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KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR

The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



MAKE ALL EFFORTS TO
EXTRADITE MALLYA,
CENTRE TELLS SC

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 21 and 08 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 65%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 19.6°C (O) Min: 09.0°C (+2)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

07:14 hrs 17:50 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

11:45 hrs 23:42 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Indian women's hockey team return to international competition after a year with a 2-2 draw against Argentina's junior women's national team. In Buenos Aires on Monday. IANS

HC urges restraint on SSR coverage: The Bombay High Court on Monday asked media houses to exercise restraint when reporting on suicide cases, saying "media trial leads to interference and obstruction to administration of justice" and amounts to contempt of court. A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni said the Press must avoid discussions and debates relating to criminal investigations, and it should confine only to informative reportage.

P5

China's economy grows by 2.3 per cent: China's economy, which was the first to be hit by the coronavirus pandemic and early to recover from its impact, grew 2.3 per cent in 2020, registering the lowest annual growth rate in 45 years, but bucking the trend of slowdowns being experienced by major world economies. The GDP of world's second-largest economy grew by 2.3 per cent, expanding to \$15.42 trillion in dollar terms in 2020.

P9

Tractor rally: SC puts onus on Delhi Police

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

In view of farmer unions' adamant on holding a "tractor rally" on Republic Day, the Supreme Court on Monday said that it is the Delhi Police, and not the court, that is the first authority to take a decision on whether to allow farmers' entry into Delhi or not.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde and comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao and Vineet Saran said "We have not taken charge of the matter except one issue...apparently our intervention has been grossly misunderstood. We are not going to tell you about your powers."

The bench stressed that the Delhi Police have the authority to take a decision over the issue, and not the Supreme Court. The observation from



the top court came after Attorney General K.K. Venugopal said the Centre is seeking restraint orders against the farmers from entering Delhi as the court has taken charge of the matter.

The Centre through Delhi Police has moved the top court seeking direction to restrain farmer unions from conduct-

ing the tractor rally as a method to disrupt the Republic Day celebrations.

Unions adamant: Protesting union leaders on Monday said that farmers have a constitutional right to take out their tractor rally peacefully and asserted that thousands of people will participate in the proposed event on 26 January.

Govt hopeful: A day before the crucial tenth round of talks with representatives of protesting farmers on controversial new farm laws, the Centre on Monday said both sides want to resolve the long-standing stalemate at the earliest but it was getting delayed due to involvement of people of other ideologies.

Asserting that the new farm laws are in the interest of the farming community, the government said obstacles do come whenever good things or measures are taken and it is taking longer to resolve the issue as farmers' leaders want a solution their own way.

SC panel to meet today: The SC-appointed panel on the three new farm laws is scheduled to hold its first meeting with members on Tuesday at Pusa campus in New Delhi, its member Anil Ghanwat said.

'Ratings must remain suspended till BARC takes necessary action'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

In the wake of purported WhatsApp conversations between Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and former Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) head Partho Dasgupta emerging in the public domain, the News Broadcasters Association (NBA) on Monday said ratings of television news channels should remain suspended till the TV ratings agency takes action to address concerns and shares details of it with the stakeholders.

In a statement, the Rajat Sharma-headed NBA said it is "shocked to see hundreds of WhatsApp messages that have been exchanged betw-

NCP seeks JPC on Goswami-Dasgupta chats: The Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Monday asked the government to set up a Joint Parliamentary Committee to probe the purported chats between Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami and former BARC head Partho Dasgupta.

Referring to the purported chats widely reported in media which mentioned that Goswami was privy to the Balakot air strikes, NCP chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase said, "It is extremely shocking and disturbing to know how issues related to national security have been used to gain TRPs." Tapase said he will meet Maharashtra Home Minister Amit Deshmukh on Tuesday on the issue and seek clarification from Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the 'chatgate'.

een BARC India's former CEO-Partho Dasgupta and Arnab Goswami, MD, ARG Outlier Media Pvt. Ltd". It demanded that the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF) should suspend membership of Repub-

lic TV with immediate effect till the case related to manipulation of ratings is pending in court. The NBA urged the BARC to come up with a clear statement about the veracity of its ratings in the period during the audit.

Mamata takes on Suvenu on his home turf, to contest from Nandigram



Mamata Banerjee on Monday declared she will contest the upcoming Assembly election from Nandigram, as she took her battle for West Bengal to the home turf of political heavyweight Suvenu Adhikari, who recently quit the Trinamul Congress and joined the Bharatiya Janata Party.

That Banerjee chose Nandigram to make the big announcement reflects the TMC supremo's determination to take the BJP, which has launched a spirited campaign to unseat her after a decade-long stint in power, head on.

Addressing a rally here, Banerjee said she is not worried about those joining rival parties as they were hardly around when the TMC was formed. Banerjee said these leaders left the ruling party to protect the money "they have looted" in the last few years.

"I have always started my campaign for the Assembly polls from Nandigram. It is a lucky place for me. So this time I feel that I should contest the Assembly polls from here. I request our state party president Subrata Bakshi to approve my name from this seat," Banerjee said.

FIR registered in UP against Tandav director, Amazon head

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW, 18 JANUARY

A criminal case has been registered here against the makers of web series *Tandav* and Amazon's India head of original content for allegedly depicting Hindu gods in an objectionable manner, hurting religious sentiments of people.

The FIR was lodged against the Amazon's India head of original content, Aparna Purohit, series director Ali Abbas, producer Himanshu Krishna Mehra, writer Gaurav Solanki, and an unknown person on Sunday night.

The film starring Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia,



dia, Sunil Grover, Tigmanshu Dhulia, Dino Morea, Kumud Mishra and others premiered on the streaming platform on Friday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Somen Burma said a four-member police team left for Mumbai on Monday for a detailed probe into the matter.

The FIR was lodged at Hazratganj police station by its Senior Sub Inspector Amarnath Yadav himself after he saw the allegedly objectionable web series, the DCP said.

Tandav makers apologise: The makers of *Tandav* on Monday apologised unconditionally after complaints that one of its episodes had hurt "Hindu sentiments." An official statement said, "*Tandav* is a work of fiction. The cast and crew take cognizance of the concerns expressed by the people and unconditionally apologize if it has unintentionally hurt anybody's sentiments."

(SEE PAGE 5)

Smiles, sanitisers greet students as Delhi schools reopen

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

Balloons, flowers, sanitisers and smiling faces welcomed class 10 and 12 students in schools in the national capital on Monday as they returned to campuses after over 10 months.

The students who were elated to be able to attend the first offline class of the academic session wore masks and queued up outside schools maintaining social distance.

Schools reopened on Monday after over 10 months of being closed in view of coronavirus pandemic. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said it was an emotional moment to see children back in school.

"Seeing kids back in school after a long time, is an emotional moment for me. Schools

have reopened today after leaving behind a very difficult time. We are hopeful that soon, everything will be normal and all students will be able to come to schools and meet their teachers and friends," he tweeted.

Pragati Diwan, an excited



Students return at Kautilya Sarkar Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalaya as schools reopened for Classes X & XII on Monday in the Capital. SNS

class 12 student said, "it was optional to come but I was sure I have to. It is the last year of my school life and I haven't come to school even one day," said Pragati Diwan, an excited class 12 student.

For another student at Geeta Bal Bharti School, the feeling

SEE PAGE 2

DETAILS ON PAGE 4



There are five agricultural universities in the state and our focus should be on research, which will benefit the country and the state

ASHOK GEHLOT
RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

Healthcare workers consulting colleagues, searching internet before taking vaccine

PTI
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

Healthcare workers in the national capital are taking into consideration the experience of their colleagues and scouring newspapers and the Internet for information on possible side-effects before going for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Also, many have chosen not to tell their "worried" family members about taking the jab.

Jay Mahawer, a 24-year-old nursing staff at Moolchand Medcity in Southeast Delhi, said he read about the vaccine and its side effects on the Internet.

"There have been reports of reaction (adverse events) following vaccination. So, there was a little bit of anxiety," he said.

Mahawer said he made up his mind only after he read about AIIMS Director Dr Randeep Guleria taking the shot.

"I experienced dizziness for a few minutes after taking the vaccine. My family was already scared. So, I have not told them yet. I am feeling fine now," he said.

His colleague, Ritik Bhati, 24, said he felt "completely okay" after taking the jab.

"There is nothing to fear. I haven't experienced any side effects yet... I had also talked to a few people who were vaccinated on Saturday about their experiences," he said.

Bhati, who hails from Rajasthan's Alwar, also did not

inform his parents about taking the vaccine.

"They are a bit scared, my siblings are aware of it though," he said.

At Medeor Hospital in Qutub Institutional Area, Anuja Mehta, a 23-year-old staff nurse, also spoke to her colleagues who took the vaccine before taking her first jab.

"My parents were worried. They asked me to wait for sometime, but I was feeling good about the vaccine as those who have already taken it had shared their experiences with us," she said.

Mohammad Raheel, manager (patient care) at Medeor, who took his first dose of Covid-19 vaccine on Monday morning, said people are a bit scared because there have been a few cases of side effects.

"I also counseled a few people who were undecided about it," he said.

In Delhi, 4,319 healthcare workers 53.3 percent of those registered got the shots on Saturday, the first day of the world's largest vaccination drive against the pandemic.

Experts say people adopting a 'wait and watch' approach for the initial few days, lack of communication and glitches in CoWin app are the major reasons why many people did not get the jabs on the first day.

There is a little bit of apprehension (about the vaccine). Also, people in India adopt a 'wait and watch' approach in important matters, be it pur-

chasing a new car or an appliance. People consider the experiences of others before taking a call, BL Sherwal, the Medical Director of Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital, said.

In his hospital, 45 people got the jabs on Saturday.

There is a need for creating more awareness and building confidence among people. No major vaccine-related side effects were reported on Saturday, which is going to encourage others to take the shots, he said.

An AIIMS security guard had developed an allergic reaction after receiving the Covid-19 vaccine. He was kept under observation of doctors at the hospital and later discharged.

A total of 51 cases of minor reactions such as rashes, swelling at the injection site or fever were reported in the city on the first day, according to officials.

Sherwal said 53 percent turnout should be considered normal. Since people are voluntarily taking the jabs, many times they skip it if there is some important work, he said.

It took a lot of effort for 20 years to eradicate polio. There was resistance. Similar efforts will be needed in the case of COVID-19 immunization campaign, he added.

Suresh Kumar, the medical director of Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan Hospital, said technical glitches in CoWin app could be a reason why many people could not take the shots on the launch day.

Vaccination in Delhi: Further dip in turnout on day two

3,598 health workers get Covid shots in the Capital on the second day of the vaccination drive, only 8 get jabs at AIIMS; 4,319 had got the shots on the opening day against a daily target of over 8K

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

About 3,600 health-care workers received the Covid-19 vaccine in Delhi today—the second day of the Covid vaccination drive—which highlighted a further dip in the jab figures as compared to that on the opening day of the immunisation drive on 16 January, with sources saying just 8 medical staff got the shots at the premier AIIMS.

Under the nationwide mega vaccination drive launched on 16 January, a total of 4,319 (53 per cent) health workers against a single-day target of 8,117 were then administered the Covid shots at 81 centres in Delhi.

Today's sharp dip in vaccination in the national capital comes after one 'severe' and 50 'minor' cases were reported following the vaccination drive on the opening day.

An AIIMS security guard had developed an allergic reaction after receiving the vaccine. He was kept under observation of doctors, an official had said on 16 January.



During the Covid Vaccination at Max Hospital in the Capital on Monday.

SNS

Various reasons are being attributed to today's low turnout, including some technical issues and fears related to adverse events.

However, the government has maintained that no case of serious/severe AEFI (adverse events following immunisation) is attributable to vaccination till date.

On day two, 3,598 people have been administered corona vaccine. AEFI was reported in 26 persons," a senior official of the Delhi health department said.

According to the Union health ministry, 3,111 vaccinations were done in Delhi today till 5.00 pm.

The jab tally reported on day two in Delhi was thus nearly 28 per cent lower from the corresponding figure last Saturday.

According to sources, 8 vaccinations were done at AIIMS, 20 in Safdarjung Hospital and 69 healthcare workers given at the remaining six facilities.

The Delhi government

has received a total of 2.74 lakh doses of the vaccine so far

from the Centre, which would be sufficient to cater to 1.2 lakh healthcare workers, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had earlier said.

The Delhi government will take measures like counselling and formal phone calls in the coming days to raise the percentage of health-care workers turning up for

the source said.

At the Delhi government-run LNJP Hospital, only 12 healthcare workers showed up, compared to 32 on day one, as per data shared by officials.

The Oxford vaccine Covishield is being administered at 75 centres while Bharat Biotech-made Covaxin doses given at the remaining six facilities.

The Delhi government has received a total of 2.74 lakh doses of the vaccine so far

from the Centre, which would be sufficient to cater to 1.2 lakh healthcare workers, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had earlier said.

The Delhi government will take measures like counselling and formal phone calls in the coming days to raise the percentage of health-care workers turning up for

being administered Covid vaccines, officials said.

Meanwhile, Delhi today recorded 161 fresh coronavirus infections (Covid-19)—the lowest in more than eight months—and 8 Covid-linked fatalities, even as the positivity rate dipped further to 0.32 per cent, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital's Covid caseload thus climbed to 6,32,590 and its coronavirus toll mounted to 10,754, the health bulletin said.

This is the 15th time in January so far that Delhi's daily coronavirus count stood below the 500-mark, and the fourth consecutive day since 15 January that this count stood below the 300-mark.

The city recorded 246 new Covid cases on 17 January, 299 cases on 16 January, and 295 cases on 15 January. On 14 January, Delhi had recorded 340 cases and 4 deaths as the daily fatality count dropped to a single digit after several months.

Today, the national capital's active coronavirus cases finally dropped to 2,335 from yesterday's 2,544.

The 161 fresh cases were detected out of 50,523 tests including 32,368 RT-PCR tests and 18155 rapid antigen tests, the bulletin stated.

Of the total 10,128 beds in Covid hospitals in the city, 9,073 were vacant. The number of tests conducted per million was over 5.22 lakh now while the total number of tests stood at over 99 lakh.

In the last 24 hours 362 Covid patients recovered in the city, which took its cumulative recoveries to 6,19,501 so far, the bulletin said. The recovery rate rose to 97.93 per cent.

Delhi health minister had said yesterday, "The positivity rate has remained below 0.5 per cent for the last few days. We can comfortably say that the third wave is on the wane. Cases have decreased. Still, I want to appeal to people to take precautions and use masks."

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF MS. HARJOT KAUR CIVIL, JUDGE (JD) GURUGRAM
CNR NO. HGR02-001101-2020
CASE NO. CS/7/93/2020
DATE OF HEARING 01-03-2021
AT 10:00AM
RAJIV KUMAR SAXENA
VERSUS
GENERAL PUBLIC
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT-1
GENERAL PUBLIC
In the above titled petition the defendant(s)/Respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that the defendant(s)/Respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 01-03-2021 at 10:00 am.
For details logon to http://highcourtchd.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&district=gurugram GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THE COURT THIS 15-01-2021 HARJOT KAUR CJ (JD) GURUGRAM

IN THE COURT OF MS. HARJOT KAUR CIVIL, JUDGE (JD) GURUGRAM
CNR NO. HGR02-000048-2021
CASE NO. CS/117/2021
DATE OF HEARING 11-02-2021
AT 10:00AM
SUSHILA DEVI
VERSUS
GENERAL PUBLIC
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT-1
GENERAL PUBLIC
In the above titled petition the defendant(s)/Respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that the defendant(s)/Respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 11-02-2021 at 10:00 am.
For details logon to http://highcourtchd.gov.in/?rs=district_notice&district=gurugram GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THE COURT THIS 15-01-2021 HARJOT KAUR CJ (JD) GURUGRAM

**IN THE COURT OF SH. AASHISH GUPTA
ACJ/CCJ/ARC-South East)**
Saket Courts, New Delhi
SS-39/2020
Shilpa Gupta Versus
The State
Whereas, an application U/s 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has been made by Shilpa Gupta & Ors., survivor of late J.K. Jain for grant of Succession Certificate in respect of debts/securities of deceased.
And whereas the said applicant shall come for hearing on 04-02-2021 at 10:00 am.
Therefore, the public at large is hereby given notice if any person has objection to the grant of Succession Certificate in favour of the said applicant, he may appear and file objections in writing in person or through duly appointed pleader, on the said date and time.

Given under my hand and Seal on 04-01-2021.
ACJ/CCJ/ARC-South East
Saket Courts, New Delhi
Seal of the Court

**COURT NOTICE
(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)
(SUCCESION CASE)
IN THE COURT OF
SH. VIJAY JAMES
Additional District and Sessions Judge,
Gurugram**

Ayush Gupta Versus
General Public
CNR No. HGR01-009632-2020
Next Date: 28-01-2021
Notice to:
General Public, Gurugram.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/Respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/Respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 28-01-

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

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SHIMLA
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Near Jodha Niwas
The Mall Shimla-171001, H.P.

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

Mrs. Shakuntala Devi Versus Deepak

CNR No. HGR02-002861-2020

Next Date: 17-02-2021

Additional District and Sessions Judge, Gurugram Seal of the Court

COURT NOTICE (U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC) IN THE COURT OF SH. AMIT SHARAWAT Additional District and Sessions Judge, Gurugram

Shri P. S. Jain Versus General Public.

CNR No. HGR01-009460-2020

Next Date: 24-02-2021

Publication Issued to: General Public.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 24-02-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

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

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF THE COURT THIS 15-01-2021 HARJOT KAUR CJ (JD) GURUGRAM

CITATION FOR PUBLICATION FOR GRANT OF LETTER OF ADMINISTRATION WITHOUT WILL OF WIFE OF INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925.

IN THE COURT OF SH. AMIT SHARAWAT Additional District and



I will contest from Nandigram. It's lucky for me. Think I won't be able to give much time to Nandigram as I will have to campaign in all 294 seats. You will have to ensure that 'thing' (her victory) and the rest I will take care later

MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

Capt condemns NIA notices to protesting farmer leaders

Such 'reprehensible, oppressive, arm-twisting tactics' of the Modi govt in its 'desperation' to undermine farmers' peaceful agitation against its 'draconian' agri laws will backfire, says Punjab CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 18 JANUARY

Condemning the National Investigation Agency (NIA)'s bid to issue notices and summons to several farmer leaders and their supporters in the midst of their anti-farm laws agitation, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh today said that such "arm-twisting tactics" would not weaken the resolve of the farmers to fight for their rights and their future.

"Do these farmers look like secessionists and terrorists?" asked the Punjab CM, slamming the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government at the Centre for "resorting to such reprehensible and oppressive tactics in its desperation to undermine the peacefully protesting farmers' fighting spirit".

But these measures will not succeed in destroying the



resolve of the farmers, Capt Amarinder said, adding that the Centre will rather end up provoking them into stronger reaction.

Questioning the intent of the Narendra Modi government, which he charged seemed bent on pushing the farmers over

the edge through such intimidatory actions, the CM warned that the BJP's most powerful minds will not be able to control the situation if things get irretrievably out of hand.

Instead of resolving the crisis triggered by its "draconian farm legislations" against which

farmers have been protesting for months, the Modi government was resorting to "victimisation and harassment" of the protesting farmers and their supporters, Capt Amarinder said, condemning it as a "regressive step" that would lead to further harden-

ing of the farmers' stance.

It was obvious, he charged, that the BJP-led Centre neither cared for the farmers and their concerns nor understood their psyche. "Punjabis are fighters by nature, they are imbued with the fighting spirit which makes them among the best warriors in the world," he said, adding that the Centre's coercive actions will only provoke the farmers from Punjab to react negatively.

Capt Amarinder expressed

shock over the Centre's "unrelenting" opposition to the farmers' "genuine and justified" demands and its "total failure" to empathise with the cause and concerns of the farmers who have been bravely holding the record cold of Delhi as they continue to hold protests at the national capital's borders, with many of them succumbing to the harsh weather and prolonged exposure to cold amid the Covid pandemic.

Not only had the Centre been standing on ego in its "adamant" refusal to repeal its "black" agri laws, it was "actively and shamelessly indulging in strong-arm tactics" to suppress the voice of the farmers, the CM said, pointing to the IT notices issued to several big arthiyas (grain commission agents) of Punjab about a month ago and the recent NIA notices that were,

he added, clearly aimed at pressuring farmers into withdrawing their stir.

These "low-level actions" will not suppress the voice of farmers, or those millions of Indians who are supporting the "annadaatas" in their battle for survival, said Capt Amarinder, adding that if the Modi government had any shame left it should immediately withdraw the farm laws and sit down across the table with all the stakeholders, especially farmers, to usher in an era of genuine agricultural reforms.

HP extends ban on poultry import for another week

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 18 JANUARY

Services and Sports Minister Rakesh Pathania directed officers to continue maintaining strict vigil and active surveillance on all habitats of migratory birds in the state and also tackle any unusual mortality in wild birds as per set protocols.

After reviewing the measures being undertaken by the Wildlife Wing of the Forest department to contain Avian Influenza outbreak in the Pong Dam reservoir, he expressed satisfaction over sharp decline in mortality numbers of birds in the last few days.

Pathania said ten Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) of Wildlife Wing would continue to work in the wetland for collection and safe disposal of dead birds as per protocol till no mortality is recorded.

Headed that the total mortality count till date in the Pong Dam Lake wildlife sanctuary was 4936. The Minister lauded the efforts of the Wildlife Wing and its field offices for taking timely and effective action in containing the outbreak and preventing its further spread to domestic poultry.

He also advised the personnel involved in these operations to ensure all bio-safety measures for their protection against Avian Influenza virus.

AWARENESS DRIVE



Cyclists taking part in a road safety awareness campaign during a state-level function in Shimla in Himachal Pradesh on Monday.

LALIT KUMAR

U'khand plans to reopen schools from class 6 upwards from Feb

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 18 JANUARY

The Uttarakhand government is planning to reopen schools from class six upwards from next month.

A high-level meeting of the state education department took place in Dehradun on Monday, in which many issues were discussed. One of the issues that featured in the meeting was reopening of schools from class six onwards.

After the coronavirus lockdown, the state government restarted academic activities for students of ten and twelve classes on 2 November last year.

Disclosing about the details of the meeting, Uttarakhand education minister Arvind Pandey said, "Opening of schools from class 6 upwards, departmental promotions,



Uttarakhand education minister Arvind Pandey during a meeting of the state education department in Dehradun on Monday.

appointment procedures and other important issues were discussed in the meeting."

If everything works out according to the education

department's plan, classes for students of the sixth standard upwards will resume from the first week of February.

H'yana CM seeks ₹5,000 cr from central budget for crucial projects

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 18 JANUARY

Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, on Monday urged the Central government to allocate Rs 5000 crore in the Union Budget 2021-2022 for execution of various important projects in the state.

The Haryana CM made this request while participating in a pre-budget meeting held by Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman through video conferencing.

During the meeting, Khattar apprised the finance minister about the financial requirements for various important projects of Haryana.

The CM while interacting with reporters after the meeting, the CM informed that for the restoration of short term

irrigation projects and ponds, Haryana has demanded a grant of Rs 1000 Crore in the Union Budget, 2021-2022. While, Rs 1000 Crore are being demanded for the development of the National Capital Region. In the Union Budget, 2021-2022, Haryana has also demanded Rs 3000 Crore for rural development, Covid-19 management, health and basic medical facilities, he said.

Meanwhile, the Haryana government has made it mandatory to have a 'Parivar Pehchan Patra' for registration of Rabi crops on the 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' portal. While giving information in this regard an official spokesperson of agriculture and farmers' welfare department said that the registration of Rabi crops has been started by the state government on the 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora' portal from 16 January.

The spokesperson said that it is mandatory for farmers to register their crops on this portal to sell their agricultural produce in mandis and take advantage of schemes related to agriculture or horticulture department.

He informed that this registration can also be done through the Common Service Centre. He has appealed to the farmers to get their crops registered on the portal fasal.haryana.gov.in through their Parivar Pehchan Patra.

Jai Ram asks officials to speed up construction of 5 heliports in HP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 18 JANUARY

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur has directed the officers to speed up the construction work of five heliports in the state—including at Kangnidhar in Mandi district, SASE (Manali) in Kullu district, Baddi in Solan district, and at Shimla and Rampur in Shimla district—so that the people including tourists could get their benefits at the earliest.

He was presiding over a meeting regarding development of heliports under RCS UDAN-2, here today.

Thakur said that the state government had already awarded the works of Kangnidhar, Baddi and Rampur heliports while works on Shimla and SASE (Manali) heliports were nearing completion.

He directed the executing agencies for completion of all these heliports within stipulated time period as these



would not only provide better facilities to high end tourists but would also give new fillip to the tourism activities. He said that the state government would provide required security for the proposed heliports as per the requirements of Union Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The chief minister said that additional land had been identified for Baddi heliport for additional Final Approach and Take Off Areas (FATO) which had already been constructed. These FATOs would be used

for helicopter parking and also for the visit of VVIPs as per their visit protocols.

He said that the state government had already carried geo-technical study and structure consultancy for stabilisation of cutting works at Kangnidhar.

The work on Shimla heliport was nearing completion and trial landing had been carried out on this heliport, said the Chief Minister adding that the state government

intended to complete this heliport at the earliest so that helicopters operation could be started under RCS UDAN-2. He said that this heliport being situated in the heart of the city would become popular amongst the tourists visiting the state capital.

Thakur said that the state government has taken up the matter regarding use of SASE heliport under UDAN-2 with the Ministry of Defence. The issue regarding providing basic facilities like passenger terminal building etc. has been taken with the SASE and DRDO authorities.

He said that all the existing airports at Shimla, Kangra and Kullu were being expanded to facilitate landing of bigger aeroplanes. He said that runway of Shimla airport would be increased by another 300 meters which would facilitate landing and take-off of bigger aeroplanes. This would provide better air connectivity to the state capital.

He said for competitive

examinations and good career opportunities, exact knowledge and competence are required, which students can assimilate easily during regular classes. He told that many facilities for the students and staff are in offering to give an international look to the University. He declared that all classes in all the constituent colleges will be opened in a phased manner.

He was interacting with the students of third-year class of B.Sc. (Honours) Agriculture after formal regular classes commenced in the College of Agriculture after ten months here.

The Vice-Chancellor asked the students to immediately take control of their farm practicals and begin the session with a positive approach.

He said for competitive

Graduate students have resumed their research work and the students of B.V.Sc. & AH have also joined regular classes.

Dean, College of Agriculture, Dr RK Kataria told that the interaction session has been arranged to build confidence and security among students. He said that online classes and examinations were held under extraordinary situation due to pandemic but these were no substitute for regular classes.

He said all pandemic related precautions will be observed in the colleges and hostels. The Dean said that it is a matter of great joy that a former student of his college Prof HK Chaudhary is holding the position of Vice-Chancellor and is interacting with the students.



Chandrababu Naidu, TDP leaders pay tribute to NTR on 25th anniversary. IANS

Man sets 10-year-old son ablaze for not studying: Angry over his 10-year-old son not focussing on studies, a man poured turpentine oil and set him ablaze, police said on Monday. The boy suffered 60 per cent burns. The boy's father, a labourer, is absconding, police said.

PTI

RMM: Members free to join any party

Statement comes after three dist secretaries join DMK in the presence of party president M K Stalin

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 18 JANUARY

The Rajini Makkal Mandram (RMM) came out with a statement on Monday allowing its members to join any political party they desired after resigning from the Mandram.

The statement comes in the wake of three district secretaries of RMM joining the DMK on Sunday in the presence of party president M K Stalin. The resignation of the Mandram office-bearers comes after Rajinikanth's recent abandonment of his plan to enter politics and face the Tamil Nadu Assembly elections, due during April-May this year.

Tuglak editor and RSS ideologue S Gurumurthi tried to get support for AIADMK-led NDA in Tamil Nadu from Rajinikanth after the super star decided not to launch his political outfit by claiming that Rajini still has the opportunity to strengthen anti-DMK forces in the state.

Gurumurthi also indirectly asked AIADMK to join hands even with VK Sasikala, the closest ally of late J Jayalalithaa to defeat DMK in the upcoming Assembly election.

Gurumurthi's first effort went in vain after an official statement from RMM on Monday stated that members of the organisation are free to work with any political parties they wish to.

But in the statement RMM administrator V M Sudhakar stressed up on the fact that though they join other parties, members of Rajini Makkal Mandram should not forget that they are fans of the actor.

After announcing that his political entry was confirmed and that he would unveil political plans on the 2021 New Year eve, Rajinikanth made a U-turn and said he was not entering politics and not starting a political party in view of his health condition and the corona pandemic.

A DMK press release said Thoothukudi district secretary A Joseph Stalin, Ramanathapuram district secretary K Senthil Selvanathan, Theni district secretary R Ganesan, IT wing leader K Saravanan, Ra-



There is no question of giving even an inch of land from Karnataka to Maharashtra.

KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER B S YEDIYURAPPA
CONDAMNING MAHA CM UDDHAV THACKERAY'S STATEMENT ON BORDER ISSUE

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ndia

Sexually abused by 38 men over months: Rape survivor

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MALAPPURAM (KERALA), 18 JANUARY

series of sexual abuses and molestation she had been exposed to.

Almost all the accused, charged with various crimes, including sexual abuse, have been arrested and remanded to judicial custody, the police officer said.

Malappuram CWC president Shajesh Bhasker said the CWC has taken all legal and logical steps to ensure the safety of the child, when she was released from the Child Home, about a year ago.

"The decision was taken by our five-member committee and in consultation with Child Protection Officer. This was done in tune with the Juvenile Justice Act, which says institutionalising a POCSO survivor should be last priority."

Basker said the CWC has been acting with utmost good faith and intentions. But there are some flaws in the after-care and follow-up of POCSO survivors once they are released in the custody of their parents or relatives, who undertake to protect them, he said.

Not dependent on Centre for vaccines: Hakim

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 18 JANUARY

With BJP accusing the Mamata Banerjee government of Covid vaccine pilferage, Trinamul leader and state municipal affairs minister, Firhad Hakim, chose to remind the saffron brigade-led central government that West Bengal can secure its own supply of vaccines if Centre deliberately cuts off adequate supply just for the sake of securing political mileage.

The Trinamul leader, who has been rallying against the BJP ahead of upcoming Assembly polls, warned the BJP and its leaders of Bengal unit not to politicise vaccines which should be made available to citizens all over the country to save their lives from the coronavirus.

Hakim while addressing a public rally chose to clarify to the people that "vaccine is not a private property of the central government. Every state pays taxes to the centre and it is with that money that a central government is able to run the country" he said.

Hakim was caustic in his criticisms of BJP Bengal president

Dilip Ghosh who had blamed Mamata Banerjee for vaccine theft.

Hakim said, "Even the BJP doesn't care about what Dilip Ghosh has to say. If the BJP government does not send an adequate supply of vaccines to Bengal, we will secure sufficient vaccines for the people of West Bengal. It is only the chief minister of this state who has promised free vaccine shots to all citizens of the state." The minister questioned the Centre why it could not provide free vaccines to all Indians.

Addressing the people in the rally, he alleged that India knows how Narendra Modi went onto become the Prime Minister from chief minister of Gujarat. "The Adanis and Ambanis had to pump in crores of rupees to make it possible. There were many senior BJP leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi and LK Advani who could have been the PM but they were sidelined. Now in a quid pro quo, Modivans sell off the entire country and its farmers to these business tycoons. People of West Bengal will never welcome the saffron brigade."

Bengal BJP banks on Modi charisma, other vote-catchers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 18 JANUARY

In a bid to intensify the campaigning and to create more impact on voters ahead of

TENDER

NORTHERN RAILWAY

First Corrigendum

Sub.: 1st corrigendum against Tender Notice No. 178-Sig/CW/329/Pt-II Dated: 15.01.2021 to be opened on 10.02.2021 invited by Dy. CSTE/CW/INDLS for and on behalf of president of India for the work of "S&T work for alteration of PI at Kathua and Madhopur Punjab stations and associated telecom work at adjoining stations in cw doubling across Ravi Bridge section over Firozpur Division of Northern Railway" May now be read with following correction.

1. Earnest money may be read as NIL instead of Rs. 1,32,700/- Bid security deposit in lieu of Earnest money need to be submitted. Detailed tender schedule may be checked on IREPS Portal. No.: 178-Sig/CW/329/Pt-II Dated: 18.01.2021 13/2/2021

Serving Customers with a Smile

The Dy. Chief Engineer/TMC/Line, S.E. Road, New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:-

1. Name of work and location Annual Maintenance Contract for Servicing, Repairing, Maintenance, Overhauling & Supply of Spares for 09 (Nine) Nos. OEM M/s Phootas Transair Ltd., Patna make UTAV Track Machines working over Northern Railway for a period of one financial year 2020-21.

2. Completion period of the work One Financial year 2020-21

3. Approx. Cost of work Rs. 26.61 Lakhs

4. Cost of Tender Document Nil

5. Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online) Rs. 53,200/-

6. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender Tender bid may be uploaded upto 15:00 hrs on 16.02.2021 on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened soon after 15:00 hrs on 16.02.2021.

7. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document The detailed e-tender notice and Tender Document is available on Railway website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in Above tender document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 02.02.2021 to 16.02.2021. The bidders who desire to participate against e-tenders, are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which, they would require to obtain class III digital certificate (if already not obtained) issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Tender Notice No. 1-W-DyCETMCL-UTV-08-20-21 Dated: 18.01.2021 13/2/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

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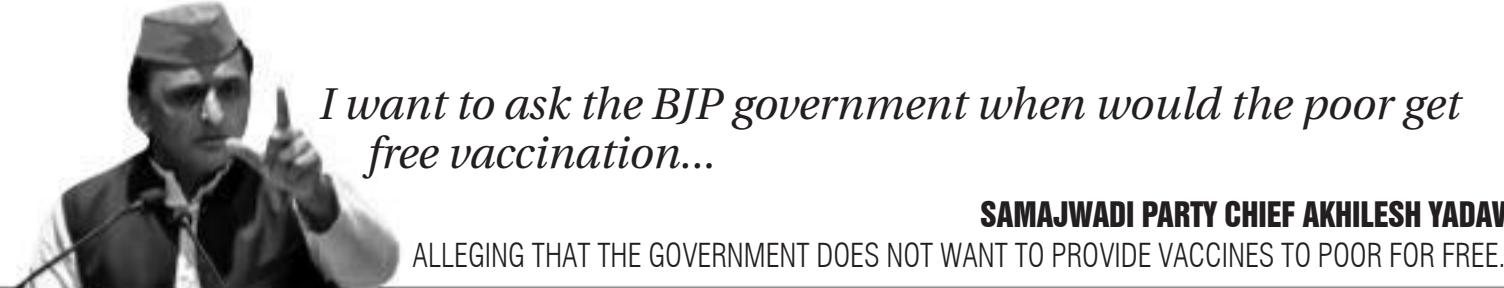
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4. Cost of Tender Document Nil

5. Earnest Money



ALLEGING THAT THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT TO PROVIDE VACCINES TO POOR FOR FREE.

THUMBNAILS



Women drivers before 'India Against Road Crash' awareness campaign, in Amritsar on Monday. ■ IANS

Rafale in R'Day parade: The newly inducted Rafale fighter aircraft will feature in India's Republic Day parade and culminate the flypast by carrying out the 'Vertical Charlie' formation, the Indian Air Force said on Monday. ■ PTI

UP legislative council polls: Uttar Pradesh deputy chief minister Dinesh Sharma and former IAS officer AK Sharma were among 10 BJP candidates who filed their nomination for the biennial polls to the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council on Monday. ■ PTI

Covid will hamper progress, reverse gains, says Vardhan

Stresses need to ensure fair and equitable distribution of coronavirus vaccines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

The poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit by Covid-19 as the impact of the crisis will reverse hard-won development gains and hamper progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals, Union health minister Harsh Vardhan said on Monday, stressing the need to ensure fair and equitable distribution of coronavirus vaccines.

Vardhan, who chaired the 148th session of WHO Executive Board through video conference, said the pandemic has presented an opportunity whereby health has been placed on the global agenda of governments, partners and donors.

He said Covid-19 has revealed the need to invest in health, and the call for sustainable funding to the World Health Organisation (WHO) so that the global body can fully respond to public health needs, adding that any proposed increase in budget needs to also consider the global economic impact of the disease.

The minister thanked the medical professionals, scientists and researchers as well as other essential workers around the world who continue working under difficult and challenging cir-



During the Covid-19 vaccination at Patparganj, in the Capital on Monday. ■ SNS

cumstances to deal with the pandemic. He also offered his condolences to the families whose dear ones died due to the disease, according to a statement by the health ministry.

The speed at which Covid-19 vaccines are being successfully produced across many countries, prominent breakthroughs are taking place, a tech investment boom is being witnessed and digital technologies are being adopted. All this is combining to raise hopes of a new era of progress, he said.

The Union minister also expressed optimism that in the current year, the unprecedented crisis caused by the pandemic shall be mitigated and successfully reversed through committed political leadership and sustained global cooperation and solidarity.

"This year, we shall see intensified international cooperation to contain, mitigate and

Night curfew withdrawn in Raj, RT-PCR cost slashed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR, 18 JANUARY

The Rajasthan government on Monday decided to withdraw the night curfew in view of a decline in Covid-19 cases.

The government also decided to further slash the rate of RT-PCR test, a confirmatory test for Covid-19, at private labs from Rs. 800 to Rs. 500.

Also, the number of reserved Covid-19 beds in private hospitals with a capacity of above 100 beds will be reduced to a minimum 10.

The decisions were taken at a review meeting chaired by chief minister Ashok Gehlot at his residence.

In the Covid-19 review

meeting, it has been decided to end the night curfew in the state and to give some relaxations in a phased manner. But it will be necessary to follow health protocols, otherwise the number of infected patients may increase, Gehlot tweeted.

The state government had, on 21 November, decided to impose the night curfew in eight districts from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. following a spurt in coronavirus cases.

The night curfew was initially imposed in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Bikaner, Udaipur, Ajmer, Alwar and Bhilwara district headquarters, and a few days later it was extended to five more districts headquarters of Nagaur, Pali, Tonk, Sikar and Ganganagar.

defeat the pandemic by using enhanced scientific knowledge and best practices," he said.

"While each country has its unique approach in dealing with public health based on the strengths of their existing health systems and national policies and programs, I am sure that together we will continue to bring about improvements, aligned with our collective discussions," he said.

Tandav stirs controversy, but it's not the only one

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

A Muslim boy and a Hindu girl kissing in *The Suitable Boy*, the name of a dog in *Pataal Lok*, a Pakistani actor in a starring role in *Ae Dil Hai Mushkil*... Amazon Prime Video's *Tandav* is the latest in a long line of films and web series that have found themselves in trouble for one reason or another.

Tandav, a nine-episode political thriller starring Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia and Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub, started streaming last week and is neck deep in trouble with loud calls for its boycott and an FIR against its makers in

A protest against makers of Web Series *Tandav*, in the Capital on Monday. ■ SNS

promise he would not "engage with talent" from Pakistan for the film's smooth release in October 2016.

PADMAAVAT
The Sanjay Leela Bhansali

film led to a massive political controversy before its release with fringe group Karni Sena demanding a ban on the movie, blaming it for distorting historical facts on Padmavati. Bhansali's movie's set in Kolhapur was set on fire and the director was manhandled while shooting the movie in Jaipur. At one point, actor Deepika Padukone faced threats to her life with a bounty being put on her head following a rumour that the film depicted a love scene between Padmavati and Allauddin Khilji. The director made strenuous efforts to deny the rumour. The movie also underwent a title change from "Padmavati" to "Padmaavat" and

released in January 2018.

PATAAL LOK

Like "Tandav", the show on Amazon Prime Video also looked at the nexus between media, politics and police. Set in Delhi, the Anushka Sharma-produced show, which started streaming from May 15, 2020, stirred controversy with BJP MLA Nandkishor Gurjar filing a complaint for allegedly using his photograph in the series without his permission. Moreover, the hashtag *#Patal Lok* trended on social media for its depiction of communal issues, beeflyching and other issues. There were also objections to a pet dog being named 'Savitri'.

Blow to Bimal as top aide leaves party

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DARJEELING, 18 JANUARY

An active central committee leader of the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha (Bimal Gurung camp), Tilak Chand Roka, today announced his resignation from the party, citing differences in political ideology. Mr Roka, who was also the Darjeeling subdivision coordinator of the party and who held different major posts in the party in the past, further said that he could not be part of a political party that supports the Trinamool Congress.

"Our political ideology does not match, which I have verbally informed the party president, Bimal Gurung. I have been on the streets during the agi-

tation in 2017 and have seen atrocities of the Bengal government, like a person being martyred right in front of me. It hurts to think of them and my mind does not agree in making such a government victorious again," said Mr Roka, who was also the former Sabhadar of the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) from the Chunchung-Mariabung constituency.

"After I came out of jail, I had already promised that I would be with the party until our brothers and sisters who were displaced return. I had also told them in an earlier meeting that I would work for the party, but would not ask for votes for the ruling party (TMC) or vote for them," he added.

MARCHING AHEAD



The rehearsal for Republic Day starts from today at Red Road in Kolkata on Monday. ■ SNS

J&K police arrest 2 JeM terrorists

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 18 JANUARY

The J&K Police on Monday nabbed two terrorists of Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit and recovered two AK-74 rifles, pistol and grenades which they had received from Pakistan through drones at the international border in Samba area of Jammu.

According to the police, the two Kashmir-bound terror operatives were carrying a cache of arms and ammunition that was dropped with the help of drones at Vijaypur in the Samba district.

Kolkata metro returns to pre-Covid levels sans e-pass

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 18 JANUARY

As the city metro returned to its pre-Covid norms allowing commuters to avail services without an e-pass, it brought major relief to the office goers on the first working day of the week.

With no digital passes, additional number of services, the city's lifeline transport system witnessed a pre-pandemic Monday after over 10 months. It was the first Monday since the resumption of services in September when the metro operated without e-passes like it did in the pre-Covid times.

However, even if the digital passes have been withdrawn, no tokens are being issued by the metro authorities as a precautionary measure.

Since the resumption of commercial services in September, the digital passes became an important part of Kolkata Metro Railway in crowd management. With an all-time requirement to only morning and evening office hours, the e-passes had become an integral part of the metro commuters, particularly office-goers.

The withdrawal of the digital passes, has come as a great relief to the office goers.

How BJP downgrades Shahnawaz's status with Bihar Council berth

MANOJ CHAUHAN
PATNA, 18 JANUARY

Kumar-led NDA government in the state and could also be used as a prominent Muslim face to lure the minority class people to the party. The development assumes significance in the light of AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi focussing his attention in the Muslim-dominated Seemandhra region of Bihar.

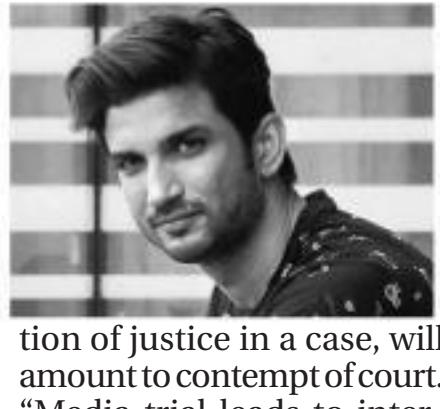
the party's tally went down from 20 to 14 of the total 26," was how Hussain had told the media soon after the result of the 2004 LS poll results came out.

He added that the implication of the Gujarat riots was felt nationwide as the minority community got alienated. Current Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat when the month-long riots had taken place. It is also said Hussain belongs to LK Advani camp.

Last month, former Bihar's deputy chief minister Mod in a similar fashion was shifted to national politics with a berth in the Rajya Sabha.

For the past 15 years, Junior Modi who never faced the voters in the elections had been serving as a deputy to chief minister Nitish Kumar. It is said he enjoyed very good rapport with the chief minister and this time again the latter too wanted him continue as his deputy again but the BJP was not interested.

Media trial hinders justice: HC on Sushant death case coverage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 18 JANUARY

tion of justice in a case, will amount to contempt of court.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni said the press must avoid discussions and debates relating to criminal investigations, and it should confine only to informative reportage that is in public interest.

The bench also held that prima facie some reportage by Republic TV and Times Now in the aftermath of the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput were "contemptuous".

The court said it had, however, decided against initiating any action against the two TV channels under the Contempt of Courts Act.

The bench said media trials ran counter to the programme code framed under the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, it observed.

"Any reportage has to be in accordance with the norms of journalistic standards and ethics, else media houses stand to face contempt action," it said. The directions are a part of the verdict pronounced by the bench on a bunch of public interest litigations (PIL) seeking that the press, particularly TV news channels, be restrained in their reportage on Rajput's death.

The HC said it had tried in its verdict to answer questions on striking a balance among one's freedom of speech and expression, a fair investigation, one's right to a fair trial and to what extent, if at all, should the press and media reporting be regulated, if it interfered with or tended to obstruct the administration of justice.

All efforts made to extradite Mallya: Centre to SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

Uttam written to him on the status of extradition of Mallya from the United Kingdom.

The solicitor general stat-

ed that Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has raised the issue of extradition with the UK government and the Centre is making all serious efforts to extradite Mallya.

He said that government is trying its best but status remains the same and from political executive level to administrative level the matter is being looked into repeatedly. The bench took the letter on record.

Mallya, an accused in bank loan default case of over Rs 9,000 crore involving his defunct Kingfisher Airlines from United Kingdom, but the process is being delayed to some legal issues involved in the matter.

A bench of Justices U U Lalit and Ashok Bhushan posted the matter for further hearing on March 15, after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sought some time to file report on the status of extradition of Mallya.

At the outset, Mehta shared a letter of the Ministry of External Affairs' official Devesh

Note on April 18, 2017. The letter submitted by the law officer stated that, the Ministry of External Affairs has been informed by the UK government that there is a further legal issue that needs resolving before Mallya can be extradited.

The top court had also refused to accept the plea of advocate E C Agarwala, appearing for Mallya in the apex court, seeking discharge from the case. The Centre had said that following the refusal of leave to appeal, Mallya's surrender to India should, in principle, have been completed within 28 days but the UK home office intimated that there is a further legal issue which needs to be resolved before Vijay Mallya's extradition may take place.

Mallya, an accused in bank loan default case of over Rs 9,000 crore involving his defunct Kingfisher Airlines, is in the UK since March 2016. He is on bail on an extradition warrant executed three years ago by Scotland

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First package

Even his detractors, pre-eminently Donald Trump, will concede that Joe Biden has scored an achievement five days before his inaugural. While the outgoing President had stumbled while trying to address coronavirus, Mr Biden on Friday unveiled a \$1.9 trillion stimulus plan for the economy of an America blighted by the pandemic. This is a positive initiative before the next President steps into the Oval Office. If passed by Congress, it will include \$1 trillion for households, with direct payments of \$1,400 to all Americans. The relief proposal includes \$415 billion to fight the virus and \$440 bn for small enterprises. Mr Biden, a Democrat, does have a point to prove. It bears recall that he had pledged to counter the pandemic that has killed more than 400,000 people in the United States. He campaigned last year vowing to do a better job handling the virus than the outgoing President. "I promise we will not forget you," was his message to the electorate. The direct payments of \$1,400 would come on top of \$600 provided in a relief bill enacted last month. Mr Biden's proposal comes even as a winter surge of the coronavirus on either side of the Atlantic breaks records; a renewed lockdown is already in force in Boris Johnson's Britain. Each day brings well over 200,000 new cases in the US and the daily death toll sometimes tops 4,000. These are staggering figures by any reckoning. Mr Biden signalled his intent with a heady primetime speech on Thursday night from his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware ~ "A crisis of deep human suffering is in plain sight and there's no time to waste. The very health of our nation is at stake. We have to act and we have to act now. There will be stumbles, but I will always be honest with you about both the progress we're making and what setbacks we meet." The coronavirus package must be viewed in the context of his presentation.

In terms of pump-priming, Mr Biden's plan envisages \$20 billion to vaccinate Americans. In a moment of blistering candour, Mr Biden lamented that "the vaccine rollout has been a dismal failure thus far." His administration plans to deliver 100 million jabs in 100 days. Altogether, Mr Biden's is a remarkably comprehensive plan of action. US officials have acknowledged that the vaccination programme has not been working as smoothly as planned, and a goal to vaccinate 20 million people by the end of 2020 was not met. The crucial question now is whether Congress will accept the plan. Republicans are likely to object to piling up trillions more in debt that the US has already incurred to tackle the pandemic, and the incoming President acknowledged his plan "does not come cheaply". But he will be helped by his fellow Democrats controlling both chambers of Congress, if only by narrow margins.

Slide in Uganda

From the era of Idi Amin's Uganda to that of Yoweri Museveni, the slide towards instability and chaos persists in the troubled country. The result of the election, which has propelled the latter to a sixth five-year term in a row, albeit seemingly commendable, has rather ironically served to intensify the instability to which the continent of Africa has been no stranger. In point of fact, Uganda showcases the continental drift. The result has been rejected by the Opposition, which has cloaked its action on Sunday with the charge of fraudulence. This seems to be a faint echo of the chaos in the United States where the defeated presidential candidate, Donald Trump, has rejected the outcome. The rest is history. It is a measure of the State's dubious control over the electoral process that the Opposition has demanded the release of their leader and Museveni's rival, Bobi Wine, who has been under house arrest for several months. The fact that he contested with inbuilt constraints underlines the almost chronic instability in Uganda, caused by a fractious polity. On closer reflection, the response of the Opposition has been far more virulent than in the United States. Wine has dismissed Museveni's victory as "cooked up and fraudulent". The electoral process was defective from the start not the least because the results were compiled in the midst of an internet blackout. Despite his defeat, Wine, who personified the major challenge to Museveni, was in the final stages of the campaign assured of robust support in the urban areas, where frustration has deepened over time given burgeoning unemployment and corruption. With the voter turnout calibrated at 52 per cent, Museveni won 58 per cent of the votes and Wine 34 per cent. Problems with the electoral process have been cited by others, too, and been termed "fundamentally flawed" by a top US diplomat in Africa. Truth to tell, Thursday's vote yielded no winners and losers in the truest sense of the terms. Indeed, Uganda bears witness to the worst election-linked violence ever since Museveni assumed power in 1986. More than 50 people were killed last November when security forces tried to quell riots in the aftermath of Wine's arrest. He has petitioned the International Criminal Court over alleged torture and other abuses by security forces.

Uganda's Election Commission has evaded questions about how the results were transmitted during the internet blackout by claiming that "we designed our own system". The EC could not explain how it worked, however.

The arrests of independent monitors and the denial of accreditation to many members of the US observer mission has further complicated the monitoring of the vote. The European Union has alleged that its offer to deploy electoral experts was not taken up. While demanding full restoration of internet access, the United States has warned that its "response hinges on what the Ugandan government does now". Uganda is in crisis and the plot thickens.

Birth of Dynasticism

In retrospect, there is no doubt that between Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay, a dynastic tradition had been introduced in the Congress and soon enough, this contagion spread to other political parties



Until S. Nijalingappa was the president of Indian National Congress (INC), the party was professional, led by a galaxy of leaders. The Congress in West Bengal was headed by Atulya Ghosh, Chandrabhan Gupta in Uttar Pradesh, Sachchidananda Sinha in Bihar, Biju Patnaik in Orissa, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy in Andhra Pradesh, Yashwantrao Chavhan in Maharashtra, Morarji Desai in Gujarat, K. Kamraj in Tamil Nadu and the like.

Following the death of President Zakir Husain, there followed a presidential election. Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy was proposed by the Congress as its candidate. Indira Gandhi did not agree and informally encouraged VV Giri to stand as an independent candidate. The Congress leaders called the Syndicate by the press did not approve of Indira's irregular behaviour. The voting that followed went in favour of Giri, who became the President of India. From the viewpoint of the Congress party, this was tantamount to the grossest indiscipline. They therefore, expelled her from the party.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi called her group of MPs and other followers the Congress (Ruling) and with the support of the Communist parties in the Lok Sabha, continued to be the Prime Minister. The rest of the Congressmen, led by the Syndicate, called themselves the Congress (Organization). The structure of the party, the real estate and various committees like the PCCs and DCCs remained with the organization. For a year or two, members, whether senior or junior, continued to cross sides. Mostly, the flow was from Organization to Ruling.

The Congress (R) continued to be in power until March 1977; then came the post-Emergency election, which reduced the ruling Congress to 160 seats, won mostly from the south. The Hindu heartland sent only two members to the Lok Sabha, one from Chhindwara in Madhya Pradesh and another from Rajasthan. The Congress then ceased to be ruling and called itself the Congress (K), initial of K. Brahmananda Reddy, ex-chief minister of Andhra Pradesh.

Over the months, Indira Gandhi let it be known that she

would like to be the president of the party; without this privilege, she could not carry on. This issue was discussed at length during the December 1977 AICC meeting. The majority answer was negative. The meeting ended on the 31st of the month and before leaving the hall, she let it be known that she would be available at the Glass House, which was well known in Bangalore. Exactly four AICC members followed her there; two of them being the late Kamalapati Tripathi and Subrata Mukherji, who is at present a cabinet minister in West Bengal.

It was soon announced in the press that a new party had taken birth, and was named the Congress (I). In due

course, the Congress (K) members began walking across to the Congress (I). A few who differed formed their own rump, one example being the Congress (Socialist). In 1978, Indira Gandhi contested a bye-election to the Lok Sabha from the Chikmagalur constituency in Karnataka. The election was well managed, especially with the help of chief minister Devraj Urs. Her opponent was Veerendra Patil of the Janata Party who had earlier been Chief Minister of the state. By 1979, rumours had started flying about the future of the Janata Party government. It was rumoured that Indira Gandhi's son Sanjay was maneuvering with Chaudhary Charan Singh's supporters to bring down the Moraji Desai government, which eventually fell on 28 July 1979. It was replaced by a government led by Charan Singh, supported from the outside by the Congress.

The new Prime Minister did not have the confidence to face the Lok Sabha. Fresh elections had to be called before the end of six months, which brought Indira Gandhi back to power, with Sanjay Gandhi as her de facto deputy, although officially, he represented only the Amethi constituency.

Hardly anyone had the courage to complain openly, although many whispered about

there being family rule. In retrospect, there is no doubt that between Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay, a dynastic tradition had been introduced in the Congress and soon enough, this contagion spread to other political parties. Very sadly in June 1980, Sanjay Gandhi crashed near the Safdarjung airport in Delhi while flying a two-seater aircraft. Thereafter, for quite a while, it was believed that Indira Gandhi's preoccupation was to somehow persuade her elder son Rajiv, who was then an Indian Airlines pilot, to join the Congress and thus replace Sanjay. She did eventually succeed and in May 1981, Rajiv contested a bye-election in his deceased brother's Amethi constituency.

Although Rajiv was not politically savvy, he began dabbling in Congress affairs as much as he could. He was soon designated general secretary; the message was that he was party president Indira's number two.

He did not have a political aptitude, but the party flatterers saw to it that he enjoyed the pomp and glory of his office. Many a Congressman could see the blunders Rajiv was making, and some even whispered their fears. For example, in Gujarat, the Congress had been looked upon as the most Leftist party but Rajiv Gandhi, his behaviour, as well as what he wore and used gave a contrarian impression. His Ray-Ban glasses, Gucci footwear, fancy watches as well his fondness for pork cutlets all gave him the image of a young, handsome man overflowing with wealth. A number of Congressmen remarked in private that their party was earlier referred to by the common folk as apni party, i.e., our party. That popular impression would soon die, they feared. There was general agreement on one point, and that was that Rajiv's demeanor was that of an archetypal yuvraja (crown prince) of India.

Then, the assassination of Indira Gandhi on 31 October 1984, shocked the nation. By 11 am, BCC Radio news confirmed that she was no more. Yet, All India Radio as well as Doordar-

shan merely reported that she had been shot at by her security guard and moved to the AIIMS hospital. Believe it or not, this report was repeated until 6 pm. By then, President Zail Singh as well as Rajiv Gandhi had managed to reach Rashtrapati Bhavan; the former from West Asia and the latter from West Bengal. Rajiv was sworn in as Prime Minister, without him being elected as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party. Such was the power of the dynasty, which ignored even a statutory election.

In 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. There was no ready-made heir. His children Rahul and Priyanka were too young. The search began for the weakest but acceptable substitute. Rajiv's widow Sonia Gandhi's choice fell on PV Narasimha Rao, who had retired; most of whose baggage had reached Andhra Pradesh, whose heart was reported to be functioning at part capacity, and who had no record of popularity. That Rao turned out to be such a capable and decisive person was a subsequent bolt from the blue. That was sufficient for Sonia Gandhi to feel "enough is enough; let me take the reins in my own hands."

The 2004 and 2009 general elections were fought under her leadership with Dr. Manmohan Singh being given the power of attorney from day to day as Prime Minister. Rahul Gandhi had entered politics, but did not seem to have the confidence to handle a single portfolio in the ministry. Yet, as favourite baba-logic, he and his sister could tear to pieces the public statement of the PM's policy.

The Congress had dominated Indian politics so much and for so long that it was like a university of politics, college and school rolled into one. Most political parties now appear to have caught the fever of dynasty, for better or worse. In the north, there are the Akalis, and the Samajwadis in UP, the Lalu clan in Bihar and the TMC in Bengal which seems afflicted by the same malaise lately.

The south is also not free of this bug, with the DMK and the Gowda Janata Dal being examples. Come to Maharashtra, where we have the Shiv Sena and Sharad Pawar's NCP. Whither Indian democracy?

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Trends in public policy

Governments around the world are aware of the environmental problems and challenges besieging the planet. This has led to the framing of public policy focusing on the balancing of economic, social, and environmental issues. The trend in pushing economic development is increasingly based on innovation being applied to increase productivity and further improve people's quality of life. Reducing the amount of greenhouse gas emissions and PM2.5 (particles less than 2.5 micrometres in diameter) dust in the air are critical areas of emphasis in framing policies to promote the development of industry and the use of electric vehicles seriously until it becomes a national agenda. A 2017 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) study illustrates the policy of supporting the manufacture and use of electric vehicles in the leading industrialised countries, including China and Japan. They have a comprehensive policy package covering five areas. They provide a 10-15 per cent subsidy to customers; offer tax incentives and manufacturing subsidies; offer research and development support for more than 20 years by funding automobile companies to develop batteries and electric startup companies, woo foreign direct investment or determine the proportion of governmental electric vehicles; and issue laws and regulations limiting the number of fossil-fuel vehicles in big cities. Public policy in developed countries, including China and Japan, have supported and promoted the manufacture and use of electric vehicles seriously, reflecting the determinants.

THE NATION
www.nationmultimedia.com
nation of the governments to revolutionise the automotive industry and reduce dependence on fossil fuels and facilitate environmental conservation.

The Chinese government has issued 39 policies for promotion and support of EVs, while Japan has 26, with the highest priority being on demand-side subsidies, followed by promoting technology research and development. Increased use of EVs and support for production have lowered the prices of electric cars. This is considered a complete stimulus covering both supply and demand. A master's degree thesis by Vut Mahamongkol in 2020 from Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Political Science, on Electric Vehicle Industrial Promotion Policy Formulation in Thailand has compiled the current policies to promote and support the production and use of electric vehicles by the Thai government. It found that there were only two areas of policies to support and promote EVs, namely the Promotion Policy, especially tax incentives to promote investments from foreign investors, totalling four policies, and for the promotion of research and development. Imposing the condition that foreign companies transfer advanced technology, such as the production of batteries that can charge quickly, would allow Thai entrepreneurs to develop their manufacturing capabilities from just assembly and fabrication. An overall evaluation shows the Thai government's policies are not comprehensive enough to cover all dimensions. As a result, the prices of electric cars in Thailand are quite high ~ about one million Thai baht (\$33,000) or more. Currently, no foreign company has set up a manufacturing plant for electric cars. All the EVs are imported.

The south is also not free of this bug, with the DMK and the Gowda Janata Dal being examples. Come to Maharashtra, where we have the Shiv Sena and Sharad Pawar's NCP. Whither Indian democracy?

NOT CONVINCED

SIR, In his letter 'More to it than meets the eye' (January 15), Mr Nirupam Halder found no logic in thwarting the implementation of farm laws; especially when it was designed to improve the economic condition of common farmers and accelerate the process to improve GDP. Be that as it may, why did the Centre fail to either convince the agitating farmers or the apex court that the three laws are meant to protect the interests of farmers and not to take away their fundamental rights? It appears that the apex court was also not prima facie satisfied with the controversial laws, which prompted it to stay their implementation and appoint a 4-member committee to resolve the impasse.

That farmers from other parts of the country were conspicuous by their absence does not mean that they did not lend support to the agitating farmers. They had already voiced their protests through their respective governments. If the law is repealed or amended, the same will be applicable to all.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, 15 January.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Budget will pose a challenge

SIR, This is to compliment Devendra Saksena for the thought-provoking article, 'Budget Musings' (15 January). The Finance Minister is going to present the annual Budget in three weeks. Any FM would now have to deal with a more challenging and uncertain economic environment now. Apart from challenges created by the pandemic-triggered compression in the national output forecast for 2020-21, the government has also got to weave in the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission. Now two principal aspects of the Budget need to be properly scrutinised.

The first is the fiscal policy the Budget charts out through taxation and spending measures. Second is the overall policy road map which needs to be spelt out to boost sentiment. The big question looming in the background is, how bad has the economic damage been?

The last few months have given cause for cheer as there are signs that the compression in GDP may be in the range of 7-8 per cent, a level lower than forecast earlier. But the danger is that the real extent of damage is not yet visible. The first cut of GDP data is a relatively inaccurate description of what happened to smaller firms and the informal sector. Moreover, the government has suspended operations of the Insolvency and Bank-

ruptcy Code for a year till end-March. This suggests that fiscal policy needs to be flexible enough to deal with what comes after the support system is withdrawn. Within its fiscal policy, the government has little room to tinker with the direct tax framework right now.

Significant changes were made to corporate taxes towards the end of 2019. They have not had the time or occasion to make an impact. This leaves the FM with mainly spending to influence the economic trajectory. If we have a look at the government's data, we shall come to know that there has been no real fiscal stimulus. There will be one required after the existing support system is withdrawn. Also, the revival so far has not really translated into durable job expansion. CMIE's unemployment data showed that it increased to 9.1 per cent in December from 6.5 per cent the previous

month, owing to more people returning in search of work. Overall, the budget needs to be a mix of stimulus through spending and clear messaging on the economic roadmap, I endorse Mr Saksena's concluding comments quoting former US President Herbert Hoover.

Yours, etc., NC Ghosh, Madanpur, 15 January.

EXPAND PANEL

SIR, The Supreme Court though moving into uncharted waters while staying the implementation of the three farm laws that are at the heart of the dispute in the current farmers' agitation

is correct in constituting a committee to advise it on what to do next. What the Court could have done is to name the members of the committee after a few days - after properly examining the antecedents of nominees which could possibly have avoided the farmers' charge that those nominated now are in favour of the farm laws. With one of the nominees recusing now, this is the opportunity for the Court to expand the committee to an odd number of maybe seven and nominate those with a more open mind towards the promulgated laws. This could possibly change the attitude of the farmers not to appear before any Court appointed committee.

The farmers should also understand that going against the government in an agitational mode is unacceptable but the same approach cannot be used with the Supreme Court since refusal to appear before the named committee would only mean that the farmers' views will not be heard. Moreover there is no other recourse to the farmers once they go against the Court and decisions are made without their participation.

Yours, etc., S Kamat, Goa, 15 January.



The government has viewed the gems and jewellery sector as a thrust area for export promotion

HARDEEP SINGH PURI

MINISTER OF STATE FOR COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

THUMBNAILS

PFC bonds: Power Finance Corporation's Rs 5,000-crore taxable non-convertible debentures (NCDs) issue was subscribed close to nine times on Monday and closed for subscription 11 days ahead of the schedule, according to the BSE data. Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has planned to raise Rs 10,000 crore through bonds in two tranches. The first tranche of Rs 5,000 crore, including Rs 4,500 crore green-shoe option, opened for subscription on Friday (15 January) and was scheduled to close on 29 January. But the issue had to be closed on Monday due to over-subscription on BSE.

PTI

Tata Motors pact: Tata Motors on Monday said it has entered into partnerships with leading private banks, including HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Yes Bank, to fund its commercial vehicles. The tie-ups aim to enhance value offerings for customers of both new as well as pre-owned vehicles throughout the customer lifecycle, Tata Motors said in a statement. The offerings arising out of these tie-ups will include ancillary financial provisions such as fuel financing, working capital financing, aggregate financing and service cost financing.

PTI

Vivo smartphone: Smart phone maker Vivo has announced the launch of the all-new Vivo Y12s in India. The latest addition in the youthful Y-series portfolio boasts a 5000 mAh battery that supports AI power saving technology. The phone has been priced at Rs 9,990 for 3GB RAM + 32GB ROM variant, said a Press release.

SNS

POCO achievement: POCO announced that it has emerged as the third largest online smartphone player in the Indian market. As per Counterpoint India Smartphone Monthly Model Tracker 2020 Nov, two out of the top three devices sold online were POCO devices, with POCO M2 and POCO C3 recording maximum demand, the company said in a Press statement.

SNS

FITTER campaign: An awareness campaign on correct insulin injection technique was organised by FITTER India recently. On this occasion, Forum for Injection Technique & Therapy Expert Recommendations (FITTER) India experts advised to adopt correct insulin injection technique, especially in view of the fact that diabetes gains further significance during Covid-19 pandemic, said a release.

SNS

Sebi fine: The Securities and Exchange Board of India on Monday slapped a fine of Rs 30 lakh on Fair-wealth Securities Ltd for misusing clients' securities, among other violations. The regulator had conducted a multi-theme inspection of Fairwealth between April 2017 and July 2018.

PTI

Hero Motors buys stake in UK firm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

Auto components maker Hero Motors Company today said it has acquired a strategic stake in UK-based transmission design technology firm Hewland Engineering for an undisclosed sum.

The acquisition will enable the company to create a competitive single source entity to design and manufacture high-quality transmission products, particularly in the emerging EV segment, to OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) across North America, Europe and India, Hero Motors Company (HMC) said in a statement.

Besides, it will give HMC

Total inks \$2.5-billion deal with Adani Group, picks 20% in AGEL

The deal involves Paris-based Total getting a board seat in solar energy developer Adani Green Energy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

French oil and energy group Total has agreed to a \$2.5-billion deal that includes buying a 20 per cent minority stake in Adani Green Energy Ltd (AGEL) from Adani Group, as it builds up its presence in the renewable energy sector.

The deal involves Paris-based Total getting a board seat in the largest solar energy developer in the world, as well as a 50 per cent stake in a 2.35 gigawatts portfolio of operating solar assets, the two firms said in statements.

Total had in 2018, agreed to buy a 37.4 per cent stake in Adani Gas Ltd - the city gas distribution firm of the Adani Group, and a 50 per cent stake in the billionaire Gautam Adani-run ports-to-energy conglomerate's under-construction Dhamra LNG project in Odisha.

In the statement, the French giant said the acquisition of a 20 per cent minority interest in Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) from Adani Group

DEEPENING PARTNERSHIP



► Total said the acquisition of a 20 per cent minority interest in Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL) from Adani Group "marks the deepening partnership between the Adani Group India's leading infrastructure platform" and Total, in the

marks the deepening partnership between the Adani Group and a 50 per cent stake in the transition and green energy fields in India."

Total is aiming to reduce its dependence on oil and is shifting towards electricity and renewable energy. It is targeting to have 35 gigawatts (GW) of gross renewable energy generation capacity by 2025, from around 7 GW now.

It wants to add 10 GW per year afterward.

AGEL is targeting 25 GW of renewable capacity by the same year.

As on date, AGEL has over 14.6 GW of contracted capacity, with an operating capacity of 3 GW and another 3 GW under development.

Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani had last year signalled room for promoters to

dilute their stake in AGEL, saying global energy producers, including Total, were interested in investing to expand their renewable portfolios.

"Our entry into AGEL is a major milestone in our strategy in the renewable energy business in India put in place by both parties," Total CEO and chairman Patrick Pouyanne said.

"Given the size of the market, India is the right place to put into action our energy transition strategy based on two pillars: renewables and natural gas," he added.

Total said the investment in AGEL is another step in the strategic alliance between Adani Group and the French firm, which covers investments in LNG terminals, gas utility business, and renewable assets across India.

"This is in line with the commitment of both Adani and Total to be leading participants in the sustainable economy of the future and help India in its quest for the development of renewable energy," the statement said.

AGEL started in 2015 with

the world's largest single-location solar power project located at Kamuthi, Tamil Nadu (648 MW) has come a long way to be the No.1 global solar power generation asset.

Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani, said: "We have a shared vision of developing renewable power at affordable prices to enable a sustainable energy transformation in India. We look forward to working together towards delivering India's vision for 450 GW renewable energy by 2030."

As part of its ambition to get to net-zero by 2050, Total is building a portfolio of activities in renewables and electricity that could account for up to 40 per cent of its sales by 2050.

At the end of 2020, Total's gross power generation capacity worldwide was around 12 GW, including close to 7 GW of renewable energy. With the objective of reaching 35 GW of production capacity from renewable sources by 2025, Total will continue to expand its business to become one of the world leaders in renewable energies.

Govt extends bid deadline for Pawan Hans to 18 Feb

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

The government has extended the preliminary bid submission deadline for buying Pawan Hans by a month till 18 February.

The department of investment and public asset management (Dipam) had in December invited bids for strategic sale, along with transfer of management control, of helicopter service provider Pawan Hans. The last date for bid submission was 19 January.

The deadline has now been extended to 18 February in view of the "prevailing Covid-19 situation and consequent logistical challenges faced by interested bidders," Dipam said in a notice.

The government owns 51 per cent stake in Pawan Hans, while Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) and the remaining 49 per cent of Pawan Hans is likely to spill over to next fiscal beginning April. The process of privatisation of Air India, BPCL, BEML, Shipping Corp and Ferro Scrap Nigam Ltd (FSNL) is ongoing.

a public sector undertaking to primarily provide helicopter services for the exploration activities of ONGC and to India's northeast.

As on 31 July 2020, Pawan Hans' total manpower was 686, with 363 regular and 323 contractual employees.

For financial year 2019-20, the company reported a net loss of Rs 28 crore, lower than Rs 69 crore in fiscal 2018-19. As on 31 March 2020, its authorised capital stood at Rs 560 crore and paid-up share capital at Rs 557 crore.

In 2018, the government had invited bids to sell 51 per cent stake in Pawan Hans. However, it was withdrawn after ONGC decided to sell its 49 per cent stake in the company along with the government's.

In 2019, a second attempt was made to sell Pawan Hans but the sale process failed to receive investor response. The strategic sale of Pawan Hans is likely to spill over to next fiscal beginning April. The process of privatisation of Air India, BPCL, BEML, Shipping Corp and Ferro Scrap Nigam Ltd (FSNL) is ongoing.

Mindtree profit rises 65% to ₹326 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

ny's active client base stood at 276, and eight new clients were added during the quarter, the filing said.

Mindtree had 22,195 employees at the end of the December 2020 quarter with trailing 12-month attrition at 12.5 per cent.

"Our third quarter has by far been the best performing in recent years backed by broad-based revenue growth of 5 per cent across our verticals and service lines, robust margin expansion of 350 bps (basis points), and a healthy order book of \$312 million,"

Mindtree CEO and managing director Debasish Chatterjee said.

He added that the company is witnessing strong business momentum across all verticals with a significant demand for cloud, data and analytics capabilities.

Semiconductor shortage to hit Ford output

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

The global shortage of semiconductors will impact production of US auto major Ford's plants in India in the coming months, even as the company advances a scheduled work-long shutdown to this week at its Chennai factory, according to a company official.

Ford India, which has two factories in Chennai (Tamil Nadu) and Sanand in Gujarat, expects the issue that is affecting the entire automotive sector to continue for at least the first half of 2021," the spokesperson added.

"The global semiconductor shortage will impact vehicle production at Ford's Chennai and Sanand plants in the coming months," a Ford India spokesperson said in a statement.

The spokesperson further said "In Chennai, we have

pulled ahead a shutdown week to this week due to a supplier part shortage connected to the global semiconductor shortage." The company is working closely with suppliers to address production constraints tied to the global semiconductor shortage and working to prioritise key vehicle lines for production, making the most of its semiconductor allocation.

"This issue is affecting the entire automotive sector and expected to continue for at least the first half of 2021," the spokesperson added.

Ford India exports a significant portion of vehicles produced from its two plants. In December 2020 its production was down 42.96 per cent at 6,943 units.

The company's domestic sales were at 1,662 units, down 45.06 per cent from the year-ago month, whereas its exports were at 6,992

ISSUE AFFECTS ENTIRE SECTOR

► "The global semiconductor shortage will impact vehicle production at Ford's Chennai and Sanand plants in the coming months. This issue is affecting the entire automotive sector and expected to continue for at least the first half of 2021," a Ford India spokesperson said in a statement.

► Last month, due to the semiconductor

shortage issue, homegrown auto major Mahindra & Mahindra had also stated it was expecting reduction in production and sales volume at its automotive division and in its wholly-owned subsidiary in the last quarter of the current fiscal.

units, a decline of 53.83 per cent from December 2019. In the April-December period of the ongoing fiscal, the company's production stood at 64,867 units, down 55.87 per cent from the year-ago period.

Its domestic sales in the April-December period were

at 30,380 units, down 40.43 per cent while exports were at 39,775 units, a decline of 62.51 per cent.

Last month, due to the semiconductor, supplied by Bosch Ltd, shortage issue, homegrown auto major Mahindra & Mahindra had also stated it was expecting reduction in production and sales volume at its automotive division and in its wholly-owned subsidiary in the last quarter of the current fiscal.

Bosch Ltd, a major supplier, had stated that its imports of micro-processors (semiconductors) have been hit following a global surge in demand from the consumer electronics industry.

At that time, auto components industry body ACMA had said it was still not clear as to what extent and for how long the shortage of semiconductors will impact vehicle production in India.

products and service offerings globally." Turkey will be the 42nd country in Motherson's global operations. The transaction will also enhance the group's tooling capabilities and complement its existing manufacturing footprint.

"Turkey is likely to play a key role as a competitive sourcing hub and as a platform to serve group's customers in European region. The proposed deal is expected to be closed within three months subject to receipt of necessary approvals," it added.

Commenting on the acquisition, Motherson Group chairman Vivek Chandra Sehgal said: "This acquisition marks another step towards the growth and diversification of Vision Systems vertical and along-term growth potential," it added.

Commenting on the acquisition, Motherson Group chairman Vivek Chandra Sehgal said: "This acquisition marks another step towards the growth and diversification of Vision Systems vertical and the group overall."

He further said: "This is the 25th acquisition by Motherson Group and we will continue to work towards serving our customers with more

Motherson Group to acquire majority stake in Turkey firm

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 JANUARY

Auto components major Motherson Group today said it will acquire a majority stake in Turkey's Plast Met Group, a key supplier of plastic moulded parts, related sub-assemblies and injection moulding tools, for an undisclosed amount.

The acquisition is being carried out by Samvardhana Motherson Automotive Systems Group BV (SMRPBV), through its subsidiary Samvardhana Motherson Reflected (SMR), the group said in a statement.

As part of the deal, SMR will acquire 75 per cent stake and will enter into a partnership with the founder of Plast Met. The acquisition includes two companies of Plast Met Group - Plast Met Kalip, Istanbul and Plast Met Plastik, Bursa ~

engaged in manufacturing of injection moulded parts, sub-assemblies for mirrors, trim modules and lighting systems.

"This acquisition will mark SMR and Motherson group's entry into Turkey. Turkey is a strategic growth market for the Motherson group, with annual passenger vehicle production of 1.4 million units and along-term growth potential," it added.

Commenting on the acquisition, Motherson Group chairman Vivek Chandra Sehgal said: "This acquisition marks another step towards the growth and diversification of Vision Systems vertical and the group overall."

He further said: "This is the 25th acquisition by Motherson Group and we will continue to work towards serving our customers with more

Equity benchmarks slump for second day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 18 JANUARY

Equity benchmarks wilted under selling pressure for the second consecutive session today as investors stayed on the back foot amid lacklustre global cues.

A sharp drop in the rupee further sapped risk appetite, though gains in market heavyweights RIL and HDFC Bank cushioned the fall.

After a choppy session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 470.40 points or 0.96 per cent lower at 48,564.27 points. The broader NSE Nifty tumbled 152.40 points or 1.06 per cent to 14,281.30 points.

ONGC was the top loser in the Sensex pack, slumping

SENSEX FALLS 470 POINTS

► Equity benchmarks wilted under selling pressure for the second consecutive session on Monday as investors stayed on the back foot amid lacklustre global cues.

► A sharp drop in the rupee further sapped risk appetite, though gains in market heavyweights RIL and HDFC Bank cushioned the fall.

► The 30-share BSE Sen-

ment of vaccination process.

"Additionally, favourable monetary policies of global central bankers, weak dollar and large fiscal stimulus in the US are expected to ensure sustained FPIs flow in domestic equities. However, for the week, market is expected to be volatile ahead of some crucial global events. Further



Not right to vaccinate young before old

DIRECTOR-GENERAL TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS SAYING IT'S NOT RIGHT THAT YOUNGER, HEALTHIER ADULTS IN RICH COUNTRIES GET VACCINATED BEFORE

The Statesman

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 2021

09

Israel trades
Pfizer doses for
medical data in
vaccine blitz

JERUSALEM, 18 JANUARY

After sprinting ahead in the race to inoculate its population against the coronavirus, Israel has struck a deal with Pfizer, promising to share vast troves of medical data with the international drug giant in exchange for the continued flow of its hard-to-get vaccine.

Proponents say the deal could allow Israel to become the first country to vaccinate most of its population, while providing valuable research that could help the rest of the world. But critics say the deal raises major ethical concerns, including possible privacy violations and a deepening of the global divide that enables wealthy countries to stockpile vaccines as poorer populations, including Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza, have to wait longer to be inoculated.

PM Benjamin Netanyahu who is stumping ahead of the country's March elections as Israel's vaccinator-in-chief said earlier this month that he reached the deal with Pfizer to speed up vaccine deliveries to Israel. AP

SKorean court gives Samsung scion prison term over bribery

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, 18 JANUARY

Billionaire Samsung scion Lee Jae-yong was sent back to prison on Monday after a South Korean court handed him a two-and-a-half-year sentence for his involvement in a 2016 corruption scandal that spurred massive protests and ousted South Korea's then-President.

In a much-anticipated retrial, the Seoul High Court found Lee guilty of bribing then-President Park Geun-hye and her close confidante to win government support for a 2015 merger between two Samsung affiliates. The deal helped strengthen his control over the country's largest business group.

Lee's lawyers had portrayed him as a victim of presidential power abuse and described the 2015 deal as part of normal business activity. Lee was taken into custody following the ruling. He didn't answer questions by reporters upon his arrival at the court.

Inje Lee, an attorney who leads Lee Jae-yong's defense team, expressed regret over the court's decision, saying that the essence of the case is

China's economy grows by 2.3 pc, bucking global Covid slowdown

China's global exports of medical supplies, specially relating to Covid, has also contributed to growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 18 JANUARY

China's economy, which was the first to be hit by the coronavirus pandemic and early to recover from its impact, grew 2.3 per cent in 2020, registering the lowest annual growth rate in 45 years, but bucking the trend of slowdowns being experienced by major world economies.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the world's second-largest economy grew by 2.3 per cent, expanding to USD 15.42 trillion in dollar terms in 2020, according to the data released by China's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Monday.

In the local currency, the GDP exceeded 100-trillion-yuan (USD 15.42 trillion) threshold to 101.5986 trillion yuan, it said.

The Chinese economy which suffered a 6.8 per cent slump in the first quarter in 2020 after it went into lockdown following the emergence of the deadly coronavirus in Wuhan staged a

steady recovery after quickly containing the Covid-19, while the virus turned into a global pandemic, hitting all major economies around the world, including India.

Aided by strict virus containment measures and emergency relief for businesses, the Chinese economy staged a steady recovery.

In the fourth quarter of 2020, China's GDP expanded 6.5 per cent year on year, faster than the 4.9-per cent growth in the third quarter, the NBS said.

The country's economic operation has recovered steadily with employment and people's well-being effectively guaranteed, the NBS said, adding that the major tasks of economic and social development have been completed better than expected.

Partly, China's global exports of medical supplies, specially relating to coronavirus, has also contributed to growth in manufacturing and exports.

China's job market grew at 5.6 per cent but below the government's annual target of around six per cent.

According to the data, a total of 11.86 million new urban jobs were created in 2020, completing 131.8 per cent of the target set for the whole year, the NBS said.

In December, the surveyed urban unemployment rate was 5.2 per cent, flat with the same period of the previous year.

But the emerging new clusters of coronavirus in the country prompted China to strengthen controls, casting a shadow over higher growth projections for this year. Ning Jizhe, the head of the NBS, said that "the main targets of economic and social development (in 2020) have been completed better than expected".

"China is expected to become the only major economy in the world to achieve positive economic growth throughout the year," he said, adding that quarterly GDP growth "have returned to the normal level".

Analysts say with global bodies like the International Monetary Fund projecting growth rate above eight per cent this year, China's economy could be picking up

pace.

"The GDP data shows the economy has almost normalised. This momentum will continue, although the current Covid-19 outbreak in a couple of provinces in northern China might temporarily cause fluctuation," said Yue Su, the Principal Economist for the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

"The government's strong anti-coronavirus measures that help effectively contain the spread of the virus, the flexible countercyclical macroeconomic policies, as well as the efforts taken to deepen reform and opening up to the outside world, have all contributed to the better-than-expected economic results in 2020," Cao Heping, a professor at the School of Economics of Peking University, told the state-run Global Times.

Observers say the nature of the recovery of the Chinese economy has been distinctly lopsided as the industrial prong of China's economy vastly outgrew consumption, with exports helping power growth, even as imports strug-

gled to gain momentum.

Consumption plays an important role as China's 14th Five-Year Plan being implemented envisages massive overhauls of the country's domestic market to boost consumption in order to reduce China's reliance on shrinking exports markets.

According to the NBS data, China's retail sales of consumer goods, a major indicator of consumption growth, fell 3.9 percent year on year in 2020. Sales of consumer goods reached 39.2 trillion yuan (about USD 6.05 trillion) last year.

As per the NBS data, China's value-added industrial output, an important economic indicator, went up 2.8 per cent year on year in 2020. The growth accelerated from a rise of 2.3 per cent registered in the first 11 months of last year.

In Q4, the industrial output grew 7.1 per cent year on year, 1.3 percentage points higher than that recorded in Q3. December alone saw the output growth rise to 7.3 per cent, up by 0.3 percentage points from November, the NBS data showed.

Philippine cases hit 500K amid vaccine struggles

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA (PHILIPPINES), 18 JANUARY

that a former president abused power to infringe upon the freedom and property rights of a private company.

He didn't specifically say whether there would be an appeal. Samsung didn't issue a statement over the ruling.

Lee Jae-yong helms the Samsung group in his capacity as vice chairman of Samsung Electronics, one of the world's largest makers of computer chips and smartphones.

In September last year, prosecutors separately indicted Lee on charges of stock price manipulation, breach of trust and auditing violations related to the 2015 merger.

It isn't immediately clear what his prison term would mean for Samsung. Samsung didn't show much signs of trouble during the previous time Lee spent in jail in 2017 and 2018, and prison terms have never really stopped South Korean corporate leaders from relaying their management decisions from behind bars.

Samsung is coming off a robust business year, with its dual strength in parts and finished products enabling it to benefit from the coronavirus pandemic and the prolonged

trade war between United States and China.

Samsung's semiconductor business rebounded sharply after a sluggish 2019, driven by robust demand for PCs and servers as virus outbreaks forced millions of people to stay and work at home.

The Trump administration's sanctions against China's Huawei Technologies have meanwhile hindered one of Samsung's biggest rivals in smartphones, smartphone chips and telecommunications equipment.

Samsung Electronics said earlier this month that its operating profit for the last quarter likely rose by 26% from the same period a year earlier to 9 trillion won (USD 8.1 billion). The company will release its finalized earnings later this month.

Lee, 52, was originally sentenced in 2017 to five years in prison for offering 8.6 billion won (USD 7 million) in bribes to Park and her long-time friend Choi Soon-sil. But he was freed after 11 months in February 2018 after the Seoul High Court reduced his term to 2 years and suspended his sentence, overturning key convictions.

The Philippines has been negotiating with seven Western and Chinese companies to secure 148 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine but the effort has been fraught with uncertainties and confusion.

About 50,000 doses from China-based Sinovac Biotech Ltd. may arrive later next month followed by much larger shipments, according to the government.

President Rodrigo Duterte says securing the vaccines has

been difficult because wealthy nations have secured massive doses for their citizens first.

Duterte's elite guards have acknowledged they have been inoculated with a still-unauthorised Covid-19 vaccine partly to ensure that they would not infect the 75-year-old President.

Singapore begins Sea-Air Vaccination Exercise

Singapore on Monday started its Covid-19 vaccination exercise, covering 37,000 frontline workers in the aviation and maritime sectors, which employ large numbers of foreign workers, as a new coronavirus cluster was reported in the last 24 hours.

During a visit to one of the vaccination centres at the Changi Airport Terminal 4, Transport Minister Ong Ye Kung said about 13,000 workers from the two sectors were scheduled to be vaccinated this week under the Sea-Air Vaccination Exercise.

On Monday, about 2,000 workers from the aviation sector will receive the vaccine, while about 1,000 maritime workers will be vaccinated.

In an indication of high-level concern, the official Xinhua News Agency called for

Deaths, self-immolation draw scrutiny on China tech giants

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG, 18 JANUARY

E-commerce workers who kept China fed during the coronavirus pandemic, making their billionaire bosses even richer, are so unhappy with their pay and treatment that one just set himself on fire in protest.

China's internet industries already were known for long, demanding days. With millions of families confined at home, demand surged and employees delivered tons of vegetables, rice, meat, diapers and other supplies, often aboard scooters that exposed them to sub-freezing winter cold.

For white-collar workers in the technology industry, pay is better than in some industries but employees are often expected to work 12 hours a day or more. The human cost caught public attention after the deaths of two employees from e-commerce platform Pinduoduo, known for selling fresh produce at low prices. Their deaths prompted suggestions they were overworked.

In a video widely circulated on Chinese social media, 45-year-old delivery driver Liu Jin poured gasoline and set himself on fire outside a distribution station for Ele.me, part of e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, setting himself on fire to protest unpaid wages.

The controversy is a blow to the image of internet industries that are transforming China's economy and generating new jobs. They have made some of the founders among the world's wealthiest entrepreneurs. During the heights of the pandemic, the fortunes of the biggest, including Alibaba founder Jack Ma and Pinduoduo founder Colin Huang, swelled as online consumer spending boomed.

In a video widely circulated on Chinese social media, 45-year-old delivery driver Liu Jin poured gasoline and set himself on fire outside a distribution station for Ele.me in the eastern city of Taizhou, shouting that he wanted his money. Others snuffed the flames and rushed him to a hospital, where he is being treated for third-degree burns on his body. Details of Liu's complaint could not be verified.

Ele.me did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Separately, a 43-year-old delivery driver collapsed on the job and died last week while delivering food for Ele.me.

The company said in a statement that it will give 600,000 yuan (USD 92,700) to the driver's family and raised its insurance coverage for drivers to that level.

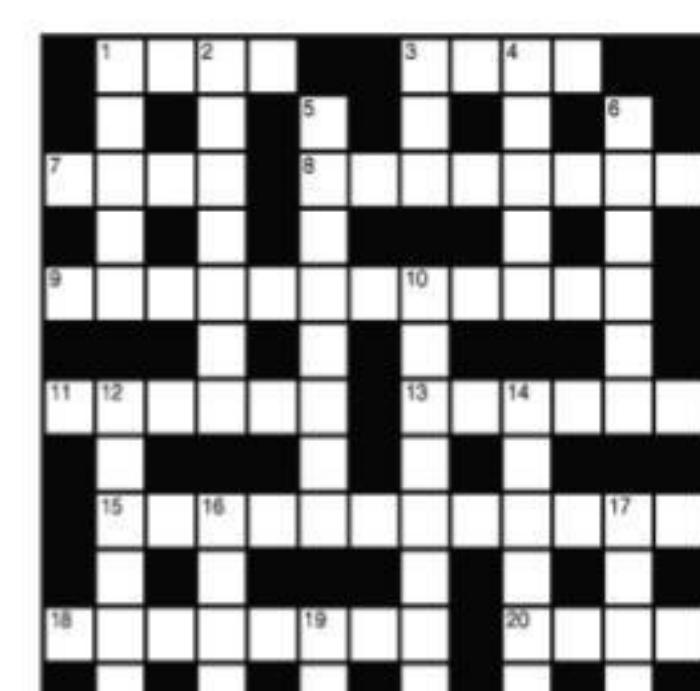
Its statement said Ele.me had not done enough in terms of accidental death insurance, and needs to do more.

The issue was highlighted again after a Pinduoduo employee surnamed Tan committed suicide after taking leave from the firm to return to his hometown less than two weeks after a 22-year-old employee surnamed Zhang in Urumqi collapsed while walking home from work with colleagues, and later passed away.

Pinduoduo, China's third-largest e-commerce firm, released statements saying it was providing assistance and support to the families of the two employees who died.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Look for (4)
- 3 Is victorious (4)
- 5 Lump of earth (4)
- 8 Dislike (8)
- 9 Pungent gas (12)
- 11 Pampas cowboy (6)
- 13 Alcoholic drink (6)
- 15 Minor offence (12)
- 18 Small car (8)
- 20 Unit of length (4)
- 21 In this place (4)
- 22 Irish Gaelic (4)

DOWN

- 1 Burst of fire (5)
- 2 Present in a localised area (7)
- 3 Misery (3)
- 4 Unpleasant (5)
- 5 Coccyx (4,4)
- 6 Prospect (2,4)
- 10 Pleas (8)
- 12 Protective covering (6)
- 14 Basket (7)
- 16 Trap (5)
- 17 Male relative (5)
- 19 A person (3)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- VidyaSagar Institute for Mental and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383383, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 23717473, 23325320

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

by JUDD

PAR SCORE 105-115

JUDD'S TOTAL 163

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O M O I R P U

E L T K C R

D A C O T R I

E A E R W P T

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Mr. Navalny should be immediately released, and the perpetrators of the outrageous attack on his life must be held accountable

US PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN'S PICK FOR NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER JAKE SULLIVAN

CALLING ON RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES TO FREE NAVALNY

THUMBNAILS



Restaurants are closed due to the state of emergency at Shibuya in Tokyo, Japan on Monday. AP

Brazil approves Sinovac and AstraZeneca vaccines: Brazil's health regulator on Sunday approved the urgent use of coronavirus vaccines made by Sinovac and AstraZeneca, enabling Latin America's largest nation to begin an immunization program that's been subject to delay and political disputes. Brazil currently has 6 million doses of Sinovac's CoronaVac vaccine and is awaiting the arrival of 2 million doses of the vaccine made by AstraZeneca and partner Oxford University. AP

12 workers trapped week ago in China mine blast alive: Chinese state media say 12 out of 22 workers trapped for a week by an explosion in a gold mine are alive, as hundreds of rescuers seek to bring them to safety. The Xinhua News Agency said a note passed through a rescue shaft on Sunday night reported the fate of the other 10 remains unknown. The handwritten note said four of the workers were injured and that the condition of others was deteriorating. PTI

German and Turkish foreign ministers to meet in Ankara

ISTANBUL, 18 JANUARY

Germany's foreign minister is scheduled to meet his Turkish counterpart in the Turkish capital, following a tumultuous year in Turkish-European relations.

Ahead of his arrival in Ankara, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas noted the difficulties of 2020 and warned that this playing with fire must not be repeated.

The visit comes amid an easing in tensions between nominal NATO allies Turkey and Greece. The two neighbours came close to the brink of war over the summer due to a dispute on maritime boundaries and energy rights in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Last week, both countries announced the resumption of exploratory talks and said meetings could take place between top officials, including the Turkish president and the Greek prime minister. We welcome the fact that Turkey has sent signals of detente since the beginning of the year not just with words, but also with actions, Maas said. He added that the return to talks with Greece is an important first step and pulling back the research ship Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa is also a positive signal from Ankara.

In December, the European Union gave the green light for the expansion of sanctions against Turkey over its exploration of gas reserves in waters claimed by EU members Greece and Cyprus. AP

Security beefed up in Washington DC ahead of Biden's inauguration

Security increased amid multiple reports of threats and armed violence by pro-Trump supporters

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 18 JANUARY

A head of the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on Wednesday, the American Capital has been virtually turned into a garrison city, amidst multiple reports of threats and more armed violence by pro-Trump supporters to disrupt the inaugural event.

In the aftermath of last week's Capitol riots, Washington D.C. is preparing for the scaled down inauguration of the 46th US President with extreme security measures - closing roads, erecting barbed wire fences and deploying more than 25,000 National Guards along with thousands of local police personnel and those from other security agencies. The area in and around Capitol Hill, a large part of Pennsylvania Avenue and the White House has been made out of bounds for the general public with eight-feet high iron barricades being erected.

US Marshals are deploying 4,000 officers to Washington DC. Major parts of the majestic National Mall, which during the inauguration is usually thronged by thousands of people, have been closed off. The entire city is on high-alert as authorities are receiving multiple reports of violent threats from various groups at the level of the incident that

happened on January 6 -- when hundreds of supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump stormed Capitol Hill, disrupting the constitutional process of certification of electoral college votes.

The unprecedented violence forced hundreds of lawmakers to take shelter at safe locations within the iconic building amidst vandalism by the mob. At least five people, including a police officer, died in the incident.

Despite the heightened security concerns, Biden plans to go ahead with the inauguration ceremony in its traditional location. In addition to converting downtown Washington DC into a fortress, security in and around 50 state capitals has also been put on high alert to ensure a peaceful transition of power.

I think this will be an inauguration unlike any other. It was already destined to be, given Covid concerns and



some of the limited seating and public access. But having our fellow Americans storm the Capitol in an attempt to overthrow the government certainly warrants heightened security, Mayor of Washington DC, Muriel Bowser, told NBC News.

Our police department is working with our federal law enforcement partners and the United States Army also has a plan to pivot if we have any attacks in our neighbourhoods, she said. We've never believed that so-called patriots would attempt to overthrow their government and kill police officers. That's exactly what happened. So, I do think we have to take another posture in our city that is more domestic terrorist focused than external to our country and act accordingly.

"We don't want to see fences. We definitely don't want to see armed troops on our streets. But we do have to take a different posture, Bows-

er said. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in its internal bulletins has warned of the potential for violence in Washington DC and at all 50 state Capitols.

"Our posture is aggressive. It's going to stay that way through the inauguration," FBI Director Christopher Wray said on the agency's plans for security on Wednesday. He added that the agency was monitoring "extensive" online chatter about further potential armed protests and issued a warning to the men and women who wreaked havoc on the Capitol.

US defence officials say they are also worried about an insider attack or other threat from service members involved in securing Biden's inauguration, prompting the FBI to vet all of the 25,000 National Guard troops being deployed here for the event.

Police have arrested two people near security checkpoints in Washington, DC.

A 22-year-old Virginia man carrying a firearm, three high-capacity magazines and 37 rounds of unregistered ammunition was arrested on Sunday near the Capitol Hill.

On Saturday, a woman claiming to be a law enforcement officer and part of the presidential Cabinet was stopped at an inauguration checkpoint, where US Capitol Police say they arrested her for impersonating an officer as well as failing to obey and fleeing from law enforcement.

He said President Trump did incite the mob on 6 January, and that's "very, very disconcerting".

"We are obviously getting briefings from the outgoing administration about the efforts to try to secure state capitals, secure Washington, D.C., the National Capital Region, he said.

Harris prepares for central role in White House

Kamala Harris will make history on Wednesday when she becomes the nation's first female vice president and the first Black woman and the first woman of South Asian descent to hold that office. But that's only where her boundary-breaking role begins.

With the confluence of crises confronting Joe Biden's administration and an evenly divided Senate in which she would deliver the tie-breaking vote, Harris is shaping up to be a central player in addressing everything from the coronavirus pandemic to criminal justice reform.

Symone Sanders, Harris' chief spokeswoman, said that while the vice-president-elect's portfolio hasn't been fully defined yet, she has a hand in all aspects of Biden's agenda. There are pieces that Biden may specifically ask her to champion, but outside of that she is at the table for everything, involved in everything, giving input and feedback and being a supportive partner to him on all pieces," she said.

Navalny's arrest adds to tension between Russia and the West

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 18 JANUARY



his immediate release, a call echoed by France's foreign ministry and by Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau.

I express my solidarity with all Russian people who share the ideals of the detained Russian opposition leader Rau added. Alexey, don't give up! US President-elect Joe Biden's pick for national security adviser called on Russian authorities to free Navalny.

The outgoing US secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, said the US strongly condemns the decision to arrest Navalny, which he called the latest in a series of attempts to silence Navalny and other opposition figures and independent voices who are critical of Russian authorities.

Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said Monday the stream of reactions to Navalny's arrest by Western officials reflects an attempt to divert attention from the crisis of the Western model of development.

Navalny's detention was widely expected because Russia's prisons service said he had violated parole terms from a suspended sentence on a 2014 embezzlement conviction.

Russia ready for quick extension of last arms pact with US

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 18 JANUARY

Moscow is ready for a quick deal with the incoming administration of U.S. President-elect Joe Biden to extend the last remaining arms control pact, which expires in just over two weeks, Russia's top diplomat said Monday.

The talks on the treaty's extension have been clouded by tensions between Russia and the United States, which have been fuelled by the Ukrainian crisis, Moscow's meddling in the 2016 US presidential election and other irritants. Sunday's arrest of leading Putin critic Alexei Navalny in Moscow after his return from Germany where he was recovering from a nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin will further cloud Russia-US ties.

Biden's pick for national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, called on Russian authorities to free Navalny.

Arms control advocates have strongly called for its preservation, warning that its expiration would remove any checks on U.S. and Russian nuclear forces, striking a blow to global stability.

In 2019, the U.S. and Russia both withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which was signed in 1987 by US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and banned land-based cruise and ballistic missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (310 to 3,410 miles).

New START envisages the possibility of its extension for another five years, and

UK's vaccination programme expands to cover over-70s

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 18 JANUARY

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that Moscow is ready to do so without any conditions.

The Kremlin also has voiced readiness to prolong the pact for a shorter term, as Trump's administration had pondered.

The talks on the treaty's extension have been clouded by tensions between Russia and the United States, which have been fuelled by the Ukrainian crisis, Moscow's meddling in the 2016 US presidential election and other irritants. Sunday's arrest of leading Putin critic Alexei Navalny in Moscow after his return from Germany where he was recovering from a nerve agent poisoning he blamed on the Kremlin will further cloud Russia-US ties.

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New START envisages the possibility of its extension for another five years, and

cinations to the next two cohorts those aged 70 and over and clinically extremely vulnerable people.

"Today is a significant milestone in our vaccination programme as we open it up to millions of more people who are most at risk from Covid-19," said UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. "We are now delivering the vaccine at a rate of 140 jabs a minute and I want to thank everyone involved in this national effort. We have a long way to go and there will doubtless be challenges ahead but by working together we are making huge progress in our fight against this virus," he said.

The NHS has so far been working to vaccinate the first two priority cohorts recommended by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which are care home residents and staff, and those aged 80 and over and frontline health and care staff.

Vaccinating these groups will remain the priority, but vaccination sites which have enough supply and capacity for vaccinating further people are allowed to offer vac-

people, helping the NHS to reach the government's commitment of offering vaccinations to the top four JCVI priority groups by the middle of February.

Now that more than half of all over-80s have had their jab, we can begin vaccinating the next most vulnerable groups. Where an area has already reached the vast majority of groups 1 to 2, they can now start opening up the programme to groups 3 to 4, said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock. We are working day

and night to make sure everyone who is 70 and over, our health and social care workers and the clinically extremely vulnerable are offered the vaccine by the middle of February.

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and night to make sure everyone who is 70 and over, our health and social care workers and the clinically extremely vulnerable are offered the vaccine by the middle of February.

UK's vaccination programme has got off to a strong start with our hard-working staff delivering more than 3 million vaccinations while also dealing with the latest wave of coronavirus infections, said Professor Stephen Powis, NHS England's medical director.

The message for eligible people is that anyone who cannot or does not want to travel to vaccination centres can wait to be vaccinated by their local GP service or hospital.

Israeli jets hit Hamas targets in Gaza after rockets fired

JERUSALEM, 18 JANUARY

Israeli military aircraft struck targets in the Gaza Strip early on Monday in response to two rockets fired from the Palestinian territory, the military said.

In a statement, the military said fighter jets hit Hamas military targets, including sites for digging underground tunnels, some of which stretch into Israel. There were no immediate reports of injuries from the airstrikes. There were also no reports of damage or injury from the rockets launched.

It was not immediately clear who fired the rockets. Hamas maintains an unofficial cease-fire with Israel, but Israel holds the group responsible for any fire emanating from Gaza.

Hamas, meanwhile, accuses Israel of failing to honor its true obligations, which include easing a crippling blockade on the Palestinian enclave, and allowing for large-scale infrastructure and job-creation projects.

Israel and Hamas have fought three wars since the Islamic militant group seized power of the coastal enclave in 2007. While no major confrontation has occurred since 2014, there are often cross-border skirmishes.

While militant rocket attacks and Israeli retaliatory artillery and aerial strikes are frequent, they have largely been subdued in recent months due to the coronavirus outbreak.

What Biden can and can't get from an evenly divided Senate

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 18 JANUARY

So what does a 50-50 Senate get President-elect Joe Biden? Washington has barely had time to process the implications of Democratic control after two Georgia runoff elections that are delivering the Senate to Democrats.

Hours after the races were decided, a mob of zealots ransacked the US Capitol and reshaped the national and political landscape.

The unexpected new balance of power giving Democrats only the barest control of Congress has big consequences for the President-elect, easy confirmation of his Cabinet most importantly but the road ahead for his ambitious legislative agenda remains complicated and murky. Republicans remain poised

to assuming their posts. Republicans can slow but not stop nominations.

Budget reconciliation

Democrats also have the opportunity to pass special budget-related legislation by a simple majority, an oftentimes process that enabled Obama to finish his 2010 health care bill and gave President Donald Trump's GOP allies a failed chance to repeal Obamacare and pass a tax overhaul bill. Biden could use this so-called budget reconciliation process to pass more controversial elements of Covid-19 relief with only Democratic votes, repeal some of Trump's tax cuts or make federal health care programs more generous, for example.

WHAT BIDEN DOES GET
Nominations
With Democrats chairing committees in the Senate and only needing a majority to win floor votes on nominations, Biden is now assured of sealing confirmation of his Cabinet and judicial picks including potentially for the Supreme Court. It also means controversial choices such as Neera Tanden, Biden's pick for budget director, can look ahead

to Chuck Schumer he'll be majority leader once the two new Georgia senators and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris are all sworn into office now has the opportunity to bring legislation to the floor and force votes. That could permit passage of \$2,000 direct Covid-19 relief payments and other aid, for instance, and could mean debates on issues like police reform, immigration and climate change. But passage

of such legislation would require support from Republicans, which gives the minority party enormous leverage.

WHAT BIDEN DOESN'T GET

Elimination of the filibuster
Before the November election, pressure had been mounting from the Democratic left to eliminate the filibuster, leading Republicans to charge that Democrats would pack the

Supreme Court or give statehood to Democratic strongholds such as the District of Columbia. Moderate Democrat Joe Manchin of West Virginia says he'll block any attempt to eliminate the filibuster, so party progressives may be wasting their breath on this topic now.

Bipartisanship

Unified control of the government by one party almost invariably drives the two sides apart.

Recent events have shown that

the hard-won passage of the \$900 billion Covid-19 relief bill and a sweeping override of Trump's veto of the annual defense bill have been evidence that the vanishing congressional middle can help drive outcomes on Capitol Hill.

But issues like increasing the debt limit instantly become partisan, and the political

incentives for many Republicans heading into the 2022 midterms and the 2024 Presidential election are to vilify Biden and Democrats controlling Congress. Expect a short honeymoon for Biden.

Progressive messaging priorities

A 50-50 Democratic Senate and bare control of the House



Shifting focus overseas

Considering the pocket-friendly medical education abroad bringing better return on investments, more students are opting for MBBS outside India

VED PRAKASH BENIWAL

Considering the adverse impact of Covid-19 in all sectors including education, this year is expected to bring along more opportunities for students. For instance, medical aspirants will be allowed to sit for NEET this year a second time if they have failed in the previous year to take admissions abroad in their desired universities; JEE will be held four times a year. With an opportunity to reappear NEET in 2021, the students have the benefit to save a year. Many students have opted for MBBS simultaneously aiming to give one more try for NEET. If they score good marks, they may get a seat in India.

Another factor that has added to their hope and confidence is that the universities offering MBBS abroad have offered the instalment plan to students for paying their fees. This has not only lessened the financial burden of parents but also boosted up the

morale of the students. To mention on humanitarian grounds, MBBS in China has taken an exemplary step this year. Where some universities have reduced their 1st year tuition fee to 50 per cent, others have offered scholarships to meritorious students, while many of them have permitted the students to pay fee in instalments no matter in which year the student is studying. A student scoring 300 plus marks in NEET is eligible for scholarship for MBBS in China.

While NEET 2020 got delayed in India, universities abroad also delayed their admission process and the session start date for Indian students. Some have even delayed this to March 2021 and are still open with the application process so that no interested candidate misses out the chance to apply for MBBS abroad. Many students who scored high in NEET attended the counselling in India and did not get the seat in desired colleges. Such students had

applied for MBBS abroad after the counselling got over in India and yet got their seat for the study of medicine this year. They not only saved a year or say a session of six months with some universities rather applied without regrets of missing the counselling in India.

Most medical colleges in India have increased their fee this year. Also some state medical colleges and institutes have levied the filling of bonds. Haryana itself has increased its fee from Rs 4 lacs to Rs 10 lacs per year with the conditions to sign a bond. The students can pay this amount by taking the loans and the government would repay the instalments of the loan. According to the bond by Haryana Government, a student on completing MBBS will have to serve at the public health centres in rural areas. If the persons quits to work under the said conditions, the bond repayments shall not be borne by the government. Fee hike in Southern

states like Kerala has also been reported this year. Where the fee was around 5-6 lacs till last year for private medical colleges, this year it has hiked to 12-13 lacs per year. The fee for private medical colleges in any Indian state is not less than 7-8 lacs. Such high fee is creating financial burden on parents.

As compared to this, MBBS abroad is offered at very low rates of Rs 2.5 to 3 lacs and goes higher upto the limits one wants to extend. One more reason to lure Indian students towards MBBS abroad is their acceptability of NEET scores. NEET scores have gone reasonably high this year with a student scoring full 720. Also, the NEET cut off for government medical colleges has hiked. Hence the students scoring close to 600 have also not got the medical colleges of their choice in India. Such students were left with options to choose either a private medical college if they could afford or opt for MBBS abroad where

the latter seems to be a wise decision. Where such students could not secure their medical seat in India, they are offered scholarships with premium government universities abroad.

With these changes in the Indian system, more students tend to get attracted towards MBBS abroad. Some have even cracked the opportunity this year while other medical aspirants are hopeful to apply for MBBS abroad after NEET 2021. Pocket friendly medical education in abroad seems to be a better return on investment. No one can deny the benefits aligned with MBBS abroad. Quality education, world class infrastructure, no entrance examination with most of the countries offering MBBS abroad, internationally recognised degrees, English medium and structured curriculum, better clinical practical and international exposure are just a few obvious benefits.

The writer is director, Jagvimal Consultants

DISHAN KAMDAR

A degree in liberal arts prepare students to look at situations from multiple perspectives, apply their skills to solve problems, adapt to their dynamic environment, and collaborate to get things done. It imparts skills that will help students to better navigate their personal and professional lives.

What makes a liberal arts education relevant is its emphasis on foundational learning across disciplines and on "learning how to learn". It imbites in students the values of intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving, effective communication, collaboration, adaptability and flexibility. Students study a number of different academic fields that encourage critical and interdisciplinary thinking. Being exposed to the breadth and depth of different disciplines lays a strong foundation to skill for life.

Liberal arts education follows an interdisciplinary approach to learning; integrating different areas of study and exposing students to a wide array of subjects. Business majors can have classes in arts, humanities, sciences or other applied areas, and many such major-minor combinations. Such a broad education helps students to view things from multiple perspectives, no matter what is their field of specialisation.

Liberal arts courses equip one with a broad range of skills. Many varied areas of studies are included in liberal arts, like, math, science, literature, economics, public policy, fine arts, psychology, political science etc. Such broad skills are great for times like now where the job market is even more competitive. One will walk out of the college with a well-rounded background.

Liberal arts education allows one to explore one's interests. With a plethora of courses to choose from, not just limited to one's specific major - one can find other courses of personal interest. This can motivate

GATEWAY TO ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

Liberal arts graduates are trained to be curious about the world, diverse cultures and traditions

to explore these courses, take up certain hobbies, or even change the direction of one's studies. Liberal arts gives one many choices and allows to explore them to find one's area of interest.

With a lot of emphasis on social

responsibility and opportunities for community engagement, liberal arts students spend considerable amount of time in projects that make them understand the social fabric of the country. Whether it's a discover India programme or an international

exchange programme, liberal arts students are engaged in making the world a better place.

Liberal arts graduates are trained to be curious about the world, diverse cultures and traditions. These are essential traits for leadership in the

present times and future. We need leaders who are sensitive to social, cultural and economic facets and follow best practices, which are balanced and inclusive.

The writer is vice-chancellor, FLAME University

PLUS POINTS

Empowering women



Bengaluru-based ed-tech startup, Newton School introduced an all women tech programme with an aim to encourage women to re-enter the workforce equipped with industry oriented skills. The course that begins mid January will not only help women to rejoin the workforce after maternity leave but also enable them to switch their careers and join the tech industry.

The new programme is an online course designed to have four months of training and expects its students to dedicate three to four hours per day for five days a week. This will allow women to learn industry skills without any financial burden. Women with any background ready to rejoin work are eligible and can apply for the course through this link: <https://www.newtonschool.co/fowomen>

Assessing aptitude



Uable, a life skill development platform for kids in India launched a one of its kind Creative Intelligence (CI) Assessment report for kids between the ages of six to 12 years recently. The assessment report was designed by an expert team at Uable comprising neuroscientists, engineers and designers from the University of California, Davis Technical University, Munich, IIT-Delhi and St Stephen's College. The test assesses a child's creativity, communication, entrepreneurial mindset, social and emotional intelligence. It covers five key life-skill areas such as visual arts and design, humanities, business and entrepreneurship, performing arts, and science and engineering.

The assessment can be taken by parents on behalf of their kids. To take the test visit: <https://reports.uable.com/cihealth-assessment.php?e=1G7pL9VuxCkAiFRmJU2cluw-pvNZGNNgUu%2BtjnRdb9&source=web>

Achieving success



Many students of Mahindra University scored high percentiles in CAT 2020, the result of which was declared recently. While the highest score is 99.97 by a 2017 batch student, three students from the 2016 batch have scored 98.25, 97.57 and 96.29 percentiles. Interestingly, all of them are from the electrical and electronics engineering stream of Mahindra University's Ecole Centrale School of Engineering.

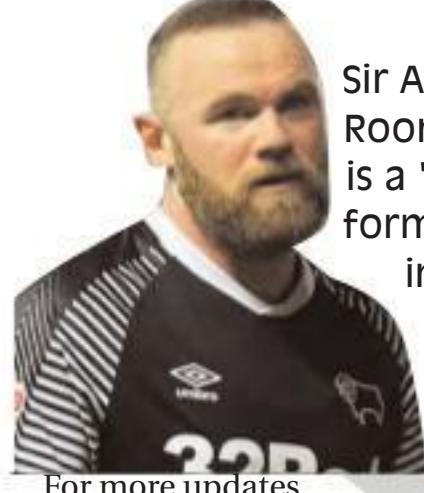
"Our students continue to make us proud, be it academics research projects, or an exam or even a competition like a hackathon, they never fail to excel. We believe that our focus on holistic learning, accent on core concepts and fundamentals, and unstinted efforts at creating the new engineer are the reason why this has become more of a norm than an exception," said Yajulu Medury, vice chancellor, Mahindra University.

Encouraging children

Scholastic India, publisher of children's books and a leader in educational technology and children's media introduced a comprehensive language improvement programme for kids of class three to eight. The newly introduced online programme offers interactive live classes in small batches of up to six students conducted by experienced coaches, based on a scientific learning methodology to provide an engaging peer learning experience to every child.

This programme is developed strategically to cater to the diverse learning abilities of children. It consists of four different modules of 30 sessions each that serve as graduating levels from beginner to advanced. Each student undertakes a simple computer adaptive test to ensure that batches are assigned to different students as per their current language abilities. For details, visit: <https://sse.scholastic.co.in/>

TAKE CARE!



Sir Alex Ferguson has warned Wayne Rooney (in photo, left) management is a "results industry" but claims the former footballer has a good "starting point." Rooney retired as a player to take up the role as manager of Derby County on Friday.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Tokyo Olympics: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga on Monday vowed to forge ahead with preparations to hold the Tokyo Olympics this summer, in the face of growing public opposition as the country battles a surge in coronavirus infections.

Dungdung hat-trick: In Santigao, Beauty Dungdung scored a brilliant hat-trick as the Indian junior women's hockey team defeated Chile 5-3 to complete a highly successful return to the sport at the Prince of Wales Country Club. Lalrindika and Sangita Kumari scored too.

Juve lose: Juventus' nine-year stranglehold on the Serie A title was at risk of unravelling after a 2-0 loss at Inter Milan. Nicol Barella scored one goal and set up another for midfielder Arturo Vidal as Inter moved level on points with AC Milan atop the table.

Barren draw: Ole Gunnar Solksjaer missed a missed opportunity for Manchester United in the Premier League title race as two late saves from Alisson Becker salvaged a 0-0 draw for Liverpool on Sunday. United are three points clear of the champions at the top.

Lyon slump: Lyon's long unbeaten streak ended and they wasted a chance to keep first place in the French league after a 1-0 home loss to Metz. Lyon were unbeaten in 16 games but were stunned by Belgian forward Aaron Leya Iseka's injury-time winner.

Bayern win: Thomas Mueller set up one goal and scored a second-half winner as German powerhouse Bayern Munich struggled past Freiburg 2-1 on Sunday to snap their rivals' five-game winning run and extend their lead at the top of the Bundesliga to four points.

Race stain: France coach Didier Deschamps said he would "never forget" Karim Benzema's accusation that the decision to omit the striker from the Euro 2016 squad was giving in to "a racist part of France." Deschamps said the episode had left a painful "stain."

Marin triumphs: Reigning Olympic champion Carolina Marin has bolstered her chances of winning a second consecutive gold medal in Tokyo after claiming the Thailand Open in Bangkok on Sunday with a 21-9, 21-16 win over top seed Tai Tzu-ying of Chinese Taipei.

Shooting Trial: Rajasthan's Bhavesh Shekhawat and Aakanksha Bansal of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) won the men's and women's 25 metres rapid fire pistol (RFP) T2 competitions as the National Shooting trials concluded at Dr Karni Singh Shooting range in Delhi on Monday.

Calls grow for Australian Open to be scrapped

AGENCIES
MELBOURNE, 18 JANUARY

Four more Australian Open participants, including one player, have been recorded with Covid-19 infections and more cases may come to light as testing continues, officials said on Monday. Health authorities in the state of Victoria have now reported nine infections among passengers that arrived in Melbourne on charter flights for the Feb 8-21 Australian Open.

"All four are associated with the tennis, and they're all tucked away safely in hotel quarantine," Victoria's premier Daniel Andrews told reporters of the new cases.

Passengers on three Australian Open charter flights have now been sent into hard quarantine, including more than 70 players who are unable to train for 14 days ahead of the first Grand Slam.

"I think the people who tested positive thus far were probably exposed before they got on the flights," Victoria's Chief

Health Officer Brett Sutton said. "But it will be the test results in coming days that will give us a picture of whether anyone's had infection transmitted to them on a flight."

The growing infection count has sparked calls from pundits to cancel the Grand Slam.

"It's time to be selfish, time for Victoria to put ourselves first," 3AW radio broadcaster Neil Mitchell said. "Call off the Australian Open. It's not worth the risk."

Tennis Australia boss Craig Tiley said on Sunday the tournament would start as scheduled but the governing body would look at altering the lead-up tournaments to help players unable to train due to quarantine. Andrews said the government still supported holding the Grand Slam and backed health officials to deliver it safely.

Messi shown the door, Barcelona beaten

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MADRID, 18 JANUARY

the 2015 final. The Basque Country club also won the title in 1984. Barcelona were seeking its 15th Super Cup title, and third in the last five seasons. They were also looking to end their title drought after going without a trophy last season, something that hadn't happened since 2007-08.

It was an even match at the La Cartuja Stadium in Seville, with neither team creating many significant scoring opportunities. Barcelona opened the scoring with a shot from the middle of the area by Antoine Griezmann in the 40th minute but Athletic equalised two minutes later with a close-range strike by Scar de Marcos after a well-placed cross by Williams.

Griezmann put Barcelona ahead with another shot from inside the area in the 77th but Athletic evened the match again with Asier Villalibre finding the net following a set piece in the 90th. Villalibre was the player hit by Messi in the final minutes as the players tangled together outside the area. The ball was already on the left side of the area when the inci-

dent happened. Athletic had a 57th-minute goal disallowed by video review because of off-side following a header by Raul Garcia, who had netted twice in the semi-final against Real Madrid.

Messi, who helped set up

Barcelona's first goal, had been doubtful to play in the final because of an unspecified fitness issue that had caused coach Ronald Koeman to leave him out of the semi-final against Real Sociedad on Wednesday, when Barcelona prevailed in a

penalty shootout.

Athletic reached the final by eliminating defending champion Madrid 2-1. The final was the third match in charge for Athletic coach Marcelino Garcia Toral.

His debut had been against Barcelona in a league game at home, when Messi scored twice to help the Catalan club recover from an early goal by Williams and secure a 3-2 victory.

When Athletic defeated Barcelona in 2015, the Spanish Super Cup final was still played in two legs between the Spanish league and Copad del Rey winners. This year's edition was moved to southern Spain after the coronavirus pandemic stopped it from being played in Saudi Arabia for a second straight season. The tournament's revamped final-four format includes the top two finishers in the Spanish league and the finalists of the Copad del Rey from the previous season.

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The Statesman Sport

12

Test in balance, rain stops victory push

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESS
BRISBANE, 18 JANUARY

India will need to score 328 runs for victory or bat all day for a draw after bowling Australia out for 294 midway through the final session on day four of the decisive fourth Test at the Gabba on Monday.

Mohammad Siraj had Josh Hazlewood caught on the boundary to end the Australian innings as rain clouds formed over the ground. Indian openers Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill then faced just 11 balls, reaching four without loss, before light rain began to fall and play was called off for the day.

Siraj and fellow quick Shardul Thakur were exceptional throughout Monday as they kept the Australian scoring rate largely under control while taking wickets at regular intervals. Although most of the Australian batting order got starts, only Steve Smith converted and even he fell for 55 when surprised by a Thakur short ball.

Australia need to win to regain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy but, with more rain forecast for Tuesday, India will fancy their chances of surviving for the draw they need to keep the silverware.

The highest run chase to achieve victory at the Gabba is the 236 that Australia scored to beat the West Indies in 1951.

But as India have shown since their disastrous capitulation in the first Test in Adelaide when they were bowled out for 36, they are never out of the contest. They came back and won the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne then batted for more than day to draw Sydney's third

Test. Smith said off-spinner Nathan Lyon, who is playing his 100th Test and needs three more scalps to reach 400 Test wickets, could play a big role on Tuesday.

"There's a nice crack forming outside the right-handers' off stump that he'll be looking to aim at," Smith said. "If he hits good areas consistently tomorrow there is certainly no reason why he can't create some chances on a day-five wicket, that's for sure."

"The game's in a nice place for us - the wicket is starting to play a few tricks," he added.

"Today a few balls shot up so tomorrow it's going to be cause

of hitting the right areas and letting the natural variation of a day five wicket do its work, and hopefully we can hang on to the chances."

However, India will feel they can at least save the Test against an Australian attack that looked fatigued in the first innings.

India claimed four wickets in the morning session to peg back a flying start by the Australians with David Warner and Marcus Harris taking advantage of some poor bowling.

The Australian openers added 68 runs off 19 overs when, with the score on 89, Harris fell for 38 when he tried to

duck a Thakur short ball only for the ball to graze his glove on the way through to wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant.

It prompted a mini-collapse as two runs later debutant Washington Sundar trapped Warner lbw for 48, the Australian opener's highest score since his return from a groin strain in the third Test in Sydney.

First-innings century-maker Marnus Labuschagne came to the crease and continued to attack, blasting five boundaries on his way to a quickfire 25 before he was straightened up by a Siraj delivery and edged up as simple catch to Sharma at second slip. Siraj, who was expensive in his early overs, then had Matthew Wade caught behind down the leg side for a duck three balls later to leave Australia 123 for four. Smith and Cameron Green then began to take the game away from the visitors, though both had let-offs. Smith was dropped at long-off by Siraj on 38 while Green survived a caught and bowled by the same bowler on 14. But Siraj, who took 5-73, made amends when he got one to leap into Smith's glove with the former Australian captain on 55, while Thakur went on to finish with 4-61 as he accounted for the wickets of Green, Tim Paine and Nathan Lyon.

'Have no words to describe this'

BRISBANE, 18 JANUARY

Right-arm pacer Mohammed Siraj, who on Monday picked five wickets for 73 to become only the fifth Indian bowler to pick a five-wicket haul in a Test at The Gabba, has shown remarkable level of fitness throughout the four-match rubber against Australia.

Siraj has bowled 134 overs, the most by an Indian bowler in the current series which saw the entire frontline attack get benched due to injuries before the fourth and final Test even began. He has ended up being India's highest wicket-taker in the series with 13 scalps. Add to that, he has manned the outfield excellently. He attributed his fitness level to regular work at home during lockdown.

"Ineed to thank Sohambhai (Soham Desai, the strength and conditioning coach at the National Cricket Academy) who designed a program for me and backed my training. Fitness is very important. I have been working on it since lock-down. I used to get regular programs from him, which I used to follow during the lockdown as well. I realise now how important fitness is, especially in Test cricket," said Siraj. Asked how he felt about achieving success on a tour that may have drained him emotionally, Siraj said he has no words to describe it except being grateful to get a chance to fulfil his father's dream.

"First of all I need to thank God that I got this opportunity to play for India. It was my dad's desire to see his son play with the entire world watching him play. Wish he were here to see this. He would have been very happy. It were his prayers that enabled me to take five wickets today. I am speechless, have no words to describe this," said Siraj. "I am very grateful that I got five wickets. It was a very tough situation with dad having passed away. I talked to folks at home, spoke to mom. They encouraged me, made me feel strong. I got mentally strong with their support."

IANS

SCOREBOARD

Australia 1st Innings: 369	Extras: (B-5, BL-2, W-2, NB-4) 13
India 1st Innings: 326	Total: (For 10 wkt, 75.5 Overs) 294
Australia 2nd Innings:	Fall of Wickets: 1-89, 2-91, 3-123, 4-123, 196-5, 227-6, 242-7, 247-8, 274-9, 294-10.
Marcus Harris c Pant b Thakur 38	Bowling: Siraj 19.5-7-75-3, Natarajan 14-4-10, Sundar 18-1-80, Thakur 19-6-14, Saini 5-1-32-0.
David Warner lbw Sundar 48	India 2nd Innings:
Marnus Labuschagne c Rohit b Siraj 25	Rohit Sharma batting 4
Steven Smith c Rahane b Siraj 55	Shubman Gill batting 0
Matthew Wade c Pant b Siraj 0	Total: (For no loss in 15 overs) 4
Cameron Green c Rohit b Thakur 37	Bowling: Starc 10-4-0, Hazlewood 0.5-0-0.
Tim Paine c Pant b Thakur 27	
Pat Cummins not out 28	
Mitchell Starc c Navdeep Saini b Siraj 13	
Nathan Lyon c M Agarwal b Thakur 13	
Josh Hazlewood c Thakur b Siraj 9	

East Bengal and Chennai in play out draw

AGENCIES
GOA, 18 JANUARY

Chennai were held to a goalless draw by a 10-man East Bengal in an Indian Super League (ISL) clash on Monday at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim, Goa. SC East Bengal puts up a strong defensive display. Robbie Fowler's side was down to 10 men for over an hour of play, but managed to hold on and earn a crucial point.

Chennai will be gutted at failing to seal the tie despite having chances aplenty. Both teams had their fair share of chances to break the deadlock but neither could find the back of the net.

The match has got off to a scrappy start as neither teams were able to penetrate much in their attacking thirds.

Hyderabad look to continue good form

High on confidence after holding-table-toppers Mumbai City FC to a draw, Hyderabad FC would look to continue with their good work when they take on laggards Odisha FC in the Indian Super League here on Tuesday.

With form on their side,

Hyderabad will start favorites again but Marquez is expecting a different challenge from Odisha this time around.

"In that game, we played better but we only won 1-0 with a penalty," he said.

"Odisha have been playing better in the last few games. I know they are the last team on the table but all the people who are following this championship know you can win or lose against other teams," he added.

Odisha come into the game after a demoralising loss against Chennai FC, their seventh defeat of the season, which is also the most by any side. They only have six points in their kitty and anything less than a win on Tuesday would further dent their playoff hopes.

Chandrasekhar recovering

BANGALORE, 18 JANUARY



Former India cricketer B S Chandrasekhar (in photo) has been taken to hospital after suffering a stroke but is recovering well and is set to be discharged in the next couple of days, his family said on Monday. The 75-year-old legendary former leg-spinner complained of "tiredness and fatigue" on Friday evening and his speech became a "little bit cluttered," his wife Sandhya Chandrasekhar Bhagwath said, describing the health scare as a very minor stroke.

"Chandra is recovering very well, and he will be back home on Wednesday or Thursday," she said.

On advice of doctors, the Mysuru-born Chandrasekhar was admitted to the Aster RV Hospital, where he was kept in the emergency care unit for observation.

Sandhya said that Chandrasekhar has now been shifted to a regular ward and undergoing physiotherapy.

"There is some kind of blockage in the brain. It's a very, very minuscule stroke," she said, adding that with medication, he will probably

be alright in a week or two.

"There is no problem. It's not a life-threatening thing. Please convey to fans that Chandra is very much stable. He has a very strong willpower," Sandhya said.

In his 16-year career, Chandrasekhar played 58 Test matches capturing 242 wickets.

Chandrasekhar, along with Bishen Singh Bedi, E Prasanna and Venkataraghavan, formed the formidable spin quartet that won many matches for India in the 1960s and '70s.

He was bestowed the Arjuna award as well as the Padma Shri in 1972 for his stupendous cricket career. PTI

England win by seven wickets

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GALLE, 18 JANUARY

Jonny Bairstow and Dan Lawrence held their nerve in a 52-run