team that includes experts in veterinary medicine, virology, food safety and epidemiology from 10 nations has over the past six days visited hospitals, research institutes and a traditional wet market linked to many of the first cases. Their visit followed months of negotiations as China seeks to retain tight control over information about the outbreak and the investigation into its origins, in what some have seen as an attempt to avoid blame for any missteps in its early response.

One of China's top virus research labs, the Wuhan Institute of Virology built an archive of genetic information about bat coronaviruses after the 2003 outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. That has led to unproven allegations that it may have a link to the original outbreak of Covid-19 in Wuhan in late 2019.

China has strongly denied that possibility and has promoted also unproven theories that the virus may have originated elsewhere or even been brought into the country from overseas with imports of frozen seafood tainted with the virus, a notion roundly rejected by international scientists and agencies.

The institute's deputy director is Shi Zhengli, a virologist who worked with Daszak to track down the origins of SARS that originated in China and led to the 2003 outbreak. She

has published widely in academic journals and worked to debunk theories espoused

by the former Trump administration and other American officials that the virus is either

## Over 80 held in China for smuggling fake vaccines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BEIJING, 3 FEBRUARY

provinces, among other regions. The criminal activity was scattered across multiple cities, the report said.

The suspects were profiting from the illegal manufacture and sale of the vaccines since September last year, the report added.

The accused made the counterfeit vaccines by injecting saline into pre-filled syringes, the newspaper said, adding that the "doses" were being sold for high prices.

The smugglers are believed to have smuggled the fake vaccines into Africa, although it is not known how they managed to leave the country, the report said.

a bioweapon or a lab leak from the institute.

Confirmation of the origins of the virus is likely to take years. Pinning down an outbreak's animal reservoir typically requires exhaustive research, including taking animal samples, genetic analysis and epidemiological studies. One possibility is that a wildlife poacher might have passed the virus to traders who carried it to Wuhan.

The first clusters of Covid-19 were detected in Wuhan in late 2019, eventually prompting the government to put the city of 11 million under a strict 76-day lockdown. China has since reported more than 89,000 cases and 4,600 deaths, with new cases largely concentrated in its northeast and local lockdowns and travel restrictions being imposed to contain the outbreaks.

New cases of local transmission continue to fall with just 15 reported on Wednesday as Chinese heed government calls not to travel for the Lunar New Year holiday later this month.

## Biden reverses Trump's hardline immigration policies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 3 FEBRUARY

US President Joe Biden has signed three executive orders that he said would lead to a "fair, orderly and humane" legal immigration system and also undo his predecessor Donald Trump's hardline policies that ripped children from the arms of their families.

The review of the existing policies and the subsequent recommendations coming from 60 to 180 days from various federal agencies are likely to benefit hundreds and thousands of Indian professionals in realising their dream of citizenship of the United States.

"I'm not making new law, I'm eliminating bad policy," Biden said on Tuesday at the White House, flanked by Vice President Kamala Harris and newly confirmed Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, of the stream of executive orders he has signed as President.

This is about how America's safer, stronger, more prosperous when we have a fair, orderly, and humane legal immigration system," Biden told reporters.

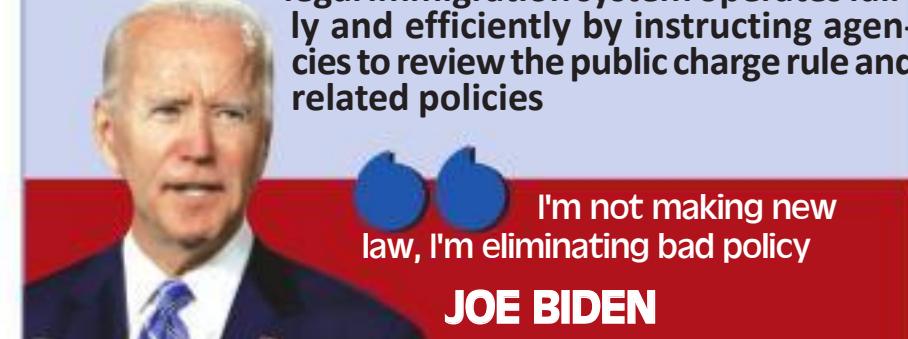
He said his executive orders are aimed to strengthen the immigration system, building on the executive actions he took on day one to protect the Dreamers, and the Muslim ban, and to better manage of the country's borders.

The federal government should develop welcoming strategies that promote integration, inclusion and citizenship, and it should embrace the full participation of the newest Americans in our democracy," he said in one of the three executive orders.

"Today we are going to

### SOFTER STANCE

- The first executive order was on creating a task force, chaired by the Secretary of Homeland Security, to reunify families
- The second executive order develops a strategy to address the root causes of migration across the borders and creates a humane asylum system,
- The third executive order promotes immigrant integration and inclusion and ensures that our legal immigration system operates fairly and efficiently by instructing agencies to review the public charge rule and related policies



work to undo the moral and national shame of the previous administration that literally, not figuratively, ripped children from the arms of their families, their mothers and fathers at the border and with no plan, reunify the children who are still in custody and their parents," he said.

The first executive order was on creating a task force, chaired by the Secretary of Homeland Security, to reunify families, which will work across governments to find parents and children separated by the prior administration.

In an attempt to deter illegal immigration, Trump's administration separated undocumented adults from children as they crossed the US-Mexico border. Under this, over 5,500 families were separated and the parents of more than 600 children still have not been located, according to US media reports.

The second executive order

develops a strategy to address the root causes of migration across the borders and creates a humane asylum system, including directing the Department of Homeland Security to take steps to end the Migrant Protection Protocols programme.

"The third executive order promotes immigrant integration and inclusion and ensures that our legal immigration system operates fairly and efficiently by instructing agencies to review the public charge rule and related policies."

Jake Sullivan said Friday

## First formal charge against Suu Kyi

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
YANGON, 3 FEBRUARY

Police levelled their first formal charge against Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi, members of her party said Wednesday, giving military authorities who staged a coup a legal reason to detain her at least through the middle of the month.

The charge that Suu Kyi was in possession of illegally imported walkie talkies came to light two days after she was placed under house arrest and appeared to merely be an effort to lend a legal veneer to her detention, though the generals have previously kept her and others locked up for years.

The charge that Suu Kyi was in possession of illegally imported walkie talkies came to light two days after she was placed under house arrest and appeared to merely be an effort to lend a legal veneer to her detention, though the generals have previously kept her and others locked up for years.

At the same time that authorities were working to keep Suu Kyi in detention, hundreds of lawmakers who

had been forced to stay at government housing after the coup were told Wednesday to leave the capital city within 24 hours and go home, said a member of Parliament from Suu Kyi's party who is among the group.

He spoke on condition of anonymity because he feared drawing the attention of the military.

Top generals announced Monday that they would take power for one year accusing Suu Kyi's government of not investigating the military's allegations of voter fraud in recent elections.

Suu Kyi's party swept that vote, and the military-backed party did poorly.

National League for Democracy spokesman Kyi Toe confirmed the charge against Suu

Kyi that carries a maximum sentence of three years in prison. He also said the country's ousted president, Win Myint, was charged with violating the natural disaster management law.

Alleged charge sheet dated February 1 indicates they can be held until February 15. Police and court officials in the capital Naypyitaw could not immediately be contacted.

The coup was a dramatic backslide for Myanmar, which had been making progress toward democracy, and highlighted the extent to which the generals have ultimately maintained control in the South-East Asian country.

The military announced Monday that it would hold power under a state of emergency for a year, and then

hand power to the winner of elections.

Meanwhile, Myanmar's new leader said the military government installed after Monday's coup plans an investigation into alleged fraud in last year's elections and will also prioritise the Covid-19 outbreak and the economy, a state newspaper reported Wednesday.

Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing announced the moves Tuesday at the first meeting of his new government in the capital, the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper said. The military had said one of its reasons for ousting the elected civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi was because it failed to properly investigate its allegations of widespread electoral irregularities.

## Biden presses Iran diplomacy as new special envoy tapped

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 3 FEBRUARY

The Biden administration says it's going to revamp and enhance diplomacy toward Iran as the US looks at restoring constraints on the country's nuclear program and reining in its regional ambitions.

As Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced the appointment of a new special envoy for Iran on Friday, President Joe Biden's national security adviser said that restoring limits on the Iranian nuclear program is a top priority and that the administration would work to build on whatever restrictions it could negotiate.

Jake Sullivan said Friday

that the administration's goal is to put Iran's nuclear program "back into a box" and then to confront other problematic Iranian activity in the Middle East.

President Donald Trump cited Iran's "malign behavior" in West Asia as one reason for withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal that Sullivan helped negotiate for the Obama administration.

"Our view is that if we can get back to diplomacy that can put Iran's nuclear program in a box, that will create a platform upon which to build a global effort," Sullivan said at an event hosted by the US Institute of Peace, with Trump's national security adviser Robert O'Brien.

"We are going to have to

address Iran's other bad behavior, malign behavior across the region, but from our perspective, a critical early priority has to be to deal with what is an escalating nuclear crisis," Sullivan said.

Iran vehemently condemned the Trump administration for withdrawing from the nuclear deal and reimposing sanctions. Tehran has reacted cautiously to signals from the Biden administration that it's willing to talk.

Earlier Friday, Blinken formally appointed former top aide to President Barack Obama, Rob Malley, to be US envoy for Iran, saying he would head a dedicated team of "clear-eyed experts with a diversity of views."

Trump trial unconstitutional, say lawyers

WASHINGTON, 3 FEBRUARY

The impeachment of Donald Trump is unconstitutional as he is no longer 'President' and should be dismissed, his lawyers said in an initial response ahead of his Senate trial.

On Tuesday, Democratic House of Representatives impeachment managers shared an 80-page trial brief laying out their case for convicting former president Trump and barring him from ever holding federal office again.

The arguments came one week before Trump's unprecedented second impeachment trial is set to begin in the Senate. Trump was impeached in the House last month on one article of inciting an insurrection on January 6.

The brief lays out the case for the conviction of Trump for incitement of insurrection against the Republic he swore to protect. It also describes the Senate's obligation to hear this case, affirming that the Constitution governs the first day of the President's term, the last day, and every moment in between.

In response, Trump's lawyers said that the impeachment trial is unconstitutional. The provisions do not apply to Trump, "since he is no longer 'President,'" his lawyers say.

"The constitutional provision requires that a person actually hold office to be impeached. Since the 45th President is no longer 'President,' the clause shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for it is impossible for the Senate to accomplish, and thus the current proceeding before the Senate is void ab initio as a legal nullity that runs patently contrary to the plain language of the Constitution."

Democrats, who hold 50 seats in the 100-member Senate, will have to persuade at least 17 Republicans to vote with them in order to convict Trump.

## Taliban on diplomatic blitz after peace talks stall

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
ISLAMABAD, 3 FEBRUARY



# Women and property rights



iStock

**While judicial pronouncements have provided a limited extent of gender equality in property rights, legislative measures are necessary to protect a woman's property rights, says SUJATA KUMARI MUNI**

The progress of any society depends on its ability to protect and promote the rights and interests of its women. Property rights and other economic rights offered to women under different statutes in India are quite complex and the issue further gets perplexed after their marriage, since they become part of a new family. Since India is a home to diverse religions sans a uniform Civil Code and each religion is governed by its respective personal laws, there is no uniformity with respect to the property rights of women. Such rights are immune from Constitutional guarantee of equality, fairness and are highly fragmented on the basis of several factors like religion, geographical region, community, the status of the woman in the family i.e., daughter or wife or mother, their marital status such as married or unmarried or deserted or widow and also the kind of property i.e., ancestral or self-acquired, land or dwelling house or matrimonial property.

This is a propitious moment to reassess the property and economic rights of women in the changing context of globalisation. The

interplay of law, ideology, politics, and economic changes offers food for thought for judges and scholars to rethink the property rights of women.

The Hindu Customary Laws and Rules historically deprived women of their legitimate rights. Women were denied property rights except the *Stridhan* which were gifted to them at the time of marriage. These rights have evolved with the passage of time in response to changed conditions. In 1937, the British rulers promulgated the Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937 for the well-being of Hindu widows which conferred on them the right to inherit landed property in the intestate property of their husbands. However, the Act suffered from some inherent loopholes, as it was silent on the rights of women when the deceased husband had disposed of all his property by will, the shares of women in agricultural lands and the rights of inheritance of other women in general.

However, after independence, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 was adopted to allow

women to inherit landed property including other movable and immovable properties from male heirs. After a prolonged discourse in public domain and push from the Law Commission, the Amendment Act, 2005 prescribes that a woman could be a coparcener by birth i.e., in her own right in the same manner as the son. In *Prakash v. Philavati* (2015), the Supreme Court ruled that if the coparcener (father) had passed away prior to the 2005 amendment, his daughter(s) would have no right to the coparcenary property. Recently, the Supreme Court in *Vineeta Sharma vs Rakesh Sharma* (2020) , held that a coparcener's legal right flows from being born in the family and she will have right to the coparcenary property irrespective of whether the father was alive or not at the time of 2005 amendment. In case of death of the daughter before the amendment, her share can be passed on to her children.

The right to reside in the matrimonial house of a woman has been another thorny issue which was dealt in *S R Batra vs. Tarun Batra* (2007), wherein the Supreme Court had

ruled that an aggrieved woman in case of matrimonial conflict with her husband will have a right to reside in a house only when it is owned or tenanted by the husband. It observes that if her in-laws own the house and the husband has no legal right in it, she cannot assert her right to live there. The said position of law has undergone a change in *Satish Chandra Ahuja vs Sneha Ahuja* (2020), wherein the apex Court held that an aggrieved woman has a right to reside in a house, even if she or her husband may not own the premises jointly or singly, or might have taken it on rent jointly or singly. The household may even belong to a joint-family or be rented by the woman's in-laws but the woman still has a right to reside in it if she has been living there after her marriage. Such right of residence shall exist as long as the matrimonial relationship between her and her husband remain intact.

Multitude of judicial pronouncements have established gender equality in property rights of women to a limited extent. It is still riddled with lot of ambiguities in granting equal property rights to women. Sections 8 and 9 of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 provide general rules of succession in the case of males dying intestate and sections 15 and 16 provides the same for woman. There is unequal order of succession i.e., in the event of a woman's death the heirs of her husband are given preference over her own parents. However, in case of a man, his relatives get to inherit the property. To empower the women better, the laws require to be made gender-neutral, and the order and rules of succession for both men and women have to be equal. It is imperative that a general awareness about the rights of women needs to be created.

Further, a separate provision in the Hindu Succession Act can be incorporated exclusively to provide the contours of *stridhan* i.e., any kind of forceful recapture or usurpation of the *stridhan* or exclusive property of the bride would render such ownership null and void, and the commission of such act would be penalised.

These disparities in inheritance and succession under the Act force women to be subordinate to men and increase their economic vulnerability. The dominance of parochial influence should end with respect to their property rights. For the women to be in a bargaining position, the property rights require an egalitarian approach for men and women. In fact, property rights are considered to be an inalienable human right, a position recognised by the International Human Rights Law and conventions. The bicameral legislative body, an independent judiciary, and the other checks and balances established by the Constitution are expected to create a political climate in which property interests of women would be better protected.

The writer is an Advocate, Supreme court of India.

## PLACING UNREASONABLE RESTRAINTS

**Pakistan's social media rules should be rights-friendly and not aim solely at restricting rights, argues USAMA KHILJI**

The federal government, represented by the attorney general of Pakistan, assured the Islamabad High Court that the social media rules notified by the government for moderating "unlawful online content" would be revised. This is a welcome development in a series of events describing which as a democratic nightmare would be an understatement.

The federal cabinet first suddenly notified a set of social media rules called the Citizens Protection Against Online Harm Rules in January 2020. After a domestic outcry and international protest by critical stakeholders for not being consulted or asked for feedback as is the tradition in any functioning democracy, the prime minister "suspended them".

However, the prime minister of Pakistan has no legal authority to overrule decisions made by the federal cabinet. This is as per the precedent set by the Supreme Court of Pakistan in the Mustafa Impex case. When this was pointed out informally, the response was that this approach was "easier". This government must realise that what seems easy isn't always legal or democratic.

The consultations that followed were nothing to write home about either. A questionnaire was published by the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) with 10 leading questions offering 'yes' or 'no' options for response, and this was supposed to be a consultation with stakeholders and experts.

The companies and groups that still attended the consultations were soon to be disappointed when the new draft of the social media rules, now named without any pretence of protecting citizens and called the Removal and Blocking of Unlawful Online Content (Procedure, Oversight and Safeguards) Rules, was notified by the cabinet in October 2020.

In further disregard for the democratic process, no draft was shared with the stakeholders for feedback as is the practice in democratic societies, and no feedback given during the consultation process was incorporated in the new version of the rules, save for the deletion of the clause setting up an office of "national coordinator", and further defining the criteria for what qualifies as "unlawful online content" by inserting verbatim clauses from the Pakistan Penal Code and the Constitution for officials of the PTA to interpret and implement.

The challenges to the Rules in the petitions submitted before the Islamabad High Court deal with their constitutionality. The court called the Rules *prima facie* a violation of Articles 19 and 19-A of the Constitution that pertain to the right to freedom of speech and right to information. However, the latest court order ended up giving more time to the federal government to review the rules with authority vested in the attorney general of Pakistan. It appears that the government is buying more time with such antics, and their lack of sincerity is evident from the fact that for over a year, no meaningful consultation has taken place. With the court's orders, one expects more sincerity from the government in this process moving forward.

Aside from the legal proceedings, the underlying issue is that these Rules should not exist in the first place. Let us take a look at what having them means. Section 37 of the parent legislation, which is the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), 2016, deals with "Unlawful online content". The language of this section is by default anti-rights: it is made up entirely of the language of the provisos of Article 19 of the Constitution that protects the right to freedom of speech, without even mentioning or protecting the right to freedom of speech and press freedom. By centring an entire clause of a law only on the exceptions, the intention of the clause is clear: to restrict freedom of speech in the country. The provisos are supposed to be interpreted with restraint, only "reasonable restrictions" are to be imposed by law, and these are only supposed to be interpreted by the higher judiciary.

This is clear from the utility of Section 37 so far: blocking of websites including those of political parties and international news sites, entire platforms under the moralistic garb of "obscenity" when they are empowering content curators while being regulated by international standards of content regulation by platforms, and arm-twisting platforms with threats of blocking if they do not accede to government demands of censorship.

The platforms, on the other hand, must be pushed to increase their investment in moderation capabilities relating to local language content; which is the practical way since they have the infrastructure to process user reports as well as filters that flag keywords. The filters must be scrutinised by human moderators that understand local contexts of incitement to violence rather than artificial intelligence on a corporate censorship spree, along with options of appeal and effective oversight mechanisms.

The economic impact of such Rules can no longer be ignored on an economy with increasing earning from the technology sector. Content creators, internet service providers, software houses, and a government that wants investment will all be impacted if rules that normalise censorship of the internet are in place.

Hence, the solution to this conundrum that we find ourselves in lies in parliament. Legislators must move to amend Peca and make it rights friendly rather than rights restricting. And to begin this process, Section 37 of Peca must be deleted, as it essentially empowers the state to carry out political censorship; the takedown of online content that harms citizens is already stipulated under Section 20, 21, 22, and 24 that deal with dignity and modesty of a citizen, child pornography, and cyberstalking. Further, Section 20 that is a criminal defamation clause is also counterproductive to a rights framework protective of citizens as it is abused by predators and those in power to silence those who speak of others' crimes, most notably against those who speak up about sexual harassment.

The writer is director of Bolo Bhi, an advocacy forum for digital rights. Dawn/ANN.



deemed him ineligible to serve under Section 3. The state legislature was forced to choose someone else.

Less than five years into Reconstruction, however, many Northerners began calling on Congress to grant amnesty to Southern officers barred from office by Section 3. The 14th Amendment gives Congress the power to restore the right to hold office with a two-thirds vote in each chamber.

This campaign, led by the prominent New York newspaper editor Horace Greeley, reflected white fatigue with the burdens of enforcing the entire 14th Amendment and a desire to move past the bitterness of the Civil War. Greeley and his "Liberal Republicans" mounted a presidential campaign in 1872

based in part on a platform of "universal amnesty."

President Ulysses S. Grant, who was running for re-election, knew white public opinion now favoured amnesty. In a 4 December 1871 message to Congress, he asked lawmakers to grant amnesty to former Confederate officials. After a long and emotional debate, Congress did so in 1872 with the General Amnesty Act.

Soon Southern voters sent many previously disqualified men back to Congress, including Alexander Stephens, the former Confederate vice president.

Confederate president Jefferson Davis and a few hundred other former federal officials and military officers remained excluded

from public office.

In granting this amnesty, Congress rejected a proposal by Massachusetts Sen. Charles Sumner, an eloquent advocate for racial equality, to couple forgiveness for white Southerners with a new civil rights law that would, among other things, have barred racial discrimination in schools.

In 1898, with the Spanish-American War about to begin, Congress removed Section 3 ineligibility from all living ex-rebels. It was widely seen as another gesture of national unity, but it was another nail in the coffin of Reconstruction.

During the 20th century, Section 3 was largely ignored. It was used just once, during World War I, to exclude the socialist congressman Victor Berger from the House for his anti-war speeches.

In the 1970s, Congress gave Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis posthumous Section 3 amnesty. This was again done in the name of national "reconciliation," after the divisive Vietnam War.

Today Section 3, created to vanquish white supremacy, is seeing a revival. The Confederate flag, which never entered the Capitol during the Civil War, was carried inside during the January 6 Capitol insurrection.

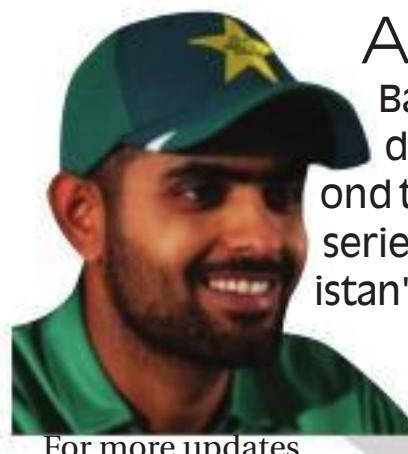
Any congressional members determined to have "engaged in insurrection" may be expelled under this provision by a two-thirds vote in their house of Congress. That includes, potentially, lawmakers who are found to have directly aided or incited the rioters. Capitol police are investigating several Republican congressional representatives for allegedly leading "reconnaissance" tours of the building on January 5.

Though lawmakers can remove their colleagues from office, they cannot legally keep those members from running for, and occupying, public office again. That's because there is today no federal statute enforcing Section 3; those parts of the Ku Klux Klan Act were repealed long ago. Unless Congress passes a new enforcement law, any expelled lawmakers could return later.

Similarly, Congress could at any time use Section 3 to declare its constitutional opinion that Trump is ineligible to hold public office again, with a majority vote. But only the courts, interpreting Section 3 for themselves, can bar someone from running for president.

The issue may never come up. The Senate may disqualify Trump first, as part of impeachment, or he may choose not to run again. If he does run, though, he may have to take his case to the Supreme Court. A bipartisan congressional opinion of ineligibility would be a big blow to his candidacy.

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



## AZAM HOPES

Babar Azam (photo, left) expects a repeat of the first test dry pitch when Pakistan takes on South Africa in the second test on Thursday. Babar, Pakistan's captain in his first test series, needs at least a draw in the second test to secure Pakistan's first test series win against South Africa in 18 years.

For more updates [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## Ajay Singh re-elected as BFI president

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 3 FEBRUARY

Incumbent Ajay Singh was re-elected President of the Boxing Federation of India, comfortably defeating challenger Ashish Sheler in the polls which had an International Boxing Association (AIBA) observer in attendance.

Singh, also the chairman of Spicejet airlines, prevailed 37-27 in the elections held at a Gurugram hotel for a fresh four-year term. He will have a new secretary general by his side in Assam's Hemanta Kumar Kalita.

Kalita would be succeeding Maharashtra's Jay Kowli, who had decided against contesting for the post after extending his support to Sheral ahead of the elections.

"I don't want to comment on the margin, I am happy that the BFI has reposed faith in me. I hope to live up to the expectations and take boxing forward," Singh said in a press conference after being elected.

"It is great credit to all of us that this election was conducted so peacefully and professionally. We are one family, we will work towards glory of our sport. Let there be no heartburn, it is everyone's right to fight the election," he added, acknowledging his rival.

Shelar is a BJP MLA from Maharashtra and was a former President of the Mumbai Cricket Association.

Singh said his priority would be to focus on development of women's boxing and ensure presence of more women in the support staff as well. "We will try to ensure greater participation of women in both administration and support staff," said Singh.

## Naresh Singh's double strike helps Sudeva drub Chennai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA, 3 FEBRUARY

Debutants Sudeva Delhi FC dished out their best performance of the I-League season so far, drubbing former champions Chennai City FC 4-0 to grab their second win here on Wednesday.

With the win, the Delhi-based side jumped to the top half of the league table with eight points from six matches.

Naresh Singh scored a quick-fire brace in the first 10 minutes of the match and Mahesh Singh and Manvir Singh struck in the second half to outplay the Chennai team.

Sudeva got off to a strong start and found the net twice in the first ten minutes of the match.

First, in the sixth minute, Naresh tapped home from inside the box after he was found by a brilliant Naresh Mahesh cross that completely bamboozled the opposition defence.

Four minutes later, Sudeva's high pressing style of play reaped dividends. Kean Lewis stole possession high up the

## 'Future will reveal East Bengal - investor relations'

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY  
KOLKATA, 3 FEBRUARY

The centenary year has also been the worst in East Bengal's history, conceded the club's de facto supremo - until investors came along - Debabrata Sarkar in a conversation with *The Statesman* here today before adding "Only the future will reveal whether we can agree to final-

ising our association with the new investor."

Insiders apprehend a messy divorce because of operational incompatibility. After last night's loss to Bengaluru FC, East Bengal were second from the bottom in the Indian Super League, having gone through 15 matches. It is not as if the red-and-gold outfit never slumped before, but the extent of the fall in their centenary year has been truly spectacular.

Sarkar concurred that it would not do to say that East Bengal's seasonal start had been delayed considerably. When you do as badly as East Bengal have done, it ceases to be a reason and an excuse is what it will be deemed. "They got rid of so many Indian players we gave them. They got in as a coach a man known more for his own playing excellence and that was a poor start. The price for all this

is being paid now," Sarkar said.

The investor is said to have driven the club's erstwhile officials out of any participatory role in the decision-making process. "There, quite honestly, is nothing that we can do either to arrest the slide or to infuse some sense into the way the job is being gone about now," Sarkar said unequivocally.

The general feeling in the

proud institution is that the whip is in the hands of the investor and the lash is for the club to bare its torso for, with even the seasoned campaigners among those who previously controlled the everyday affairs left utterly bewildered. This is a complete and complex change from the time when East Bengal, under severe pressure to find their spot in the ISL, got chief minister Mamata Banerjee to

speak to the tournament's organisers so a sponsor could be found to pay the huge franchise fee and also pick up the tab for the allied things, with cheers breaking forth from all sides.

The investor - a term increasingly in use in this land though it has not experienced the boom in pay-per-view television which ushered it in Europe - is subsequently said to have called

for a deal to ensure continued association that allegedly left East Bengal marginalised in the proposed amalgamated entity.

"They never tell us anything about whatever they plan to do or skip," Sarkar said. There, though, is no doubt that the investor came in on an invitation. Nogate crashing marked its entry. From one from investor to another, East Bengal lurch from crisis to crisis.

## 'My job is to take a backseat and help Virat as captain'

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHENNAI, 3 FEBRUARY

India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane, who led India to win in two of the last three Tests against Australia in India's landmark series win Down Under, says he is happy to take a backseat and contribute as vice-captain by offering suggestions when asked by skipper Virat Kohli.

Kohli, who missed the last three Tests in Australia for the birth of his child, will lead India in the first Test against England that begins on February 5.

"My job is to take a back-seat and try and help Virat as captain. There are too many things on captain's mind so as a vice-captain, you have to visualise situations, think about what can happen in the game and if captain asks you for suggestion then you should be ready. My job is really easy. I take a backseat. Whenever he asks me about certain things, I go and tell him. For me, I generally take a backseat whenever he is the captain," said Rahane.



while speaking to the media on Wednesday.

"Virat is the captain. He left Australia for family reasons that is why I became the captain. Originally Virat is the captain and I am the vice-captain. So I am really happy that he is back with us. Which is really positive. As a team we are trying to play as a unit and together as well as to our strengths."

The 32-year-old Rahane, who scored an impressive century at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) to help India win the second and roar back

in the series following the capitulation in the first Test, will have to move back to No.5 from the No.4 slot where he batted in place of Kohli in Australia.

He admitted that a bit of adjustment is needed to move back to No. 5.

"Little bit of adjustment is needed. But I have been batting well," he said.

"It is all about what team requires in that particular situation and bat accordingly. For me, it is all about contribution to the team rather than thinking about my own performances or own outcome. I

will give my 100 percent in whatever the team requires in that situation."

Rahane said he feels good despite being pushed down to No. 5 but added that Kohli's return is a positive sign for India.

"Virat is back which is a really positive sign for us. He has been batting really well. His record has been great."

The Indian team is not looking at the World Test Championship (WTC) final just yet and is focussing on winning the first Test against England here, said India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane on Wednesday.

India have to beat England by winning at least two Tests to qualify for the World Test Championship final. They need to win 2-0, 2-1, 3-0, 3-1 or 4-0 to enter the final, for which New Zealand have already qualified.

"Right now we are just focussing on this series, this Chennai game [first Test]. The WTC final is still four months from now. Not thinking about that right now. New Zealand played really well. They deserve to be there," said Rahane.

## Won't be easy for Root, Buttler, Stokes to perform in India: Kuldeep

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI, 3 FEBRUARY



Chinaman bowler Kuldeep Yadav (in photo) believes it will not be easy for the likes of Joe Root, Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes to perform in the upcoming four-Test series between India and England which gets underway from Friday at the MA Chidambaram Stadium.

England are coming on the back of a thumping 2-0 Test series win in Sri Lanka. England skipper Root was in great touch in the two Tests, accumulating 426 runs at an average of over 100. Buttler scored 131 runs in the three innings he played in Sri Lanka while Ben Stokes was not part of the squad.

"England have definitely played pretty good cricket in Sri Lanka. The way they countered spin bowling in Sri Lanka, they are in pretty good rhythm and touch. It will be a little challenging for me to execute my plans because I am playing after such a long time," Kuldeep told ESPNcricinfo while talking about his plans.

"But having seen these batsmen play in one-day cricket and having seen them play against Sri Lanka, I do have good plans. I hope I can execute them," he added.

Kuldeep has not played Test cricket for India since 2019. In fact, he was the only

player in the Indian squad to have not played a single game in the recently-concluded Border-Gavaskar series -- which India won 2-1 -- despite being fit.

The 26-year-old said if he gets the first game against England, he would be in a better mental space to feature in the next.

"When you play regular cricket, the confidence comes automatically. If I play the first match, I will be in a better position to play the next game. Mentally I have kept myself very relaxed. Accordingly, my confidence level will be peaking," said Kuldeep.

India need to beat England in the Test series by one of the following margins: 2-0, 2-1, 3-0, 3-1 or 4-0 to enter the final of the inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) final, slated to be played in June at the Lord's, London.

For England, any of the following margins will guarantee them a place in the final against New Zealand: 3-0, 3-1, 4-0.

New Zealand have already sealed a spot in the final following postponement of Australia's three-Test tour to South Africa.

## CA pulling out of SA tour is huge worry for game: Vaughan; Pietersen calls it dark time in cricket

AGENCIES  
LONDON, 3 FEBRUARY

Former England skippers Michael Vaughan and Kevin Pietersen on Wednesday questioned Australia's decision to postpone their tour of South Africa and expressed doubts if they would have done the same with a powerful cricket nation like India.

"And we even surrendered that to Australia. There's probably a feeling that we were laying down the red carpet for Australia, which is frustrating at times. After all of that, it's very disappointing and disruptive to our plans going forward."

South Africa are also scheduled to play three T20Is beginning February 11 against Pakistan and they had already planned to send their Test players after the second Test, keeping in mind the quarantine rules ahead of the Australia series.

A second-string South Africa squad also arrived in Pakistan for the T20 series but South Africa will continue with their original plan of sending few Test players and support staff home.

"It's so important in these

times that the big 3 do everything they can to help out those without the financial clout ... just saying," his tweet read.

Former star batsman Pietersen, who had captained England for a brief time during his career, too slammed Australia's decision to withdraw from the tour.

"No way @CricketAus would have not played India in a Test tour. It's a really dark time in the world of cricket with CA cancelling their tour of @OfficialCSA. @englandcricket also pulled out of SA due to Covid issues, but players test positive in SL and tour goes on!," he tweeted.

On Tuesday, Cricket South Africa (CSA) had slammed its Australian counterpart for postponing the Test tour, saying it is "extremely" disappointing and will lead to "serious financial loss".

"We are extremely disappointed by the decision of CA," CSA's director of cricket, Graeme Smith, had said in a press release on Tuesday.

"CSA has been working tirelessly in recent weeks to ensure that we meet every single expectation of CA."

"This was set to be the longest tour in a BSE (bio-safety cabinet or biological safety cabinet) comprising a three-match Test series that was scheduled to begin with Australia's arrival later in the month. So to be informed about the CA decision at the eleventh hour is frustrating."

Sports bodies across the globe have felt the financial meltdown of the COVID-19 pandemic with Cricket Australia too being forced to lay off their staff and also cut the salary of many employees.

However, the recently-concluded India's tour of Australia helped it to recover financially.

The decision to pull out of South Africa will affect Australia too as it has adversely affected their chances to make the World Test championship final. Now the outcome of the India-England series will decide who plays New Zealand in the title clash.

West Indies legend Ian Bishop too felt bad for the Proteas.

"I really feel for South African cricket," Bishop tweeted.

## So many events, so many champs, so much tennis in Melbourne

AGENCIES

MELBOURNE, 3 FEBRUARY

Erima Nishimura sure picked a decent day to bring her 9-year-old son, Yoshiharu, to Melbourne Park for the first time to see some tennis.

Such tennis! There were 89 matches on the schedule Wednesday, featuring Serena Williams (in photo), Naomi Osaka, Stan Wawrinka and eight other Grand Slam singles champions.

It's all part of a six-tournament setup meant to help players prepare in short order amid a pandemic for the Australian Open - yes, a half-dozen tournaments, and all held at one site, the venue where the year's first Grand Slam event

begins on Monday.

"I feel like things are coming back to somewhat normal," said Sofia Kenin, the defending Australian Open champion, who won a three-setter Wednesday that was part of the Yarra Valley Classic.

"It's obviously nice to see a lot of matches."

Nishimura, who is from Tokyo and moved to Melbourne 18 months ago, and Yoshiharu even got to see Osaka, who collected one of her three Grand Slam trophies at Melbourne in 2019, beat Katie Boulter 3-6, 6-1 on Margaret Court Arena.

"This Australian Open is very happy for all people living in Melbourne, I think," said Nishimura, who bought

tickets especially to see Osaka play and then waited in a small group of fans above the player exit to collect a special memento.

"This is the first time I've seen her play have only seen her on television. Now we've got her autograph."

Even Osaka herself said she planned to head out to the courts to sit in the stands and watch others play.

"I just feel like this whole situation is a bit unusual," Osaka said, "because we're at the Australian Open -- like, where it's being held, but we're not playing it quite yet."

Nadal and most of the top 10 players, and two other ATP events going on this week.

That's a lot of tennis players and their entourage to transport, feed and to ensure adequate social distancing.

For some, the glut of tennis at Melbourne Park has the vibe of majors in times gone

by before a Grand Slam stadium had a retractable roof when rain washed out play and those matches had to be crammed onto different days.

For others, like British player Dan Evans, it felt like going back to junior tournaments, when it was the norm for multiple competitions to run concurrently.

"They have obviously done a great job to get so many playing opportunities out there. The beauty of this is, if you lose ... you can just go straight back out and prepare -- you're not going to travel anywhere," he said.

"Obviously practice courts are not ideal right now, but there's plenty off-site."

And there's fans some-

thing fresh to the mix for players who've become used to playing to empty stands in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Capacity is capped at 25% this week, allowing some extra space for the players to play and practice, something they've sorely missed while spending 14 days in hotel quarantine. It will rise to 50% for the Australian Open.

Melbourne hasn't had any locally transmitted COVID-19 cases for weeks, and the state of Victoria has opened its domestic borders, something almost unimaginable at a time last year when the city was in lockdown and curfews were enforced during a coronavirus outbreak.

Usually, the lead-up tour-