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FORMER WEST BENGAL UNIT PRESIDENT OF AIMIM SK ABDUL KALAM

AFTER JOINING THE TRINAMUL CONGRESS

# Bird flu scare: Delhi govt bans import of live birds

CM also declares closure of Ghazipur poultry market for 10 days, says Delhi is taking precautionary steps against bird flu; 24 crows found dead at Jasola park, 10 ducks die at Sanjay lake

**PTI**

NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

**D**elhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced a ban on import of live birds in the national capital and closure of Ghazipur poultry market for the next 10 days in view of bird flu scare.

Noting that there is no confirmed case of avian influenza in Delhi so far, the chief minister said samples have been sent to Jalandhar laboratory. He also said that a 24-hour helpline has been set up for assistance of people.

"In the last few days, there have been several cases of bird flu across various parts of the country, which is a cause of worry,"

Cases of bird flu have been registered in Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan.

No confirmed case of bird flu has been registered in Delhi until now. We have collected around 104 samples until now, which have been sent to Jalandhar for testing and examination in a laboratory," the chief minister said at a press conference.

He said Delhi is taking several steps to control the spread of bird flu as a precautionary measure. "Upon receiving the results day after tomorrow, the Delhi government will take all decisions and measures based on the results. The import of live birds is being completely banned from today onwards. Second, the Ghazipur poultry market in

Delhi will remain shut for the next 10 days," Kejriwal added.

He said the Delhi government is following all guidelines and directions issued by the central government with regards to bird flu.

"Rapid response teams have been formed in every district to contain the spread and conduct proper surveillance, and they will function under the district magistrates. Our veterinary officers are conducting proper surveys in all bird markets, wildlife establishments and water bodies across Delhi."

The special focus of the teams is poultry market Ghazipur, Shakti Sthal Lake, Bhalsoo Lake, Sanjay Lake, Delhi Zoo, DDA Parks situated at Hauz Khas village, Pashchim



A poultry market in the Capital on Saturday. SNS

Vihar and Dwarka," Kejriwal added.

The chief minister said that the news of birds dying is also coming from across Delhi, and

the rapid response teams of those districts are conducting adequate inspection of the situation. "A247 helpline - 23890318 - has also been launched," he added.

Amid bird flu scare in the national capital, at least 24 crows have been found dead at a district park in south Delhi's Jasola in the past three days and 10 ducks have died at the famous Sanjay Lake, officials said on Saturday.

The DDA, which owns a large number of parks in the city, said authorities are monitoring the situation closely.

"The samples of ducks found dead have been taken by the veterinary department authorities to ascertain if the cause of death was bird flu or not," a senior DDA official said.

On the death of crows, the DDA has informed the Delhi government's forest department, he said. "We are monitoring the situation very closely as DDA owns a large number of public

parks many of which have water bodies," the official said.

Asked what steps the DDA authorities might take in view of the situation, he said all parks are open as of now.

"However, at places like Hauz Khas, which has a big lake, where a lot of birds flock to, security personnel are cautioning them to avoid visiting given the bird flu scare," the official said.

Other DDA parks include Coronation Park in Burari, Japanese Park in Rohini and various biodiversity parks.

Amid a bird flu scare, at least 35 crows have died in the national capital in the last few days and the samples have been sent to labs for testing, the officials had said on Friday.

An official of the animal

husbandry unit had said around 50 birds, mostly crows, had died over the last three to four days. "We received information about the death of crows in Dwarka, Mayur Vihar Phase 3 and Hastals village in west Delhi. However, it is yet to be ascertained if bird flu infection is the reason," Dr Rakesh Singh from the department had said.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia had instructed officials on Friday to maintain a strict vigil on birds at major bird sites, especially poultry markets, water bodies, zoos and other potential hotspots.

On Friday, the Centre said bird flu has been confirmed so far in six states - Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat.

## JOBS & CLASSIFIEDS QUEST

### LEGAL NOTICES

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

To, Mr. C. Gupta  
District Judge  
Commercial Court  
(Central)-03  
Room No. 308  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi  
CS (Comm): 1164/2020  
ICICI Bank Ltd.  
Versus  
Gandharv

Gandharv (Defendant), s/o Sh. Gopal Kumar, 42-A, Ganga Vihar, Nafarpur, Deenpur Nafarpur, Delhi-110037.  
Also at : Gandharv (Defendant), s/o Sh. Virender Kumar, Air India Satin Airport Services Pvt. Ltd., A-63, IGI Airport Road, NH-08, Near Mahipal Flyover, Delhi-110037.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 25/01/2021 at 10:30 AM, further details kindly visit DRT website www.drt.gov.in. Phone Number : 011-23748473.

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

Given under my hand and Seal of the Tribunal on this 29th August of 2020.

District Judge  
Commercial Court  
(Central)-03  
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi  
Seal of the Court

DEBTORS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I- DELHI  
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street,  
New Delhi-110001  
OA No. 1026/2019  
ICICI Bank Limited  
— Applicant  
Versus  
Dhirendra Verma & Ors.  
— Respondent

To, 1. Dhirendra Verma, H. No. B-206, 3rd Floor, Duggal Colony, Khanpur, New Delhi-110062.

Also at : Dhirendra Verma, 280, Shastri Nagar, Connyan Purwa, Sitapur-261001.

Also at : Dhirendra Verma, Flat No. 801, 8th Floor, Tower B, JNC Greenswoods, Plot No. GH-01, Sector-3, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad-201001, Uttar Pradesh.

Whereas the abovenamed applicant has constituted a case for recovery of Rs. 51,31,401/- (Rupees Fifty One Lac Thirty One Thousand Four Hundred One only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Lt. Registrar on 14-01-2021 at 10:30 AM, for the details kindly visit DRT website www.drt.gov.in. Phone Number : 011-23748473.

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

Given under my hand and Seal of the Tribunal on this 29th August of 2020.

By Order of this Tribunal  
For Registrar  
Undermentioned Phone Number  
Amit K. Dar,  
Registrar  
DRT-I, New Delhi  
Phone No.: 011-23748473  
E-mail : regdrt1delhi@nic.in

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I- DELHI  
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street,  
New Delhi-110001  
OA No. 1026/2019  
ICICI Bank Limited  
— Applicant  
Versus  
Dhirendra Verma & Ors.  
— Respondent

Rajeev Dhand, C-11 C, MIG Flat, Vatika Apartment, Mayapuri, New Delhi-110064.

Also at : Mona Dhand, w/o Mr. Rajeev Dhand, Flat No. 1903, Tower-B2, UP Country, 17th Floor, TS-01, Sector-17A, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, NOIDA-201303, Uttar Pradesh.

Whereas the abovenamed applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 11,04,237/- (Rupees Eleven Lac Four Hundred Thirty Seven Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Lt. Registrar on 16-01-2021 at 10:30 AM, for the details kindly visit DRT website www.drt.gov.in. Phone Number : 011-23748473.

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

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Undermentioned Phone Number  
Amit K. Dar,  
Registrar  
DRT-I, New Delhi  
Phone No.: 011-23748473  
E-mail : regdrt1delhi@nic.in

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India has been at the forefront in forging a global response to combat the enormous challenges posed by the pandemic. We supplied medicines to nearly 150 countries, making the world look at India as the 'pharmacy of the world'.

RAM NATH KOVIND  
PRESIDENT

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 10 JANUARY 2021

03

# 519 fresh corona cases, 12 deaths in Capital

Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal appeals to Modi govt to ensure everyone gets free Covid-19 vaccine

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

**D**elhi today recorded 519 fresh coronavirus (Covid-19) cases and 12 Covid-linked deaths, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

These cases were detected out of 80,275 tests including 45,079 RT-PCR tests and 35,196 rapid antigen tests, the health bulletin said. The city's Covid positivity rate climbed to 0.65 per cent from yesterday's 0.59 per cent. Delhi's Covid caseload mounted to 6,29,801 and the coronavirus-related death toll to 10,666.

The city's active coronavirus cases tally dropped to 3,683 from yesterday's 3,779.

The bulletin stated that 603 Covid patients recovered over the last 24 hours, which raised



the cumulative number of such recoveries in the national capital to 6,15,452 so far. The recovery rate stood above 97 per cent.

The number of containment zones in the city dipped to 2,951 from 2,965 the previous day. The number of people under home isolation dropped to 1,652 from 1,807 the previous day. Of

the total number of 12,166 beds in Delhi's Covid hospitals, 10,709 beds were vacant.

The bulletin stated that 70 beds in Covid care centres were occupied by persons under quarantine, including travellers who have returned through the Vande Bharat Mission and by bubble flights.

The number of tests done per million in Delhi so far was

over 4.9 lakh while the total number of tests stood at over 93 lakh. Cabinet secretary took a meeting through video-conference on public health response to Covid-19 to review preparations for the vaccination, the bulletin said.

This month, 585 coronavirus cases were logged in Delhi on 1 January and 494 cases on 2 January, 424 on 3 January, 384 on 4 January, 442 on 5 January, 654 on 6 January, 486 on 7 January, and 444 on 8 January.

On 29 and 30 December, the city had recorded 703 and 677 cases respectively. On 31 December, it reported 574 cases. Meanwhile, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today appealed to the Narendra Modi-led central government to ensure that everyone gets free Covid vaccine.

"Coronavirus is the century's biggest pandemic. It is

very important to protect our people from it. I appeal to the central government to ensure that everyone gets free vaccine. The expenditure on this will save many Indian lives," Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi.

The Delhi government has already announced that the coronavirus vaccine, when it is available, will be provided free to people in the city.

"The Delhi government is fully prepared to receive, store and administer Covid-19 vaccine to 51 lakh priority category persons in the city in the first phase of vaccination. The vaccine will be provided free to everyone in Delhi," health minister Satyendra Jain had recently said.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 444 Covid cases following 75,724 tests. The city had then logged 10 Covid-linked fatalities. The recovery rate was 97.71 per cent.

After joining the agitation, he has been to his hometown

## Wheelchair-bound Pb farmer defies odds, joins protest at Singhu border

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

Sitting on a wheelchair, 44-year-old Harvinder Singh from Punjab's Jalandhar interacts with fellow farmers camping at Delhi's Singhu border to protest against the Centre's new agric

laws. His physical limitations due to polio have rendered him on a wheelchair for decades but that has not deterred him from joining the over a month-long agitation, leaving behind his ailing mother at his native vil

lage. "I may have lost all hopes of recovery from polio but I have not lost hope for a positive outcome from this agitation, he says. Singh, who has been camping at the border for a month now, said he has been battling polio since childhood and has lost all hopes of recovery but this agitation is a ray of hope for him.

When asked what prompted him to join the protest despite his condition, Singh said "I am a farmer and so it was my responsibility to be here." After joining the agitation, he has been to his hometown

his battle.

"Later, I went to my village to check on my mother. She is 85 but despite getting injured, she told me to not return and fight my battle," said Singh, who engages in wheat and rice farming at his hometown.

His nephew, Sukhinder, who accompanied Singh, said his uncle's mother has been a great source of support to them.

"When she got injured, she did call to inform us and said she will be fine and that we need not rush back home immediately. She stressed that just like how it was doctor's duty to treat her, it was their duty to fight for their rights," he added. However, braving the severe cold and heavy downpour, nothing stopped Singh from returning home.

Now he is firm on staying at the border till the government accepts their demands and takes back the three new agri laws.

"I may face difficulties but with everyone's cooperation, we are surviving all challenges and will continue to protest until our demands are met," he added.

## Modi cheated farmers, alleges Himachal Cong

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 9 JANUARY

Himachal Pradesh Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore on Saturday accused the Narendra Modi government of "cheating" farmers in the name of various schemes, charging that the central government was working against the interests of the farming community.

Rathore said PM Crop Insurance Scheme and Kisan Samman Nidhi Scheme will prove biggest scams of the country as only those persons who were associated with BJP were given benefits of these schemes, though they were ineligible for these. "PM Crop Insurance Scheme that was launched in 2016 is the biggest scam as the Central government launched the schemes in collusion with insurance companies under which farmers of the state and the country have been duped

## Air quality 'poor' in Gurgaon, 'very poor' in Gzb, Noida, Faridabad

PTI  
NOIDA, 9 JANUARY

The average air quality was recorded in the "very poor" category in Ghaziabad, Noida, Greater Noida and Faridabad, while it was "poor" in Gurgaon, according to data for a 24-hour period issued by a government agency on Saturday.

Pollutants PM 2.5 and PM 10 were prominent in the air of the five immediate neighbours of Delhi, according to the air quality index (AQI) maintained by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

As per the index, an AQI between zero and 50 is

considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'. The average 24-hour AQI at 4 pm on Saturday was 348 in Ghaziabad, 360 in Greater Noida, 346 in Noida, 311 in Faridabad and 230 in Gurgaon, according to the CPCB's Sameer app.

On Friday it was 304 in Ghaziabad, 312 in Greater Noida, 261 in Noida, 256 in Faridabad and 163 in Gurgaon.

The CPCB states that an AQI in the "very poor" category may cause respiratory illness on prolonged exposure,

while that in "poor" category may cause breathing discomfort to most people on prolonged exposure.

The AQI for each city is based on the average value of all stations there. Ghaziabad and Gurgaon have three such stations while Noida, Greater Noida and Faridabad have two stations each, according to the app.



## Counselling sessions for farmers at Singhu to prevent burnout, suicide bids

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

Despite their rock-hard determination to sustain the over 40-day-old agitation against the new farm laws, many protesting farmers at Delhi borders are falling prey to anxiety and depression, with a few having allegedly claimed their lives fighting this prolonged cold.

Braving the elements and the odds stacked up against them, an overwhelming number of farmers have been protesting at Singhu Border and two other sites since November 26, but their "sedentary lifestyle" at present and "psychological sedimentation" is taking a toll on their physical and mental well-being.

According to NGOs running medical camps at the Singhu Border, the nerve centre of the massive agitation, these farmers are brave in their spirit, but some have become vulnerable, facing extreme weather and may be a "sense of wanting hope" that have transliterated into suicides at times.

However, to ease their psychological burden, US-based NGO, United Sikhs, has started carrying out counselling sessions for farmers at their camp set up on the Haryana side of the protest site at Singhu Border.

"So many farmers have died during this agitation, some of them claimed their own lives. While they may have a strong determination, but the extreme cold and pent-up emotions, coupled with sedentary lifestyle at present as they are not going to fields, is making them psychologically vulnerable," said Sanya Kataria, a clinical psychologist and a volunteer at the camp.

A student of Doctorate in Psychology at a private university in Noida, she has been offering services via the United Sikhs camp in the last few days.

"These farmers have been sitting for over 40 days on a national highway as part of this agitation. While most can withstand the physical rigour and biting cold as they are used to working hard, some of them have fallen prey to anxiety, depression and also helplessness coupled with lack of self-esteem and feeling of frustration. It is a dangerous combination," she told PTI.

"We don't want any farmer to die, and prevent any further suicide bids. So, our counselling calms their minds. We also ask farmers to come for follow-up sessions," she said.

Besides, there is a facility for physiotherapy at the camp,

and general physicians and other doctors come too, "some as volunteers, other on a payment basis, by rotation", Kaur added.

Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) national spokesman Rakesh Tikait had recently claimed that 47 farmers have sacrificed their lives during the protests.

A 75-year-old farmer protesting against the Centre's new farm laws had allegedly hanged himself at the Uttar Pradesh-Delhi border in Ghazipur, earlier this month.

Medical Services Centre (MSC), a volunteer organisation, based in Kolkata, has also been running a camp since the start of the protest late November.

Dr Nikhita Murali, a physician, who has been offering services for the past few days at the Singhu Border, said, "Many women who have joined the protest are having health issues too."

"Sitting continuously or cooking for a long time in kitchen is causing joint aches but many farmers are coming to us with problems of improper blood sugar level or blood pressure. Headache and body aches also common ailments among them," she said.

Asked what kind of problems women protesters are facing, Murali, a native of Kochi,

said some are exhibiting gynaecological infections like in the reproductive tract. "These women belong to conservative families, so they don't talk about their medical problems, and feel uncomfortable talking to a male doctor about any gynaecological issues. After talking to me during consultation, they revealed that they have such problems," the doctor said.

But, none of them want to go back from the protest site, they wish to soldier on. Their will power is very strong, she added.

On Saturday, it was yet another day of protest for the farmers in the ritual January winter, even as the eighth round of talks between the farmer leaders and the Centre remained inconclusive on Friday. Cries of 'Saada Haq', 'Aithe Rakha', 'Jo Bole So Nihal' and 'Kisan Union Ekta Zindabad' rent the air throughout the day. Besides, many good Samaritans have also put up roadside stalls to offer free medicines and dental care services for the farmers, who are in no mood to relent or retreat.

## HP CM condoles demise of Solanki

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 9 JANUARY

Army soldier Kuldeep Singh who laid down his life during Operation Snow Leopard in Ladakh.

Hawaldar Kuldeep Singh hailed from Nalagarh of Solan district.

He extended his condolences to the bereaved family members and said martyr Kuldeep Singh has lost his life to protect the frontiers of the country in extreme weather conditions and his sacrifice would be remembered.

He prayed to the Almighty to grant peace to the departed soul and to give strength to bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss. Thakur also expressed grief over demise of Indian

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Army soldier Kuldeep Singh who laid down his life during Operation Snow Leopard in Ladakh.

Hawaldar Kuldeep Singh hailed from Nalagarh of Solan district.

He extended his condolences to the bereaved family members and said martyr Kuldeep Singh has lost his life to protect the frontiers of the country in extreme weather conditions and his sacrifice would be remembered.

He prayed to the Almighty to grant peace to the departed soul and to give strength to bereaved family members to bear this irreparable loss.

Thakur also expressed grief over demise of Indian



Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy and Telangana Minister KT Rama Rao at the inauguration of various development projects, in Hyderabad on Saturday. ■ IANS

**Kerala permits reopening of spas, ayurvedic resorts:** The spas, ayurvedic resorts in Kerala, which were closed months ago due to pandemic, are all set to welcome visitors again as the state has issued orders for reopening them by adhering to safety norms. The spas and ayurvedic resorts used to welcome a large number of tourists both domestic and international holidaymakers. ■ PTI

**UP's new tenancy-related ordinance:** The Uttar Pradesh has decided to promulgate a tenancy-related ordinance aimed at safeguarding the rights and interests of both the landlords and tenants and check disputes between them. The ordinance was approved in a Cabinet meeting chaired by CM Yogi Adityanath on Friday and is likely to receive Governor's assent soon. ■ PTI

## Guj's ex-CM Madhavsinh Solanki dies at 94

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
GANDHINAGAR, 9 JANUARY

Former Union External Affairs Minister and four-time Gujarat Chief Minister Madhavsinh Solanki died here this morning, leaving a legacy of winning the highest number of seats in the state Assembly. He was 94.

Solanki had created history in Gujarat politics in 1985 by leading the Congress to win as many as 149 of the 182-member Assembly, a record that could not be broken in the quarter century of BJP victories in the state.

Known as a keen reader, Solanki was the proponent of the KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi, Muslim) formula which led the Congress to

## TN polls: AIADMK General Council endorses EPS as CM

Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu are likely to be held in April-May



**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHENNAI, 9 JANUARY**

The ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu on Saturday endorsed chief minister K Palaniswami as its CM candidate for this year's high-stakes Assembly polls, where the party will take on arch rival DMK in a tough electoral battle.

AIADMK's top decision-making body General Council also authorised O Panneerselvam and Palaniswami—the top leaders—to devise winning strategies to ensure a grand win in the 2021 polls, create an AIADMK-led victory alliance and decide seat-sharing with alliance parties," the members resolved.

The party has earned the public's praise for "good governance," it added.

The AIADMK had earlier led the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), its constituents being the BJP, DMDK and PMK among others, in the state for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and its two top leaders have already confirmed the party's alliance with the BJP.

The general council also endorsed Panneerselvam's October 2020 announcement that Palaniswami will be the AIADMK's chief ministerial candidate for the polls.

The members said they "unanimously accept the announcement and will work hard to ensure victory" and bring Palaniswami back to the post after the elections.

Further, it approved the appointment of a steering committee, which was announced in October last year. The six ministers and five other office-bearers in the committee are seen as loyal

ists of Palaniswami and Panneerselvam respectively. The setting up of such a committee was Panneerselvam's long pending demand then.

Targeting DMK President M K Stalin, the party alleged that he was unable to bear the growing public support for its government, as well as Palaniswami's administrative acumen and was therefore indulging in "uncultured" criticism of the CM.

It condemned Stalin and his DMK supporters for "personal attacks."

In an apparent reference to its arch rival, the party, in another resolution, said it would strive hard to "put an end to the dynasty politics of one family" and ensure that a "true democratic government" under AIADMK was installed post-polls.

It also lauded the government on different matters such as the 7.5 per cent quota in medical education for government school students who clear the National Entrance cum Eligibility Test (NEET) and attracting investments to the state. Further, it opposed the Sri Lankan government's move to scrap the provincial councils, saying it would impact the Tamils there and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene in the matter.

In his address, Panneerselvam said the party was above individuals and urged for a united fight to secure a "grand, unprecedented victory" in the coming elections.

He urged party workers to go to the people with DMK's "scams and betrayals" such as ceding of Katchatheevu islet in the 1970s and not taking steps for notifying the final award of the Cauvery disputes tribunal in a gazette.

He said there was no factionalism in the party and that no leader, including himself or Palaniswami, have said "be loyal to me," but only insisted for unity among the ranks.

"Ours is the only democratic organisation where workers can become even chief minister and deputy CM, which is not the case with others....setting aside differences, work with the sole aim of party's victory (in the polls)," he said.

Palaniswami, targeting DMK over "dynasty politics", said that while earlier it was the late M Karunanidhi at the helm of affairs, "it was then (MK) Stalin and now Udhayankidhi (Stalin's son)."

"In this election, end this dynasty politics," he said.

For AIADMK stalwarts, the late chief ministers M G Ramachandran (party founder) and Jayalalithaa people were their heirs, he said.

He reiterated that the CM's post is a "responsibility" and said "I see everyone here as a CM." Palaniswami thanked "elder brother" Panneerselvam for earlier announcing him as the party's CM face in the coming polls and the general council and the executive for endorsing the same today.

## Chhattisgarh says no to Covaxin till it completes third phase of the trial

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
RAIPUR, 9 JANUARY

Chhattisgarh government says it will not allow the vaccination of indigenous 'Covaxin' developed by Bharat Biotech until the company completes the third trial and comes up with reliable data.

Health minister T S Singh Deo said that since Bharat Biotech's 'Covaxine' has not completed mandatory three trials, therefore it should not be allowed to be administered to the people. Chhattisgarh government will not allow Covaxine in the state and will not accept it if the central government sends it to us, he said.

Referring to the death of a volunteer after he was given Covaxine dose in Bhopal, Singh Deo pointed out that a large number of health experts have questioned the safety of the vaccine. Indian Government should not be seen making such decision in haste, because vaccination drive against the deadly Covid-19 may run till at least 500 to 700 days, then why so hurry? he added.

Speculating a mad rush of similar vaccine candidates, the Chhattisgarh minister said that if a vaccine is approved without proper trial results and without taking into adequate safety parameters, several other companies will also line up for approval with inadequate trials. Covaxine was supposed to take 28 thousand samples but it had just 23,000 when its vaccine candidate was given a go-ahead by the government for emergency use, making the trial results suspicious, Singh Deo

## Covaxin volunteer dies in Bhopal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
Bhopal, 9 JANUARY

poisoning', as the cause of death.

People's Medical College Vice Chancellor Dr Rajesh Kapoor confirmed that Marawi had participated in the vaccine trial on 12 December. Dr Kapoor, nonetheless, pointed out that it could not be confirmed whether Marawi was injected with the vaccine or a placebo.

He said that 50 per cent of the trial participants are given the actual vaccine and fifty per cent are given saline. Dr Kapoor said that the vial containing the liquid for the trial comes covered and coded.

He asserted that all necessary and required protocols were ensured and Marawi's consent was taken to participate in the trials.

Medico-Legal Institute Director Dr Sharma said Marawi's viscera would be tested and the exact cause of death could be ascertained.

trying to corner the government for its alleged haste in giving go-ahead to Covaxine without proper trial results. Several party leaders have raised the bogie of 'clinical safety'. Congress governed states, however, have been busy preparing for the mass vaccination drive on the hand and lamenting the absence of transparency, simultaneously.

## Andhra: 16-member SIT to probe attack on temples

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 9 JANUARY

Andhra Pradesh government has formed a 16-member special investigation team (SIT) to probe all cases of attacks on temples and desecration of idols since last September.

As the Opposition including both TDP and BJP have exploited the repeated attacks on temples to the hilt, the state government is keen to defuse the tension especially with the bypoll for Tirupati Lok Sabha seat coming up shortly.

In fact the state government under YS Jaganmohan Reddy has alleged there is a larger conspiracy behind the "orchestrated incidents to defame it and stoke religious sentiments in the communally peaceful state."

palli Amar, advisor, National Media has cautioned the mainstream media against falling trap to fake information shared on social media and end up circulating false news.

He has cited at least five incidents where idols have been damaged some months or even years ago but have been circulated as a fresh one, spreading rumours in an attempt to cause communal flare-up and rile up sentiments of the majority of the people.

For instance, in case of Saraswati temples in Srikakulam and Guntur the alleged vandalism had taken place two years ago but were reported as fresh incidents.

Even in cases where idols have been desecrated most of the temples are in remote areas where security is pretty much lax.

It may be noted that chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is a practising Christian both BJP and TDP have alleged he has not taken action against the incidents of vandalism.

## PM to head panel to mark Subhas Chandra Bose's 125th birth anniv

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

The members include 10 Union ministers and seven CMs who will decide on the activities to be undertaken for the year-long commemoration planned by the government.

The members also include historians, authors, citizens, members of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's family, experts, as well as eminent people associated with the Azad Hind

### AT WORK



Workers on a cold afternoon at India Gate, in the Capital on Saturday. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA

## WB: Ahead of Assembly elections, CPM to launch online survey

RAJIB CHAKRABORTY  
KOLKATA, 9 JANUARY

Ahead of the Assembly elections in the state, the CPI-M will launch an online survey at grassroots level to seek the people's opinion regarding the West Bengal government's actual performance towards developing the state to identify voter preferences and framing a campaign roadmap for the upcoming election.

It has been learnt that the party initially chalked out a plan for a door-to-door survey, but apprehending that the Trinamul Congress may unleash violence on the party workers conducting the survey, they cancelled it and decided to do it online.



## India developing capabilities for undertaking deep ocean missions: Harsh Vardhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHENNAI, 9 JANUARY

The government was in the process of developing a capability in which scientists can go deep into the ocean beyond three kilometres for taking up ocean exploration, Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said on Saturday.

Participating in a function here, he said India was ranked at the top in weather forecasting and had never issued a false warning whenever cyclones were formed.

"Normally it is about six hours of going down (in the ocean) doing some research activities and coming back.

A party source said that this online survey at grassroots level is for identifying voter preferences and framing a campaign roadmap for the coming Assembly polls.

(for research purposes)," he said after dedicating coastal research vessel 'Sagar Anveshika' at Chennai Port Trust here.

On weather forecast, he said the natural calamity, the country remembers—was the Tsunami of 2004 which caused a 'tragedy of a huge magnitude'.

"When we look back on how our scientists have developed (since Tsunami hit in 2004), we can proudly say that we are the best nation in the world in predicting early warnings of tsunami. We have never issued false warnings. My scientists tell me that Japan has issued false warnings on tsunamis," he said.

The minister said because of early warning facilities, states and administration were able to take up precautionary measures in protect-

ing the people.

"Some cyclones could have caused huge damage. But they were very well predicted sometimes 10 days or two weeks ear-

lier so that the government and

respective states got ample time and opportunity to take care of all the precautions so that lives of people and sources

of livelihood could be protected," he pointed out.

The country's most ambitious mission was to launch a deep ocean mission which



Union Science and Technology minister Dr Harsh Vardhan on board Sagar Anveshika

would look at all the aspects of the ocean as a source of minerals, a source of water and strengthen the scientific community, he said.

"We are already in the process and then we will take the help of big organisations in a collaborative way like DRDO, ISRO, people in IITs," he said. Vardhan said 'Sagar Anveshika' launched today can accommodate about 15-20 scientists for research purposes and has laboratories similar to research vessel 'Sagar Thara' for taking up scientific explorations.

"The state-of-the-art vessel will transform our ocean research activities and boost our blue economy," he said.

The vessel is equipped with advanced navigation systems as well as research and exploration apparatus.





Government has finalised petitions to challenge the Centre's farm laws and will do so at an opportune time on the advice of legal experts

PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER AMARINDER SINGH

REACTING TO ACCUSATIONS MADE BY AAP MP BHAGWANT MANN

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 10 JANUARY 2021

05

## THUMBNAILS



A free home delivered tiffin service for senior citizens was launched in Agra on Saturday.

IANS

Air traffic disrupted at Srinagar airport: Air traffic to and from Kashmir was affected on Saturday as several flights were cancelled due to fresh snowfall in Srinagar and other parts of the Valley, officials said.

Snow accumulated on the runway of the airport which hampered the flight operations. At least seven flights have been cancelled. Some flights have been delayed, he added. The snow clearance teams are on the job.

SNS

**British national, 2 others held with drugs:** The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday arrested three persons, including a British national, for allegedly supplying imported strains of ganja in the metropolis, an official said.

One of those arrested is a suspect in the drug case being probed after the death of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput in June last year, he added. Over 200 kilograms of ganja, including imported strains like 'OG Kush' (a strain of cannabis indica), and curated marijuana, some of which had been sourced from the United States as well as local areas, were recovered in the NCB action, he said.

**2 test Covid +ve with UK strain in Srinagar**

JAMMU, 9 JANUARY

The Kashmir valley recorded the first two cases of UK's new strain of Covid-19 on Saturday when two male members were tested positive in Srinagar.

This has triggered panic in the valley that has already recorded several deaths due to coronavirus during the past few months.

Both tested positive were travellers and belong to the Habak and Soura localities of downtown Srinagar.

They have been admitted to the Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial Hospital (JLNMH) in Srinagar for treatment.

Nodal officer for Covid-19 confirmed that both have been tested positive for the new mutant strain of Covid.

Srinagar's administration has started comprehensive contact tracing of the duo.

Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed a substantial drop in its daily number of Covid-19 cases in the recent weeks. From the peak of over 2000 positive cases per day in September, the number has come down to 100 odd positive cases in the recent days.

Since the outbreak in March 2020, 1,22,303 people have tested positive for COVID-19 and 1,907 have died in the UT of J&K.

The administrations of all districts has been asked to stay alert and quarantine travelers immediately.

# Bird flu confirmed in 7 states; samples sent for testing

Bird flu is confirmed in UP, Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana & Gujarat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

**T**he Centre on Saturday said the outbreak of bird flu or avian influenza has been reported in Uttar Pradesh, taking the total number of affected states to seven.

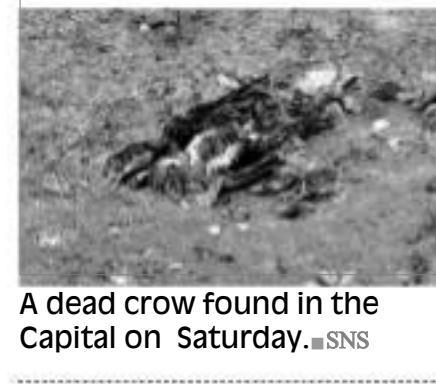
However, the confirmation of bird flu in Delhi, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, is awaited as the samples have been sent for testing, it said.

Besides Uttar Pradesh, the other six states where bird flu is confirmed are Kerala, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Gujarat.

"So far, the disease has been confirmed from seven states... The Department has issued advisory to the affected states so as to avoid further spread of the disease," the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying said in a statement.

In Chhattisgarh, reports of unusual mortality of birds in poultry and wild birds in Balod district were reported on Friday night and Saturday morning. The samples have been sent to the labs concerned.

In Delhi, reports of unusu-



A dead crow found in the Capital on Saturday. SNS

al mortality in ducks were received from Sanjay lake and the samples have been sent for testing, it said. Similarly in Maharashtra, the samples of dead crows from Mumbai, Thane, Dapoli, Parbhani and Beed districts have been sent to Bhopal-based ICAR-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (ICAR-NIHSAD), it added.

"After confirmation of Avian Influenza positive samples from ICAR-NIHSAD in poultry (two poultry farms) of Panchkula district, Haryana, positive cases of Avian Influenza in migratory birds were reported in Shivpuri, Raigarh, Shahapur, Agar, Vidisha district of Madhya Pradesh, Zoological Park, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh and Pratappurh and Dausa districts of Rajasthan," the ministry said.

On the status of culling



At a poultry market in Delhi amid bird flu scare on Saturday. SNS

operation, the ministry said it has been completed in two affected districts of Kerala.

Central teams have reached Kerala, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh for monitoring/epidemiological investigation.

The Centre has also asked state governments to ensure effective communication and coordination with health authorities for close vigilance on the outbreak and to avoid any chances of spreading of the disease to humans.

States have been asked to increase surveillance around water bodies, live bird markets, zoos and poultry farms and also to ensure proper disposal of carcass, and strengthening of bio-security in poultry farms.

They have also been asked to be prepared for any eventuality of avian influenza and ensure sufficient stock of PPE kits and accessories required for culling operations.

"Chief Secretaries/Administrators were requested to

arrange to issue appropriate advisories to quell consumer reactions, affected by rumours and increase awareness regarding safety of poultry or poultry products that are safe for consumption following boiling/ cooking procedures," the statement added.

Meanwhile, the anxiety over spread of the disease in the poultry industry as prices of eggs and broiler chicken have fallen owing to decline in demand.

## A farewell to @realDonaldTrump

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

real Donald Trump," recalled Costanzo. "He thought about it for a minute and said: 'I like it. Let's do it.'

Other than Trump's family, no one seemed off limits from his Twitter wrath. Trump attacked Republicans, Senate Democrats, 2016 political rivals, current administration staffers, former administration staffers, the Republican Party and cable networks. @realDonaldTrump was prolific: On days when its owner was particularly agitated, such as in the midst of impeachment proceedings, it pushed out more than 100

tweets. In its most popular tweet, on 2 October 2020, @realDonaldTrump announced that Trump and first lady Melania Trump had contracted the coronavirus. The post got 1.8 million likes and nearly 400,000 retweets, according to Factba.se. @realDonaldTrump frequently spread misleading, false and malicious assertions, such as the baseless idea that protesters at Justice Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation hearings were paid by the liberal philanthropist George Soros and that November's election was beset by voter fraud.

Sumadi said a dozen vessels, including four warships, were deployed in a search and rescue operation

## Indonesia jet carrying 62 goes missing...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

centered between Lancang island and Laki island, part of the Thousand Islands chain just north of Jakarta.

Local media reports said fishermen spotted metal objects believed to be parts of a plane on Saturday afternoon in the Thousand Islands.

In October 2018, a Boeing 737 MAX 8 jet operated by Lion Air plunged into the Java Sea just minutes after taking off from Jakarta, killing all 189 people on board.

## Partha compares BJP with migratory birds

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 9 JANUARY

gal.

The minister said, the crop insurance premium is paid by the farmers in all other states of India. In Bengal the farmers have to pay nothing, it is paid by the state.

She said, "The Centre promises to double farmers' income by 2022. But farmers' income will not double before 2028 at current rates." However, farmer's Income has tripled in Bengal - from Rs 90,000 in 2011, farmers' income has now tripled to Rs 2 lakh 90 thousand," she said.

Krishan Bandhu scheme covers all farmers of Bengal while PM's Kisan Yojana for small and marginal farmers. Krishan Bandhu provides financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per acre, while PM Kisan provides Rs 1,214 per acre the minister stated.

## APPOINTMENT

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT AND SESSIONS JUDGE, PANIPAT

ADVERTISEMENT

Applications are invited from eligible candidates on plain paper in prescribed form attached with this advertisement for filling up 13 (Thirteen) posts of Peons/Addl. Peons (General Category-07, ESM General Category-01, SC-02, BC-A-02, BC-B-01) purely on temporary basis but likely to be on permanent basis. in FPL-DL\*\* (16900-53500) plus other allowances as admissible to Haryana Government Employees from time to time, which denotes for Group-D, for Sessions Division, Panipat. In case of non-availability of suitable Ex-Servicemen, their dependents i.e. wives, sons and daughters subject to their full-time continuous service, age etc. shall be considered against the posts meant for Ex-Servicemen. Further that in case of non-availability of suitable Candidates from reserved categories, vacancies meant for such categories shall be filled up from the candidates belonging to General category.

The educational qualification and age for the aforesaid posts would be as under:-

1. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION: Middle standard with knowledge of Hindi/Punjabi.

2. AGE: The candidate should not be less than 1 years and more than 42 years of age as on 31.10.2020. Upper age limit is, however, relaxable, as per instructions of the Iaryana Government issued from time to time.

3. LAST DATE: The last date for submitting the application forms will be 31.01.2021 till 5.00 P.M. No application received thereafter shall be entertained, in any case. This office will not be responsible for any postal delay.

4. The applications may be submitted by registered post or by hand at the following address:-

The Superintendent,  
Office of the District & Sessions Judge,  
Judicial Court Complex, Panipat.  
Pin Code: 132103.

5. Incomplete applications without bearing photograph of candidate, attested copies of proof of date of birth, educational certificates and other relevant documents shall be rejected outright and no intimation whatsoever would be given to the candidates.

6. The candidates will have to appear for interview on the date and time which would be uploaded on the website of District Court, Panipat i.e. [www.districts.ecourts.gov.in/panipat](http://www.districts.ecourts.gov.in/panipat) in due course. No separate intimation of the interview would be given to the candidates and the candidates themselves would have to be vigilant about the date and time of their interview as per the schedule given on the website.

7. The candidates shall also bring their original documents on the date of interview.

8. No separate call letters for interview will be sent.

9. No T/A/D/A shall be paid.

10. The number of vacancies may increase or decrease during the selection process.

11. For any query, the candidates may contact this office on Telephone Number 0180-2657171.

District & Sessions Judge, Panipat

SP SHARMA

JAMMU, 9 JANUARY

The unique banyan tree that demarcates the boundary of India and Pakistan on the International Border (IB) at Suchet-

garh in the Jammu district has become the most photographed landmark amidst efforts of the J&K government to make the place a tourist hotspot.

This is perhaps the only point where a tree and not any traditional concrete pillar demarcates boundary of the two countries. The tree was not the dividing line a few years ago as a concrete pyramid shaped pillar number 918 stood there. However, the concrete pillar vanished within the broadening trunk of the tree with passage of time. However, the Indian BSF and Pakistani Rangers guarding their respective borders did not cut the tree and finally painted the 918 marking on the tree.

The next pillar 919 is made

of concrete but the pillar tree has become an attraction for visitors who come from different parts of the country. With its increasing circumference, one side of the tree is now within the Indian territory and the other in Pakistan. During sunrise in the morning the tree gives its shade in Pakistan and in the afternoon on the Indian side of the border.

Prior to the partition in 1947, Suchetgarh was an important railway station between Jammu and Sialkot (now in Pakistan). This was the last place in the territory of the then ruler of J&K and thereafter the BSF and Rangers like that in Wagha, Ferozepur or Fazilka in Punjab.

Both sides do not lay claim over the tree on whose both sides are identical concrete platforms of India and Pakistan on which flag-meetings between the BSF and Rangers are held. The Pakistan Rangers sit on the Indian platform when the meeting is held on the Indian side and the BSF officers cross the borderline to meet

at the platform on the other side of the tree if the meeting is convened by Pakistan.

Being a live border with frequent exchange of fire between the Indian and Pakistani troops, this part of the IB does not host the beating retreat of BSF and Rangers like that in Wagha, Ferozepur or Fazilka in Punjab.

The octroi post of the British era is now the observation post

of the BSF. Suchetgarh has also been earmarked as the crossing point for the UN Observers to Pakistan and vice-versa.

Successive governments in J&K have made efforts to promote Suchetgarh as a destination of border tourism. The then Governor NNVohra personally visited the spot to take stock of steps taken to create infrastructure for tourists.

Another attraction near the border is the Gharana wetland that is these days home to a large number of species of migratory birds. About 6000 birds of different species can presently be seen in the wetland. Most of these birds are migratory and endangered that are covered under various schedules of the

NORTHERN RAILWAY  
REVISED PUBLIC NOTICE  
It is notified for the information of all concerned that the Public Notice published on 09.01.2021 in connection with construction of Rohtak-Jind-Baghat Bridge between Rohtak and Baghat Stations, train no. 04508/4507 Faizabad-Delhi-Faizabad Express Special has wrongly been shown as partially cancelled between Ambala Cantt.-Faizabad stations instead of Ambala Cantt.-Delhi Jn. stations. Hence kindly read it as partially cancelled between Ambala Cantt.-Delhi Jn. In other words the rail service will remain suspended between Ambala Cantt and Delhi Jn. on 11.01.2021. The rest of information hold good. Inconvenience is deeply regretted. 6/27/2021  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

## Disunited America

Events of the last two months following the 3 November general election show that America is a deeply divided nation. Though denied a second term, President Donald Trump received the second highest number of votes in the history of the United States of America and his constituency is growing. When Congress was meeting on 6 January to certify Joe Biden's victory, Trump and his advisers like Rudy Giuliani who considers it a "stolen election," were inciting their supporters to march on Capitol Hill. Giuliani advised them to engage in 'combat'. After they had stormed the House and caused five deaths, Vice President Mike Pence who was presiding over the session condemned the violent mob but said nothing about Trump who incited them. "The 75 million great American patriots who voted for me will have a giant voice long into the future. They will not be disrespected or treated unfairly in any way, shape or form. I love them all," Trump tweeted before Twitter permanently suspended him as his posts "pose the risk of further incitement of violence." Trump's constituency comprises Bible-thumpers, white supremacists, 'Uncle Toms' of the Afro-Americans and the less-educated and less-skilled who feel left behind in this era of globalisation and high technology. Hours before violence broke out on Capitol Hill, Trump addressed his supporters outside the White House. "All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by a bold and radical left Democrats, which is what they are doing, and stolen by fake news media. We will never give up and never concede," Trump said.

The attack on Capitol Hill has brought to the surface the powerful ideological and theological currents of American politics that stay just under the surface. The emblems carried by the rioters and the juxtaposition of Christian and white supremacist symbols, 'Jesus 2020' flags that imitated the Trump flags, crosses and "Jesus Saves" symbols bear witness to these forces. Some of the participants blew shofars, Jewish ritual horns, as they circled the Capitol, re-enacting the siege of Jericho by the Israelites described in the Bible. Rabbi Aaron Alexander of Adas Israel Jewish congregation in Washington DC was not amused. He wondered how many in the Jericho March knew that history. Etched on a door along the path of the rioters was a message "Murder the Media," that seemed an extension of a presidency marked by anti-press vituperation. All through the afternoon of 6 January rioters were seen kicking, toppling, stomping and snatching equipment of media persons and trying to burn them. The US Press Freedom Tracker is investigating several instances of assaults, equipment damage and other mayhem caused by the mob. That more than 150 elected representatives at the joint session voted against certification of Biden's victory only confirms how divided America is today. The schism is widening and it is the unity of America that may soon be at risk.

## Om, Ganga Sagar!

Just a couple of days ahead of the annual pilgrimage of the faithful to Ganga Sagar in West Bengal, a Division Bench of Calcutta High Court (coram: TBN Radhakrishnan, CJ; and Arijit Banerjee, J) has signalled a very timely word of caution not the least because of a possible surge of coronavirus in view of the huge crowds from all over the country that will assemble for the holy bath on 14 January. With no restriction on the number of participants, unlike at the Kolkata International Film Festival and a welter of other events such as the book fair, the Bench has prescribed the novel praxis of "e-snān" (virtual bathing) during the Ganga Sagar mela at Sagar Island this year. Towards that rational end, the Bench has observed that the "state government is directed to consider whether special incentives could be given to pilgrims, who would opt for e-snān". Considering the religious connotation of the ritual and the mela and the hundreds of thousands of visitors, the court has stopped short of declaring Sagar Island as a containment zone (as petitioned) though the crowd can daunt the most intrepid administration. The plea was made in the backdrop of the pandemic, one that has not militated against "mass bathing". The Ganga Sagar mela is, after all, a profoundly emotive issue. In its immediate response, the health department has articulated the state government's decision to store "Sagar water" in small containers for pilgrims, who will be asked to take their bath with it instead of going to Ganga Sagar this year in view of the pandemic. Whether or not this will satisfy the pilgrims, many of them as fanatical as they are faithful, is quite another story. "E-snān" water will be distributed through state-managed kiosks during the duration of the mela (January 12 to 16) free of cost. It has been readily acknowledged by the health department, helmed by the Chief Minister, that only e-bathing by pilgrims could keep the situation under control. Without cutting corners, it is fervently to be hoped that the state government will give it a try in right earnest.

Small wonder that the High Court has directed the state's Chief Secretary to furnish a report on 13 January on the measures implemented "on the ground". This will enable the court to decide whether the annual fair should be allowed this year "keeping in mind the pandemic and the paramount interest of public health at large". The second persists as a frightful challenge on the first anniversary of the pandemic, so to speak. There is the very real possibility of the infection spreading when pilgrims take the holy dip at the crack of dawn. While the e-snān and e-darshan options are intended to avoid overcrowding and even during transportation in part by road and in part by boat and steamer, the challenge is to convince people who believe faith - and not science - will keep them safe.

# The New Normal

The weapons industries suddenly discovered their triggers were hopeless and absurd; guns, missiles and tanks gathered dust and drones groaned as their redundancy seemed so absurd in an abnormal world. The fighter planes looked like installation art on public display. It was of course the era of the New Normal



**A**s with the dawn of every New Year, 2020 was welcomed with cheer, bursting of balloons, feasting and bonhomie and the first few weeks of January unrolled with renewed pledges and new resolutions. Then suddenly as January days were almost over, there was news that a viral infection was raging through China, with thousands falling ill every day.

At that time, the world was too busy to be thinking about precautionary measures. The World Health Organisation warned that localized epidemics could take on the proportions of a pandemic, even worse than the early twentieth century Spanish Flu. The heedless, headstrong world with its plethora of projects for grabbing power and profit, dismissed the caveats as fantasizing thrills and chills and the superpowers of fluctuating gradations were sure that the glowing coronavirus that looked like a spiky sputnik was an Asian thing, a global South phenomena, integral to its poverty, low public health and hygiene.

When the pandemic set in, many recalled that in a United Nations and WHO meeting held in 2005, then US President George W Bush had stated, "A pandemic is a lot like a forest fire." Bush said at the time, "If caught early it might be extinguished with limited damage. If allowed to smoulder, undetected, it can grow to an inferno that can spread quickly beyond our ability to control it. To respond to a pandemic, we need medical personnel and adequate supplies of equipment. In a pandemic, everything from syringes to hospital beds, respirators, masks and protective equipment would be in short supply."

So when in early 2020 the world was in the grip of the pandemic, Slavoj Žižek stated in his text of counter-discourse, Pandemic, Covid 19 Shakes the World: "The coronavirus epidemic itself is clearly not just a bio-

logical phenomenon which affects humans: to understand its spread, one has to consider human cultural choices... economy and global trade, the thick network of international relations, ideological mechanisms of fear and panic." Moreover, i ek suggested the possibility for "re-leasement" - the use of "dead time", "moments of withdrawal", "for the revitalisation of our life experience" as lockdowns had enforced solitude, time to "think about the (non)sense of [our] predicament".

In India too, suddenly from March 2020, the home became the shelter, refuge and haven of safety and security from the rampaging, ruthless virus, invisible and lethal. The human world groaned as it wrestled with the challenge of unprecedented times. The world waited impatiently for the invention of coronavirus annihilating vaccines. Laboratories worked 24x7. The weapons industries suddenly discovered their triggers were hopeless and absurd; guns, missiles and tanks gathered dust and drones groaned as their redundancy seemed so absurd in an abnormal world.

The fighter planes looked like installation art on public display. It was of course the era of the New Normal. Lockdowns were announced when matters were getting out of control. Phased lockdowns, curfews, containment zones and hot spots swept through the world. Italy, France, UK, USA and Brazil were in a bizarre competition regarding maximum number of death scores. Many world leaders contracted the virus. Many survived. In India too MPs and MLAs had to be hospitalised as they tested Covid positive. Many survived. The names of those who lost their lives were not important.

The overall number of victims was important and varied so often that many suspected that the figures were fudged.

Alarmingly, after the first phase of nationwide lockdown was announced in India, what really shocked the entire country was the misery of the migrant labourers who were compelled to walk back to their homes, hundreds or thousand miles away from their places of work. Administrative heads seemed totally oblivious about the millions of workers of the unorganised sectors, who had contributed so robustly to the GDP.

As if the unpreparedness of the public health administration was not a matter of shock and awe, as Covid 19 spread throughout the country, our government, promising to fortify an emergent New India, passed several contentious bills while the contagion raged, without any prior discussion with the 28 states of India. The well-known normative practice is that states that are expected to implement the new bills and policies are

asked by the central government to comment on their feasibility. The three Farm Bills led to a national uprising of farmers' organisations as they were sceptical about the government's intentions. They demanded the repeal of the three Bills till they were discussed threadbare in Parliament. The debacle continues. Also, the hue and cry about China's salami-slicing Indian territory, somewhere around the Ladakh border, is still shrouded in mystery and rhetorical outburst.

Furthermore, the much feted proposed National Education Policy 2020, in place of the National Policy of Education 1986, may lead to resistance from many states, as there are some sticky

issues about primary education being imparted in the mother tongue or the state/ regional language. Will this be implemented in the private English medium schools too?

Moreover, the hype about the efficacy of online education brings to the fore the digital divide, where the disadvantaged sections will invariably be deprived of access to such online platforms.

Does this suggest that those who are unable to avail of digital instruction will have to opt for the showcased vocational training detailed in NEP 2020? If implemented, as proudly promised, this will obviously impact the poor students of the rural, urban and suburban areas, a significant percentage belonging to the reserved categories.

The confusing flexibility and fluidity of the undergraduate and postgraduate university courses, the scrapping of M.Phil and direct enrolment for research, may lead to a situation where our own citizens will find that our educational policies are exclusionary. The primary aim of universalising education seems to be now projected as unsmart and antiquated.

The NEP 2020 on paper reads like a glamorous game changer, yet in order to avoid a frightening implosion in the knowledge domain, the participatory democratisation of the education process can be ensured through obtaining feedback about the proposed transformative policies from all central and state-funded institutions, as well as all private schools, colleges and universities. This is a crucial necessity before Members of Parliament put their seal on NEP 2020.

The year 2020 had been swaying on the edge of a precipice. One hopes 2021 will usher in greater empathy and tolerance, with complete respect for the vistas of democracy. Dismisive notions of excessive or extreme democracy, whenever there is disagreement or dissent, can only be destructive for both the citizen and the nation.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

## Marriage of Blues on the rocks?

Speculation is rife in political circles that the relationship between the SLFP and the SLPP has turned sour, and their bickering could lead to a breakup. This has come about following a discordant note SLFP leader and former President Maithripala Sirisena struck in a recent interview with The Hindu newspaper; he hinted at the possibility of the SLFP going it alone at the next Provincial Council (PC) elections. Coalition partners usually issue such veiled threats to up the ante in negotiations over nominations, etc., but the SLFP seniors are said to be upset that the SLPP has short-changed them. Some of them have even complained, in public, of what they call stepmotherly treatment at the hands of the SLPP. There is no love lost between the SLPP leaders and their SLFP counterparts; theirs is an alliance of strange bedfellows; they are acting out of expediency rather than principle, as is public knowledge. The SLFP is aware that if it stays in the ruling coalition indefinitely, it will run the risk of going the same way as the traditional left. It will have to break ranks with the SLPP and shore up its support base if it is to prevent itself being dissolved in the SLPP-led coalition. However, such a course of action is not without high political risks. If it contests the next PC polls separately but fails to improve its electoral performance significantly, it will find itself in the same predicament as the UNP, which is now lying supine. A breakaway is a huff will also lead to a division in its parliamentary group with some of its MPs switching their allegiance to the SLPP. (Eight Opposi-

## The Island Online

tion MPs have already voted with the government for the 20th Amendment.) Founder and chief strategist of the SLPP Basil Rajapaksa issued a veiled warning to the SLFP, in an interview with Hiru TV, on Monday night. Denying the allegation that the SLPP had shortchanged the SLFP, he dwelt on the fate that had befallen the JVP following its breakaway from the SLFP-led UPFA coalition in protest against the then President Chandrika Kumaratunga's decision to share tsunami relief with the LTTE, in 2005. It backed Mahinda Rajapaksa in the presidential race in that year, but did not return to the government's fold.

The JVP, which had 39 MPs in the UPFA administration, had never recovered, since its hasty breakaway, Basil said by way of a warning to the SLFP. He got it right; the JVP did not make that risky political parachute jump at the right altitude. Kumaratunga's tsunami relief sharing mechanism was stillborn, and the JVP should have stayed in that government, made the best use of the key ministerial positions it had received to serve the public and muster enough popular support. Its exit from the UPFA caused it to suffer a debilitating split with a group of its MPs led by Wimal Weerawansa crossing over to the UPFA government, in 2007. Prevarication is Sirisena's forte. When he was asked by a journalist, at a recent SLFP function, whether his party had decided to go it alone at the next PC polls, he said the PC elections had been postponed, and, therefore, he did not want to field that query.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Middle-of-road approach needed

**SIR,** The farmers' protests and the present stalemate is probably a good time for the Union government to consider at least some important changes to the laws and the problems of agriculture as middle-of-the-road alternatives.

The most important change that the government has to undertake is a remedy to its blunder that allows the government to be a judge of its own policies and act as the final arbiter of disputes between parties. This attempt to shelve the concept of separation of powers, which is a fundamental aspect of our Constitution, must be withdrawn. The second problem that needs urgent attention is the issue of extreme price volatility, especially at the time of harvest. Third, apart from decline in margins of cultivation one of the biggest problems remains the availability of credit from the formal banking sector. In 2019, an RBI internal working group agreed that the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) penetration was only 10 per cent of total agricultural households. Hence, expanding this is the need of the hour and will go a long way to help the smaller cultivators.

The discontent needs to seen in the context of rising cost of cultivation, recent moves to dismantle subsidies and the sharp increase in taxes on diesel prices which are pinching all categories of farmers. Widespread discontent

is also fuelled by the fact that the government has not shown any keenness to resolve long standing problems over the years.

Yours, etc., Shovonlal Chakraborty, Kolkata, 7 January.

### HOLD FIRM

**SIR,** It is high time the Union government hardened its stance on farm laws. Agitating farmers mostly from Punjab and Haryana should not be allowed to hijack a reform-oriented law meant for the whole nation. They might have

some merit, but surely there is encroachment of bad elements in their ranks for protecting vested interests. The Centre should not repeal laws. Or else, every one will start to bully and pressurise the government. The farm unions' refusal to go to Supreme Court exposes chinks in their legal arguments. They are cornering government subsidies, while poor farmers are being misled.

Yours, etc. Jayanta Bandyopadhyay, Howrah, 9 January.

### MINISTERS FIRST

**SIR,** Amidst the helplessness faced by all arising out of the havoc created by Covid-19, at last bright light has appeared at the end of the tunnel: availability of a vaccine is imminent ('Vaccine rollout likely next week', Jan 6). The report suggests that healthcare and frontline workers will get priority in the matter of emergency use authorization of the vaccine. Prioritisation of mere workers in the matter of receiving first jabs of the vaccine ahead of VIPs, seems unjust. Whenever important projects are contemplated, customarily foundation stones for them are laid by ministers. Launch of the Covid-19 vaccine is no doubt the most beneficial project in the country.

Therefore, in the fitness of things, under the catchy idiom "emergency use authorization"

(whatever that might mean), priority should be given to ministers in the matter of administration of the vaccine. Let them lead from the front.

Yours, etc., Sanjita Ghatak, Narendrapur, 6 January.

### C'MS VISIT

**SIR,** Apropos recent report of the state chief minister's visit to a camp in her Assembly Constituency, coming a day after BJP president JP Nadda held a door-to-door campaign in Bhawanipore, she has claimed that the BJP is a "party of outsiders" which has no place in Bengal and issued a call to save the state by preventing outsiders here.

It may be recalled that the BJP has its genesis in Jana Sangh as far back in the last century having its illustrious leader in Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. Reiterating that the "BJP is not a party of Bengal but it is a party of Delhi, of Gujarat, and they should return to these states", the TMC supremo has further emphasized that "if you want to fight elections in Bengal do so without bringing outsiders," while addressing a "Duare Sarkar" camp. If the TMC supremo and her team of Ministers are boastful of her great achievements as per report card on her 10-year rule, it does not stand to reason as to why she is scared of the BJP which is not a party of the state, and its bringing of outsiders here to disturb its peace.

Yours, etc., Arun Kumar Bhaduri, Kolkata, 13 December.

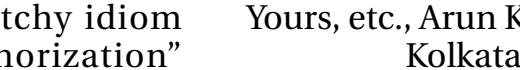
### SC'S DECISION

**SIR,** This refers to the news report, "Interfaith marriage: State conversion laws on SC radar", published in *The Statesman* today. This piece of news should come as a huge relief to most people as the secular fabric of our country has been at risk of being torn apart by these draconian laws.

There have been serious questions on the constitutional validity of the Uttarakhand Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020 and the Uttarakhand Freedom of Religion Act, 2018 which regulate religious conversions in inter-faith marriages. The apex court has most certainly showcased its valued wisdom by agreeing to examine these controversial laws. Notices have also been issued by a bench headed by the CJL to these two state governments on two different petitions.

The present dispensation at the Centre has been quite transparent with its apparent political intentions as these draconian laws are bound to foster animosity between religious groups. With assembly elections to some crucial states scheduled for this year, it is imperative that the apex court hear the arguments and make suitable judgements at the earliest.

Yours, etc., Anupam Neogi, Kolkata, 7 January.



SUNIL SHARAN

Even on 6 January 2021, one of the darkest of dark days in American history, Senator Kelly Loeffler of Georgia, could not help but exclaim a well-worn cliche on the floor of the Senate: America is the greatest country on earth. There are other cliches bandied about at will in America as well. Such as it being the leader of the free world. Or the world's sole superpower. Or American being an exceptional people. Or being God's own chosen people?

What happens when too much power is given to a power that has gone mad? America happens. Scientists say that for every two people being reported dead from Covid, three people are actually dying. That means more than half a million Americans have died of Covid, the most of any nation in the world. America is supposed to have first-rate medical infrastructure. Why did it fail its people so badly? Who is responsible for so many deaths?

America's military is vaunted, now much more by its own people than by its adversaries. Since World War II, the American military's fighting record has been debatable. More recently, it has been pathetic. It went into Afghanistan to catch Bin Laden, but just when it had him in its grasp in the mountains of Tora Bora in December 2001, it outsourced his capture to Afghan warlords who let him slip away. Was anyone held responsible for that fiasco?

America has had to spend another 20 years in Afghanistan. After Afghanistan came Iraq, and now Syria and Yemen. Even though it is armed with the latest weaponry, the US military just cannot win a war. Something is wrong somewhere, but no one wants to figure out where. Just state the cliche over and over again - the US military is the greatest in the world - and everything will be just fine.

The US military claims to be apolitical but wasn't it the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley who accompanied President Trump on his unholy march to St. John's Church and that too dressed in full battle fatigues. Milley apologized later but what was he thinking when the president asked him to accompany him. Milley should have said no and stood his ground.

On the other hand, he appeared a willing accompaniment of the president. And if he was so contrite, he should have resigned. He perhaps knew that if he didn't listen to the president, he might have gotten fired instantly. So he listened and

# This can't be greatest country on earth



then weasled out of any repercussions by apologizing later.

This constant lack of accountability, this constant resort to praising oneself with soaring rhetoric, all this led the country to January 6. Everyone knew that tens of thousands of rednecks were going to march on to the Capitol at the orders of their commander in chief. Yet, there was hardly any security protecting the building. The hoodlums were allowed to do as they pleased, sending members of Congress scurrying into their rabbit holes, petrified for their lives.

Imagine if 30,000 blacks or Muslims had congregated near the Capitol. Would it have been made an impregnable fortress then? Your guess is as good as mine.

Racial inequality, a failing army, a capitulating medical infrastructure, corrupt politicians, all these bedevil America. But they say a fish rots from the top. Donald Trump has another two weeks in power. Who knows what he will conjure up next? But it's not about Trump alone. It's about the next man as well.

One of Joe Biden's stated top two priorities during his campaign

for president was police reform, the other of course being managing the pandemic. But now he says that he won't do much about police reform. Isn't that a massive betrayal of trust of African Americans who so believed in him as to put him in office? Think South Carolina. And now that the Democrats control everything - the White House, the Senate, the House - will they veer out of control? For instance, will they foist incomplete climate solutions on an unsuspecting and even unwilling nation?

America needs to go back to

the drawing board. No longer is it the greatest nation on the planet. Instead, it has become the laughing stock of the planet. Its politicians like Loeffler should stop fooling themselves as well as us. They, and the American people, have serious work to do. Just because most of them have a pale skin tone doesn't make them superior to any other people on earth. Or any more exceptional. Or even, any more chosen.

The writer is an expert on energy and contributes regularly to publications in India and overseas.

**POLITICAL DIARY | KALYANI SHANKAR**

## India must use UNSC stint well



India has joined the high table at the United Nations Security Council this week as an elected member. The non-voting membership has come at a time when there are deep differences between the P5 members - Britain, France, the United States, Russia, and China. The Covid-19 pandemic has already hit the world and sharpened the rivalry between the U.S. and China. The world body itself has weakened over the decades and is even starved of funds.

Speaking at the joining ceremony this week, India's Permanent Representative T.S. Tirumurti pledged that India would "not shy away from raising our voice against the common enemies of humanity like terrorism," and would use this two-year tenure to bring human-centric and inclusive solutions to matters of international peace and security. "India will be a voice for the developing world," he said.

Explaining India's stand, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said when India was elected last July that "India's approach will be guided by 'five S's' as set out by the Prime Minister - Samman (Respect), Samvad (Dialogue), Sahyog (cooperation), and Shanti (Peace), to create conditions for universal Samridhi (Prosperity)." In effect New Delhi has already chalked out its goals.

For a long time, India has been demanding reforms in the UN pointing out that the UNSC does not

reflect the realities of the 21st century. Last November, then Indian envoy to the UN Akbaruddin referring to the reform process said it was a Greek tragedy enacted every year.

The present structure bestows most of the powers to the P-5, while the ten non-permanent members of the council have a much smaller role. The powerful group has also resisted reforms in the world body.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a speech last year at the UN asked: "For how long will India be kept out

of the decision-making structures of the United Nations?" Successive UN Secretaries Generals have emphasised the need for UN reforms. Many other countries including the United States have expressed similar sentiments.

This two-year term presents a unique opportunity for the country to demonstrate it is an aspiring global power and use this for pushing India's agenda of multilateralism and reforms. The key priorities for India during the present term are - new

opportunities for progress, international terrorism, reforming the multilateral system, international peace and security, and promoting technology with a human touch. To achieve success India needs to be the leader of the other non-permanent members and also to take a clear position on the conflict situations in Yemen, Syria, North Korea, Ethiopia, Iran, Myanmar, Afghanistan, and the Central African Republic.

Unfortunately, at the UN Human Rights Council, India has usually abstained on country-specific resolutions. It has failed to support UN initiatives to address Myanmar's ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya or Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's "drug war".

Above all, this is the time to show the world India's leadership quality. India's overall objective should be to raise a voice on behalf of the developing nations and build alliances. As the biggest contributor of troops to UN peacekeeping, India will have an input in determining how operations are mandated.

Taking this opportunity, India should also raise some controversial issues like the Rohingya refugee crisis in Myanmar, Iran nuclear issue, the handling of the pandemic and climate change. New Delhi should try to blunt the efforts of Pakistan to bring the Kashmir issue to the SC. India should try to play a more proactive role on sensitive political issues around the world, taking enlightened and coherent policy

stances at the UNSC on international security challenges.

The world today knows the massive threat posed by terrorism and India would make efforts for adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT). The CCIT is facing a deadlock at the UN since there are basic differences between various countries on the exact definition of terrorism.

In the next two years, India will be chairing three important subsidiary committees of the UNSC. According to Tirumurti, "The chairing of Taliban sanctions committee, has special resonance for India, which has not only been in the forefront of fighting terrorism, especially cross-border terrorism, but has also been one of its biggest victims."

India will also chair the key counter-terrorism and Libyan sanctions committees. These are the opportunities for India to show its leadership qualities.

The past decade has shown the UN as an ineffective institution, with more and more conflicts in the world to overwhelm the entire UN system. Even the UN Secretary-General in 2013, throwing up his hands, had said, "Syria is our collective failure."

India's presence in the SC should not only be purposeful but also pragmatic. India has for decades wished to be a permanent UNSC member, as a calling card of its "arrival." Now is the right time to press for its demand.

**NO 28191**

### SOLUTION FOR 03 JANUARY

#### ACROSS

- 8 Language without appeal draws in two kings (8)
- 9 Building quickly assembled before cracking (6)
- 10 Obstacle on marshland where ship derails (6)
- 11 Engage in sport and kit wears out (8)
- 12 Enemy circles large ice sheet (4)
- 13 Offensive revolutionary deeply hurt a right-winger (10)
- 15 Short holiday viewed as sound, healthy
- 17 Storm in Belgium with freakish result (7)
- 20 Purgative from sailors in Surrey? (5,5)
- 22 Woman into bed with Democrat (4)
- 23 Music rocks on beat that can be hot (8)
- 25 Country game needs good man in charge (6)
- 26 Jack meets fool and hospital cleaner (1-5)
- 27 Is it paste produced in this plant? (8)

#### DOWN

- 1 One found in bed happened to have a bad back (8)
- 2 American playwright discussed on the beach? (6)
- 3 Perhaps Bering, Blixen and Kierkegaard, or certain 7s? (5,5)
- 4 Crew member checks mounting fear in two ways (7)
- 5 Son, mine, an exact likeness (4)
- 6 Car capital leaves nothing - just endless rubble (8)
- 7 One earning crust from
- 14 Warmer in the main with huge opening flower? (4,6)
- 16 Peevish with formal greeting showing arm (8)
- 18 Weird Scots rook inside the Spanish moat? (8)
- 19 Some terrible mishap brings scar (7)
- 21 Swimmer one put outside (6)
- 22 Ulster manoeuvring shows brilliance (6)
- 24 Characters inside school getting cooked salmon (4)

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

NOW AND AGAIN

## The dance of planets

GOWRI MOHANAKRISHNAN

There was a lot of excitement about Jupiter and Saturn coming together to form a 'Christmas Star' at the winter solstice. The conjunction - and it isn't over for me yet - may not be spectacular in terms of size or brightness, but it is intriguing, and yes, beautiful.

It is fun to follow planets, because they keep moving across the fixed patterns of stars in the night sky. It's easy to recognise the big four - Venus is brighter than any star, Jupiter is golden, Mars reddish and Saturn white.

Jupiter, Saturn and Mars "swam into my ken" in 2018. In an Upper Assam tea garden, the skies are clear and there are no tall buildings. I could see a clear stretch of sky from West to East.

At one time that year, the four appeared at equal distance from one another. Soon Saturn and Jupiter started moving closer to each other.

I happened to be in Delhi during the lockdown, with an East facing balcony and pollution-free skies. Jupiter and Saturn were doing their double act all summer. Mars was moving closer to us all that time, and Venus would shine like a huge lamp in the pre-dawn sky.

Back in Upper Assam, the great conjunction looked more interesting on 20 December than on the 21st, with Saturn tracing a slow circle around Jupiter from one night to the next. On Christmas night, they were still hand in hand, with Jupiter looking brighter and Saturn moving just the tiniest step away. Until they disappear from view, you can continue to enjoy the sight of these two twirling around together.

Planets don't twinkle, they dance. And things don't change up there overnight, or in a week or two. Even after the planets disappear from view for a bit, they come back. The journey doesn't end here. Keep watching.

### 100 YEARS AGO

#### THE BRITISH & FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - The Bible Society's year ends in India on November 30. About one quarter of the Rs 40,000 required for the translation and production of the Scriptures in the languages spoken in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam is locally contributed; the balances is remitted from London. The total contributions for the current year are likely to show a slight falling off as compared with the average of the past three years unless Rs 1,000 are received between now and the end of the month. For this sum the Committee appeal to all who have not up to the present contributed in 1920. Although production costs have increased enormously the Bible Society has met every demand made upon it, and the Committee confidently hope that friends in the three Provinces will at once rally to their help and by the contribution of the sum asked for lessen to that extent the very heavy burden resting on the Home Committee at this time.

A. WILLIFER YOUNG.  
Calcutta.

#### WOMEN'S MEDICAL SERVICE

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - It would be interesting to know why more of the vacancies in the above service recently have not been filled by qualified and experienced Anglo-Indian and Indian women who hold British medical qualifications and who possess the advantage of having worked in hospitals in England as well as in India previous to their departure for England for further medical studies. Although according to the regulations and rules of the W.M.S. preference of admission should be given to those who had previously worked for the Dufferin Fund, it has been said lately that preference is now being given to those who had done war service or work. It does not seem just for fair that Anglo-Indian and Indian medical women should have to return to practically the same appointments as they held before proceeding to the United Kingdom when their qualifications and experience are in no way inferior to those of the European women now being admitted to the service.

R.W.E.

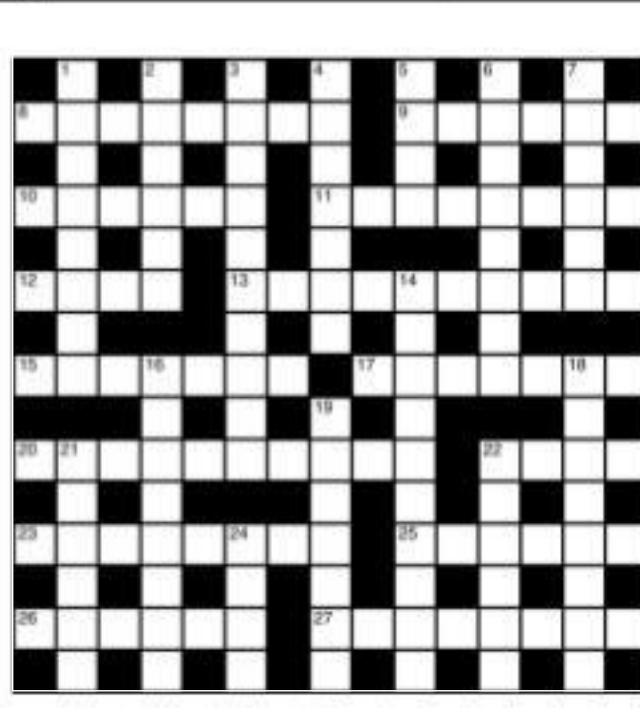
#### A TEACHER'S COMPLAINT

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - The demand for teachers is increasing. Why? Because most of those in the profession have discovered the prospects to be nil, and are moving steadily into other fields of labour which offer brighter prospects. Exactly a third of the teachers trained in the Government Training College, Sanawar, have quitted the profession in disgust. Of the number of trained teachers entering the United Provinces, I have statistics to show that more than 50 per cent have gone elsewhere, or have abandoned the educational service. Another point is that the Education Department is considering - mark the words "is considering" - the question of raising the salaries of teachers. It is high time that teachers were astir and appreciated their own worth. A teacher should have in view a starting salary of nothing less than Rs 200. Teachers who have been in the profession a number of years ought to base their salary on the length of service.

A RETIRING TEACHER.

CROSSWORD





Our holistic approach consists of improving the ease of starting a business, ease of doing a business, and ease of growing our businesses

PIYUSH GOYAL  
UNION COMMERCE & INDUSTRY MINISTER

## THUMBNAILS

**D-Mart profit:** Avenue Supermarts Ltd, which owns and operates retail chain D-Mart, on Saturday reported an increase of 16.39 per cent in its consolidated net profit at Rs 446.95 crore for the third quarter ended December 2020. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 384.01 crore in the October-December quarter a year ago, Avenue Supermarts said in a BSE filing. Its revenue from operations was up by 10.77 per cent at Rs 7,542 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 6,808.93 crore in the corresponding quarter last fiscal.

PTI

**FPO norms:** Capital markets watchdog the Securities and Exchange Board of India has relaxed the framework for follow-on public offers (FPOS), a move that will help promoters of companies to raise funds more easily through this route. The applicability of minimum promoters' contribution norm and the subsequent lock-in requirements for the issuers making FPO have been done away with by the regulator, as per a notification.

PTI

**Hyundai recall:** Hyundai is adding about 471,000 SUVs to a September US recall for an electrical short in a computer that could cause fires. And the company is warning owners to park the SUVs outdoors until they are repaired. The latest recall covers certain model-year 2016 through 2018, and additional 2020 through 2021, Hyundai Tucson SUVs. The vehicles have antilock brake system computers that can malfunction internally and cause an electrical short. That can lead to a fire.

AP

**BSNL union plea:** BSNL Employees Union has urged the company's chairman and managing director to hold regular interactions with the unions, like his predecessor did, for early revival of the loss-making public sector firm. BSNL CMD P K Purwar, however, said he keeps meeting unions, employees and even individual employee for their suggestions and advice.

PTI

**NHAI cash chase:** The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is planning to raise Rs 1 lakh crore through monetisation of highways under the toll-operate-transfer (TOT) mode in the next five years, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said. The road transport, highways and MSMEs minister also said electronic toll collection is being planned through GPS for exact distance traversed and not through toll plazas.

PTI

**SAIL output:** State-owned SAIL has posted 9 per cent growth in crude steel output at 4.37 million tons (MT) during October-December period of the ongoing fiscal year. The company had produced 4 MT crude steel in the year-ago period, SAIL said in a statement.

PTI

# Fiscal deficit estimated at 7.5% of GDP in FY 2020-21

This would be 100 per cent jump from the Budget estimate of 3.5 per cent pegged for this fiscal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

**I**ndia's fiscal deficit is expected to be around 7.5 per cent of the GDP in the current fiscal owing to moderation in revenue collection due to the Covid-19 crisis, experts said.

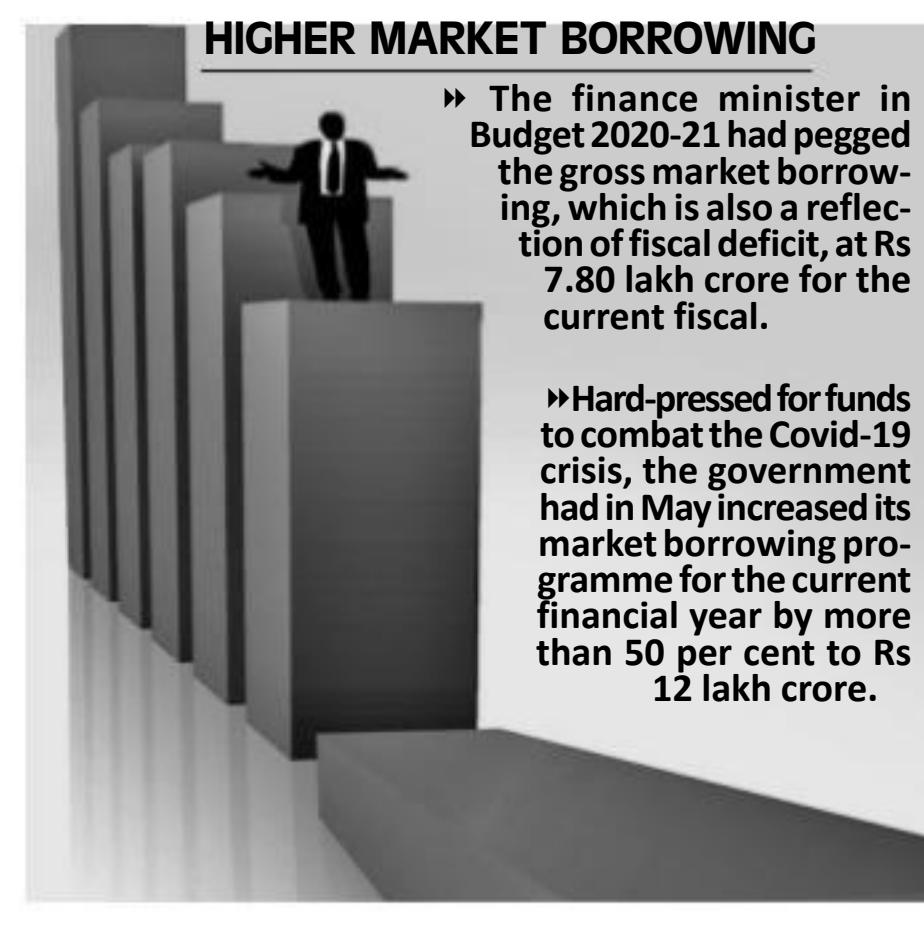
This would be a 100 percent jump from the Budget estimate of 3.5 per cent of GDP pegged for the current fiscal.

The government had pegged the fiscal deficit at Rs 7.96 lakh crore or 3.5 per cent of the GDP in the Union Budget 2020-21, which was presented by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in February 2020.

The finance minister in Budget 2020-21 had pegged the gross market borrowing, which is also a reflection of fiscal deficit, at Rs 7.80 lakh crore for the current fiscal.

Hard-pressed for funds to combat the Covid-19 crisis, the government had in May increased its market borrowing programme for the current financial year by more than 50 per cent to Rs 12 lakh crore.

"We estimate the fiscal deficit at Rs 14.5 lakh crore or 7.5 per cent of the GDP," she



per cent to Rs 12 lakh crore.

According to Icra's principal economist Aditi Nayar, the fiscal deficit is expected to touch 7.5 per cent for the fiscal ending in March.

"Nominal GDP or GDP at current prices in the year 2020-21 is likely to attain a level

said.

Small savings and treasury bill will make up the balance apart from government borrowing programme of Rs 12 lakh crore, she said.

"We estimate the fiscal deficit at Rs 14.5 lakh crore or 7.5 per cent of the GDP," she

of Rs 194.82 lakh crore, as against the provisional estimate of GDP for the year 2019-20 of Rs 203.40 lakh crore, released on 31 May 2020.

The growth in nominal GDP during 2020-21 is estimated at (-) 4.2 per cent. Nominal GVA at basic prices is estimated at Rs 175.77 lakh crore in 2020-21, as against Rs 183.43 lakh crore in 2019-20, showing a contraction of 4.2 per cent.

The Central government may have to incur a larger fiscal deficit than what was earlier announced, said D K Srivastava, chief policy advisor, EY India.

"We assess that the government may revise upwards its borrowing target so as to exceed 7 per cent of 2020-21 nominal GDP and signal a move towards restoring fiscal consolidation in a limited way in the Budget estimates for 2021-22," he said.

The Centre's fiscal deficit had widened to 135 per cent of the full-year's Budget estimates (BE) at Rs 10.7 lakh crore in the first eight months

(April-November) of FY 21. It is 33 per cent higher than the corresponding period last year.

The fiscal deficit had breached the Budget target in July itself as the economy faced the most stringent lockdown in the first quarter to contain the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic.

The government's total receipts stood at Rs 8,30,851 crore (37 per cent of BE 2020-21) till the end of November 2020. This included Rs 6,88,430 crore tax revenue (net to Centre), Rs 1,24,280 crore of non-tax revenue and Rs 18,141 crore of non-debt capital receipts. Non-debt capital receipts consist of recovery of loans and disinvestment proceeds.

The tax revenue collection was 42.1 per cent of BE of 2020-21, compared to 45.5 per cent of BE (2019-20) during the corresponding period a year ago. Non-tax revenue was 32.3 per cent of BE. During the corresponding period of the last fiscal, it was 74.3 per cent of BE 2019-20.

## RInfra completes stake sale in PKTCL to IndiGrid for ₹900 cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

The proceeds will be utilised for debt reduction, and the company's dues will come down by 6 per cent to Rs 13,100 crore from Rs 14,000 crore.

ing agreement between RInfra and IndiGrid and has now been completed with the transfer of shares of PKTCL and receipt of sale consideration.

IndiGrid is India's first power sector infrastructure investment trust, owning AAA-rated power transmission assets in India. With this acquisition, IndiGrid owns 12 operating power transmission assets with a total asset under management of over Rs 14,500 crore, the statement said.

The total transaction value is Rs 900 crore. The entire sale proceeds are being utilised for debt reduction, it added.

RInfra is one of the largest infrastructure companies in the country.

## 'Ushering in rapid reforms to become \$5-trillion economy'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY



India is strengthening the entire ecosystem to achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of becoming a \$5-trillion economy by 2025 through rapid structural reforms, Union minister Piyush Goyal said today.

Addressing the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas conference, the commerce and industry minister said: "We are working simultaneously to bring about a quantum leap in our quality, in our productivity, in our efficiency, so that Indian industry can truly expand our export basket, making it bigger, better and broader".

The minister observed that new markets were being explored aggressively to enhance the reach of Indian products globally.

"The Indian diaspora living abroad have more familiarity with consumer markets.

You have unique insights into consumer behaviour and can guide Indian industry to develop customised products for foreign markets," Goyal said. The minister said the disruptions due to Covid-19 have made everyone realise that one needs to dare to do great things.

"Otherwise we may lose our ability to be a global leader. This is the power behind Aatmanirbhar Bharat. It is not about closing doors but to open the doors wider to build India's capability and capacity and our resilience with speed, skill and scale," Goyal said.

He highlighted that through rapid structural reforms, India is strengthening the entire ecosystem to achieve the Prime Minister's dream of a \$5-trillion economy by 2025.

"Our holistic approach consists of improving the ease of starting a business, ease of doing a business, and ease of growing our businesses," Goyal added. The minister pointed out that India is growing rapidly and offers a plethora of opportunities for Indians both in India and across the world. "Our wish is that our brothers and sisters from across the world become the first to avail these opportunities."

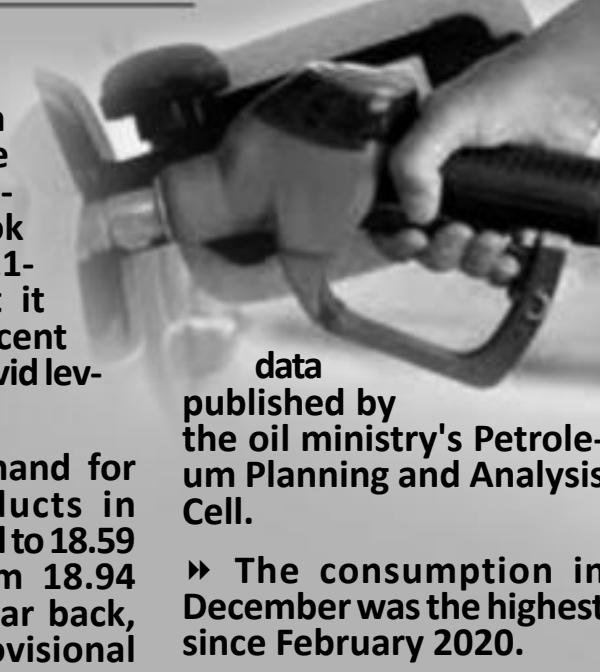
"Let us fulfil our duty to our motherland with determination and devotion and develop India into a leader, a participant in resilient global supply chains into a dominant player in international supply trade," he said.

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## Fuel demand at 11-month high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 9 JANUARY

### REPORT CARD FOR DEC



India's fuel demand rose for the fourth straight month in December as the resumption of economic activity took consumption to 11-month high, but it was about 2 per cent lower than pre-Covid levels.

The total demand for petroleum products in December 2020 fell to 18.59 million tons from 18.94 million tons a year back, according to provisional data published by the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell.

Fuel consumption, however, posted a month-on-month increase for the fourth straight month, helped by reviving transportation and business activity. India had consumed 17.86 million tons in November.

The consumption in December was the highest since February 2020.

While petrol had reached pre-Covid levels in September, diesel consumption returned to normal in October. However, its demand fell again in November and now in December.

Diesel demand, which had soared 7.4 per cent year-on-year in October, dropped 6.9 per cent in November and by 2.7 per cent in December to 7.18 million tons. Month-on-month, the demand slightly improved from 7.04 million tons.

Fuel demand had snipped by 49 per cent in April after a nationwide lockdown, imposed to curb the spread of coronavirus, shut industries and took most vehicles off-road.

The 69-day nationwide lockdown was followed by local and state-level restrictions. The curbs have eased only slowly and in phases, while localised restrictions in con-

tainment zones remain. The onset of the festive season has fuelled a rise in consumption, but the public transport is not back to normal levels yet, as schools and educational institutions continue to remain shut in most parts of the country.

Demand for naphtha, which is used as industrial fuel for generating electricity and producing petrochemicals, fell 2.67 per cent to 1.23 million tons in December.

But, bitumen, used in road construction, consumption jumped by 20 per cent to 7,61,000 tons.

LPG – the only fuel that showed growth even during the lockdown period on the back of the government giving free cooking gas to the poor – was up 7.4 per cent at 2.53 million tons.

Aviation turbine fuel or ATF sales fell 41 per cent to 4,28,000 tons as most airlines are yet to resume full operations. On a month-on-month basis, it improved by 13.5 per cent.

## SCI to partner IWAI to start coastal shipping

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOLKATA, 9 JANUARY

Inland & Coastal Shipping Ltd, a Kolkata-headquartered company, is likely to start its operation on national waterway-1, the stretch from Varanasi to Haldia on Ganga river, she said.

The proposed development assumes significance after another state-run entity, Container Corporation of India, had discontinued its coastal shipping operation, the industry sources said.

The coastal shipping activities will be undertaken by its wholly-owned subsidiary ~ Inland & Coastal Shipping Ltd.

"We will announce a collaboration with Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) very soon. We are commencing coastal shipping operations," SCI chairman and managing director H K Joshi said at a virtual event organised by Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Indus-

try.

Facebook-owned WhatsApp today said its latest update – which has received criticism from a multitude of users globally – describes business communication and does not change WhatsApp's data-sharing practices with Facebook. It does not impact how people communicate privately with friends or family wherever they are in the world...with end-to-end encryption (E2E), it cannot see private chats or calls and neither can Facebook and that the company remains committed to E2E.

Will Cathcart, WhatsApp head

This kickstarted a spate of conversations and memes on the Internet over WhatsApp's alleged sharing of user information with Facebook.

Rival platforms like Signal and Telegram are reportedly seeing a surge in downloads in the wake of the development.

Tesla chief Elon Musk had also joined in the conversation, asking people to leave WhatsApp.

In a series of tweets, WhatsApp head Will Cathcart sought to share his views on the matter. He said the company updated its policy "to be transparent and to better describe

he said.

The tweets, however, received varied responses from users with many continuing to point out concerns around the sharing of user data between WhatsApp and Facebook.

Meanwhile, Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov – in a blog – alleged that Facebook's WhatsApp has switched to covert marketing and it has detected bots that spread inaccurate information about Telegram on social media.

Durov also sought to clarify "myths" that are allegedly being pushed by WhatsApp about Telegram that has over 500 million users globally.

He said "myths" that Telegram's code is not open-source, that the company is Russian and that the platform is not encrypted – are all incorrect.

## Gold bonds issue priced at ₹5,104/gram

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 9 JANUARY

### SUBSCRIPTION TO OPEN FROM 11 JAN

» The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2020-21 - Series X will be open for subscription from 11 January to 15 January 2021.

» The minimum permissible investment will be 1 gram of gold and the maximum limit of subscription shall be 4 kg for individual, 4 kg for HUF and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities



January 2020.

The central bank further said the government, in consultation with the RBI, has decided to offer a discount of Rs 50 per gram less than the nominal value to those investors applying online and

the payment against the application is made through digital mode.

For such investors, the issue price of gold bonds will be Rs 5,054 per gram of gold," the central bank said.

The issue price for the

bonds (Series IX), which were open for subscription from 28 December 2020 to 1 January 2021 was Rs 5,000 per gram of gold.

Sovereign Gold Bond 2020-21 is issued by the RBI on behalf of the Government of India.

The bonds are denominated in multiples of grams of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram and the tenor of the sovereign gold bond (SGB) will be eight years with exit option after fifth years to be exercised on the interest payment dates.

The bonds are restricted for sale to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), trusts, universities and charitable institutions.

The minimum permissible investment will be 1 gram of gold and the maximum limit of subscription shall be 4 kg for individual, 4 kg for HUF and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal (April-March).

According to the RBI annual report 2019-20, a total of Rs 9,652.78 crore (30.98 tons) has been raised through the SGB scheme (37 tranches) since its inception in November 2015. The RBI issued 10 tranches of SGBs for an aggregate amount of Rs 2,316.37 crore (6.13 tons) during financial year 2019-20.

The gold bonds will be sold through banks (except small finance banks and pay-

## Forex reserves swell by \$4.483 billion</

# Historic Bindu Sagar Lake cleaning project launched

**BJD – BJP slugfest to claim credit, slogans, tussle & torn shirts**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 9 JANUARY

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan today jointly launched the Bindu Sagar Lake Cleaning Project at Ekamra Khetra, Bhubaneswar.

Not everything was hunky-dory on stage as BJD Minister and BJP MP exchanged barbs and below the state workers of both parties raised slogans against each other, engaged in abusing each other and tussle in which quiet a few shirts were torn.

Why has the IOCJ and ICTM stepped in, because there is no visible development at the local level, quipped BJP MP Aparajita Sarangi while hoping that the project will be completed in four months time.

BJD Minister Ashok Panda was quick to hit back saying it will be done in four weeks, not four months. He pointed out that the centre had promised funds for light and sound shows at Dhauli and Konark which it never gave, instead the state government funded the projects.

The fact is that the Bindu Sagar cleaning was taken up twice prior to this – in 1978



and 1981 when de-weeding was done.

But high on optics and use of new technology was the highlight of todays renewed effort.

The CSR initiative of IndianOil in collaboration with the Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai - IndianOil Campus, Bhubaneswar (ICTM-IOCB) is a part of the much awaited Swachh Bindu Sagar project.

While Pradhan, state Ministers PK Mallik, Ashok Panda, MPs Raghunath Mohapatra, Aparajita Sarangi, Chairman Indian Oil SMTVaidya, VCICT Mumbai, AB Pandit and others were present at the holy temple, the CM opted to inaugurate it from his residence via video conference.



The CM said the cleaning project will transform Bindu Sagar which is associated with socio-cultural life of Bhubaneswar people.

It is considered as one of the holiest lakes of our country as it is linked to every holy water body of our country. Each drop of water here is holy.

It is an embodiment of national integration and it's our responsibility to keep it clean and green. It is also our responsibility to keep all other holy ponds and ghats around this Ekamra Khetra clean and green, he said.

Pertinently, the CM has already unrolled a mega Ekamra Khetra development plan around the famous Lingaraj Temple.

Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said, "Bindu Sagar at Lord Lingaraj's holy Ekamra Khetra, has its distinct identity. Being the largest water body in Bhubaneswar it carries rich diversity and is closely associated with Odia culture and tradition. Various rituals of Lord Lingaraj are closely associated with this lake."

With ICT's patented world class innovative technology being used to clean this water body, the dream project Swachh Bindusagar is going to be fulfilled, he said.

The Union Minister noted that Odisha is going to become the nerve centre of industrialisation through rapid development in petrochemical, chemical, polymer, textile and fibre sectors. Very soon in collaboration with the state government, a textile park is going to be set up at Dhamra, Bhadrak.

Shrikant Madhav Vaidya,

Chairman, Indian Oil informed that the project worth Rs. 70 lakh includes running and maintenance costs for three years which is being invested from Indian Oil CSR fund.

The project dovetails GOI's Swachh Bharat Mission and shall result in improvement of lake ecology, adding to the aesthetic and tourism value.

ICT patented 'Hydrodynamic Cavitation Technology' is used to reduce Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD), Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) & microbial population in the water body.

## Speed up dissemination of Aqua technologies: Minister Sarangi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, 9 JANUARY

Union Minister of state for fisheries and animal husbandry, Pratap Sarangi underscored the need to develop sustainable technology for better production and suggested that CIFASign a MoU with state departments for faster dissemination of aquaculture technologies.

Sarangi was on a visit to the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar where he reviewed freshwater aquaculture research activities

realizing the Prime Minister's vision of Doubling Farmers' Income by the year 2022. He addressed a set of 16 Odia leaflets on popular aquaculture technologies. The leaflets, a book and three e-booklets meant for creating awareness among the farmers about scientific aquaculture practices.

Dr. S. K. Swain, Director, ICAR-CIFA made a brief presentation about institute's research accomplishments as well as progress on flagship schemes viz., STC, SCSP, NEH, Mera Gaon Mera Gaurav, Swachh Bharat Avyaan, etc.

The Minister also interacted with the scientists in the afternoon and urged them to develop technology packages to attract rural unemployed youth; develop entrepreneurship and contribute to the

needs of the state.

It needs mention that the state has conducted dry run for vaccination twice and is fully prepared. A list of front-line health workers and 31 points of vaccination across the state put on readiness.

Meanwhile Odisha on Saturday reported 206 fresh cases. One Covid death was reported in the state taking the overall death toll to 1,891.

The case fatality rate currently stands at 0.57% in Odisha. The recovery rate is 98.77%.

Odisha currently has 2,124 active cases.

A total of 71,40,339 sample tests have been conducted in the state so far, including 29,127 on Friday.

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His (Donald Trump's) actions since Election Day will be judged harshly by history

US REPUBLICAN POLITICIAN NIKKI HALEY  
AFTER THE CAPITOL HILL VIOLENCE

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	29	24 R
HONG KONG	12	7 H
TOKYO	7	-3 CL
LONDON	4	-1 H
DUBAI	24	14 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	13	6 H
NEW YORK	2	-4 S
MOSCOW	-5	-8 H

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

## THUMBNAILS



A migrant stands next to a fence during snowfall at the Lipa camp, outside Bihać, Bosnia. AP

**US judge blocks Trump govt's asylum rules:** A federal judge has blocked the Trump administration's most sweeping set of asylum restrictions less than two weeks before President-elect Joe Biden takes office. The new rules had been set to take effect on Monday. AP

**Three killed by avalanche:** At least three people were killed by an avalanche that hit a ski resort in Siberia, officials said Saturday. The avalanche swept over several buildings at the Otdel-naya Mountain ski complex outside the Arctic city of Norilsk just before midnight. AP

**Japan emergency:** The heads of Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo prefectures in central Japan have asked for a state of emergency declaration like the one issued by the prime minister to the Tokyo area to stem the surging rise in coronavirus cases. AP

**Easter attacks: US charges 3 Lankans**

WASHINGTON, 9 JANUARY

The US has charged three Sri Lankan nationals for allegedly being part of a group of ISIS supporters responsible for the 2019 Easter attacks in the island nation that killed 268 people.

Mohamed Naufar, Mohamed Anwar Mohamed Riskan and Ahmed Milhan Hayathu Moahmed are currently in custody in Sri Lanka, according to a federal criminal complaint unsealed Friday.

The criminal case was filed on December 11, in the US District Court in Los Angeles.

Naufar, the "second emir" for the group of ISIS supporters that called itself "ISIS in Sri Lanka" who allegedly led the group's propaganda efforts, recruited others to join ISIS and led a series of multi-day military-type trainings.

Riskan allegedly helped manufacture the IEDs used in the Easter Attacks; and Moahmed allegedly executed a police officer in order to obtain the officer's firearm, shot a suspected informant, and scouted a location for a separate terrorist attack.

"ISIS's Easter attacks in Sri Lanka killed 268 people, including five Americans, many while they worshipped," said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C Demers.

According to these charges, the defendants were committed supporters of ISIS, recruited others to ISIS's violent cause, purchased materials for and made IEDs, helped to prepare and trained others who participated in the attacks, and murdered in the name of this deadly foreign terrorist organisation. They are in custody in Sri Lanka," he said.

Democrats said that the US fully supports the Sri Lankan investigation. PTI

**Democrats plan swift Trump impeachment**

The final days of Trump's presidency are spinning toward a chaotic end as he holes up at the White House, abandoned by many aides

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 9 JANUARY

declared Friday on a private conference call with Democrats.

And one prominent Republican, Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, told the Anchorage Daily News that Trump simply "needs to get out."

The final days of Trump's presidency are spinning toward a chaotic end as he holes up at the White House, abandoned by many aides, top Republicans and Cabinet members. After refusing to concede defeat in the November election, he has now promised a smooth transfer of power when Democratic President-elect Joe Biden is sworn in on Jan. 20. But even so, he says he will not attend the inauguration, the first such presidential snub since just after the Civil War.

In Congress, where many have watched and reeled as the president spent four years breaking norms and testing the nation's guardrails of democracy, Democrats are unwilling

"We must take action," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi



to take further chances with only a few days left in his term. The mayhem that erupted Wednesday at the Capitol stunned the world and threatened the traditional peaceful transfer of power.

Pelosi said she had spoken to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley "to discuss available precautions for preventing an unstable president from initiating military hostilities or accessing the launch codes" for nuclear war. She said Milley assured her longstanding safeguards are in place.

The president has sole authority to order the launch of a nuclear weapon, but a military commander could refuse the order if it were determined to be illegal. Trump has not publicly made such threats, but officials warn of grave danger if the president is left unchecked.

"This unhinged president could not be more dangerous," Pelosi said of the current situation.

Biden, meanwhile, said he is focused on his job as he prepares to take office. Asked about impeachment, he said,

"That's a decision for the Congress to make."

The Democrats are considering lightning-quick action. A draft of their Articles of Impeachment accuses Trump of abuse of power, saying he "willfully made statements that encouraged — and foreseeably resulted in — imminent lawless action at the Capitol," according to a person familiar with the details who was granted anonymity to discuss them.

The articles are expected to be introduced on Monday, with a House vote as soon as Wednesday.

If Trump were to be impeached by the House and convicted by the Senate, he might also be prevented from running again for the presidency in 2024 or ever holding public office again. He would be only the president twice impeached. A person on the call said Pelosi also discussed other ways Trump might be forced to resign.

Senators from a bipartisan group convened their own call to consider options for congressional action, according to an aide granted anonymity to reveal the private discussions.

Not helpful, the White House argued. Trump spokesman Judd Deere said, "A politically motivated impeachment against a President with 12 days remaining in his term will only serve to further divide our great country."

Trump was tweeting again Friday, his Twitter account reinstated after a brief ban, and he reverted to an aggressive statement that his supporters must not be "disrespected" after he had sent out a calmer Thursday video decrying the violence. Toward evening, Twitter said it was permanently suspending him from its platform, citing "risk of further incitement of violence."

The soonest the Senate could begin an impeachment trial under the current calendar would be Jan. 20, Inauguration Day. Conviction in the Republican Senate at this late date would seem unlikely, though in a sign of Trump's shattering of the party many Republicans were silent on the issue.

One Trump ally, Republican Minority Leader Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, did speak up, saying as the White House did that "impeaching the President with just 12 days left in his term will only divide our country more."

McCarthy said he has reached out to Biden and plans to speak with the Democratic president-elect about working together to "lower the temperature." But Murkowski said she wants Trump to resign now, not wait for Biden's swearing in on Jan. 20. "I want him out," she said in a telephone interview.

**Indian-American named Kamala Harris' dy Press secy**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 9 JANUARY

Prominent among them being Yael Belkind, Assistant to the Chief of Staff to the Vice President; Vincent Evans as Deputy Director of the Office of Public Engagement and Intergovernmental Affairs; Michael Fuchs as Deputy Chief of Staff; Kate Childs Graham as Director of Speech Writing and Dr Ike Iriby as Policy Advisor to the Vice President.

Indian-American Sabrina Singh would serve as Deputy Press Secretary to the Vice President in the White House, according to an announcement made by the Biden-Harris Transition.

Singh was Press Secretary to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris on the Biden-Harris campaign. Prior to her role on the campaign, she served as senior spokesperson for Mike Bloomberg's presidential campaign and National Press Secretary for Cory Booker's presidential campaign.

Small businesses are also facing backlash on online review sites such as Yelp, which flagged at least 20 businesses for unusual review activity related to Wednesday's rioting.

One business, Becky's Flowers in Midland, Texas, is owned by Jenny Cudd, a former mayoral candidate who posted a video on Facebook bragging that she had broken into House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office.

There are some exceptions. Those who work for the government may be more legally protected, and so too can unionised workers, who typically have a contract listing the reasons they could be fired for. And some states may have laws that protect

workers' free speech.

But "what people did at the Capitol Wednesday was rioting, not protesting," said Aaron Holt, a labour and employment attorney with law firm Cozen O'Connor.

"When someone violates the law, that's almost never going to be protected, and a private employer is going to be within their rights to discipline or take some kind of action in response to that that might go against their fundamental core values."

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Flowers in Midland, Texas, is

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bragging that she had broken

into House Speaker Nancy

Pelosi's office.

By Friday, Cudd's flower

shop was flooded with dozens

of one-star reviews in which

she was called a traitor and

domestic terrorist, along with

photos of her inside the Capi-

tol.

Reached by text message,

Cudd said she was not avail-

able to speak Friday.

Prominent among them

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We hope that the new administration has a major role in Libya's stability and reconciliation

INTERIOR MINISTER OF LIBYA'S UN-BACKED GOVERNMENT FATHI BASHAGHA  
EXPRESSING HOPE FOR SUPPORT FROM THE INCOMING AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 10 JANUARY 2021

11

## China ready to receive WHO experts

The exact time on when the WHO team will arrive in Wuhan to probe into the coronavirus' origin is under negotiation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 9 JANUARY

**C**hina is ready to receive a WHO expert team to probe the origin of Covid-19 and has reached a consensus with the UN's top health agency, a senior Chinese official said on Saturday, but gave no specific timeline for the visit.

The exact time on when the WHO expert team will arrive in Wuhan, where the virus emerged in December last, and investigate into the coronavirus origin is still under negotiation, Zeng Yixin, deputy head of the National Health Commission, told a press conference.

China and the World Health Organisation have reached a consensus on specific arrangements of the investigation with four video conferences, Zeng was quoted as saying by state-run Global Times.

Chinese experts are waiting for their WHO counterparts, he said.

Once the WHO experts complete their procedures and finalise the schedule,



### Beijing on alert after Covid spike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 9 JANUARY

Beijing has gone on an alert mode following a sudden spike in Covid-19 cases in the neighbouring Hebei province while China has administered nine million coronavirus vaccines so far in a stepped-up nation-wide drive to contain the virus.

The National Health Commission (NHC) on Saturday reported 33 newly confirmed Covid-19 cases, of whom 17 were locally transmitted and the rest

arrived from outside the mainland.

Fourteen locally transmitted cases were reported in north China's Hebei province, the NHC said.

The rise of cases in Hebei sent Beijing on alert as the capital, besides housing the country's top leaders, is getting ready for the annual Parliament session from March 5 during which over 5,000 legislators and advisers would converge.

Beijing is already dealing with a spurt in cases in some of the communities in the

expressed disappointment over China not finalising the necessary permissions for the experts' team's arrival.

"I'm very disappointed with this news, given that two members had already begun their journeys and others were not able to travel at the last minute, but had been in contact with senior Chinese

officials," he said.

Tedros said he made it clear that the mission was a priority for the UN health agency and it was "eager to get the mission underway as soon as possible."

The delay by China to finalise the WHO team's arrival is fuelling concern that Beijing is obstructing global

efforts to trace the origins of Covid-19.

Reacting to Tedros comments, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying had said there might be some misunderstanding on this.

"We can understand Dr Tedros and the WHO she had said, adding that the two sides are "in discussions" to finalise

the dates.

We hope the details can be determined as soon as possible. Hope the WHO can understand this. We always have smooth communication channels. There might be some misunderstanding on this. But there is no need to read too much into this. We have smooth communication and pleasant cooperation. I believe it will continue, Hua said on Wednesday.

China has been proactively questioning the widely-held view that the deadly outbreak broke out in a wet market in Wuhan where live animals, birds and reptiles are sold and spread to humans.

The market remained closed and sealed since early last year.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a recent interview to official media that China "raced against time" and was the first country to report coronavirus cases to the world.

More and more research suggests that the pandemic was likely to have been caused by separate outbreaks in multiple places in the world.

**Pak's Shia Hazaras end protest after PM assures of visit**

ISLAMABAD, 9 JANUARY

Pakistan's minority Shia Hazara community members ended their protest on Saturday and buried the bodies of 11 coal miners killed by the Islamic State terrorists after Prime Minister Imran Khan's assurance that he would visit them soon.

The miners from the Shia Hazara community were shot dead after being abducted by the Islamic State terrorists on Sunday last in Mach area of restive Balochistan province.

Following the incident, their relatives and hundreds of other members of the community sat on a protest along with the coffins having victims' bodies in the Western Bypass area of provincial capital Quetta amid harsh cold weather, insisting that they will bury the dead only when the prime minister personally visits them to assure protection. However, Khan on Friday stirred a controversy by saying that he would not be blackmailed and visit only if the dead were buried.

Khan's remarks invited sharp criticism from across the country, prompting a flurry of official activities to convince the families to perform the burial rites and end the controversy caused by the callous statement.

Officials said the deadlock ended after Balochistan chief minister Jam Kamal Khan visited the protesters for the second time and accepted their demands and told them about the prime minister's plan to visit them soon.

The announcement to end the sit-in protests was made by the Shuhada Action Committee and representatives of Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen, a Shiite political party. As per the agreement, the government will take action against those responsible for negligence in the Machh incident.

## NK threatens to build more nukes, cites US hostility

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEOUL, 9 JANUARY



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to expand his nuclear arsenal as he disclosed a list of high-tech weapons systems under development, saying the fate of relations with the United States depends on whether it abandons its hostile policy, state media reported on Saturday.

Kim's comments during a key meeting of the ruling party this week were seen as applying pressure on the incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden, who has called Kim a thug and has criticised his summit with President Donald Trump.

The Korean Central News Agency quoted Kim as saying the key to establishing new relations between (North Korea) and the United States is whether the United States withdraws its hostile policy.

Kim said he won't use his nuclear arsenal unless hostile forces intend to use their nuclear weapons against North Korea first.

He also suggested he is open to dialogue if Washington is too, but stressed North

Korea must further strengthen its military and nuclear capability to cope with intensifying US hostility.

He again called the US his country's main enemy. Whoever takes office in the US, its basic nature and hostile policy will never change, he said.

Biden, who will take office on January 20, is unlikely to hold direct meetings with Kim unless the North Korean leader takes significant denuclearisation steps.

Cheong Seong-Chang, a fellow at the Wilson Centre's Asia Programme, said Kim's speech showed he has no interests in denuclearisation talks with Biden if he insists that working-level negotiations must sort out contentious issues first.

Kim didn't cite any specific provocative US actions. North Korea has previously called regular US military drills with South Korea and the American military presence in South Korea as proof of hostility.

In particular, the North views the US-South Korean drills as an invasion rehearsal, though the allies have repeatedly denied that.

The North Korean leader listed sophisticated weapons systems that he said were under development. They include a multi-warhead missile, underwater-launched nuclear missiles, solid-fuelled long-range missiles and spy satellites.

He said North Korea must also advance the precision attack capability on targets in

the 15,000 kilometre (9,320 mile)-striking range, an apparent reference to the US mainland, and develop technology to manufacture smaller nuclear warheads to be mounted on long-range missiles more easily.

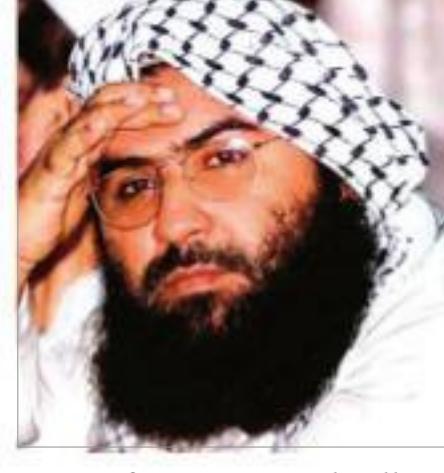
Nothing would be more foolish and dangerous than not strengthening our might tirelessly and having an easy-going attitude at a time when we clearly see the enemy's state-of-the-art weapons are being increased more than ever, Kim said.

The reality is that we can achieve peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula when we constantly build up our national defence and suppress US military threats, he said.

## Pak's anti-terrorism court asks police to arrest Azhar by 18 Jan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LAHORE, 9 JANUARY



UN designated global terrorist Masood Azhar, chief of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), should be arrested by January 18 in connection with a terror financing case, an anti-terrorism court in Pakistan has asked the Punjab Police, a court official said on Saturday.

The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Gujranwala issued an arrest warrant against Azhar in the terror financing case instituted by the CTD in the previous hearing on Thursday.

Following the Palwama terror attack in February 2019, Pakistan's Punjab police had launched a crackdown on terrorism financing and arrested six militants of the JeM in Gujranwala, some 130 kms from Lahore. Azhar is facing the trial in this case.

Following the immense international pressure after the Pulwama attack, the Pakistan government arrested over 100 members of the banned militant outfits including the JeM chief's son and brother.

The government also took control of the JeM, Mumbai terror attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed's Jamaat-ud-Dawah and Falahai Insaniat Foundation (FIF) properties including seminaries and mosques across the country.

The JeM had claimed responsibility for the Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF soldiers were killed.

Pakistan's Punjab government claimed to have taken over the administrative control of the JeM headquarters, comprising Madressat Sabir and Jama-e-Masjid Subhanallah in Bahawalpur.

In May 2019, the United Nations designated Azhar as a "global terrorist" after China lifted its ban on a proposal to blacklist the Pakistan-based JeM chief, a decade after New Delhi approached the world body for the first time on the issue. Azhar is a fugitive released by India in exchange of passengers of the hijacked Indian Airlines plane IC-814 in 1999.

Azhar is facing charges of terror financing and selling jihadi literature.

Following the Palwama

### ANXIOUS WAIT



People wait for news on their relatives who are on board a Sriwijaya Air passenger jet that lost contact with air traffic controllers after take off, at Soepadio International Airport in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, Indonesia on Saturday. AP

## French vaccine rollout slowed by focus on elderly, red tape

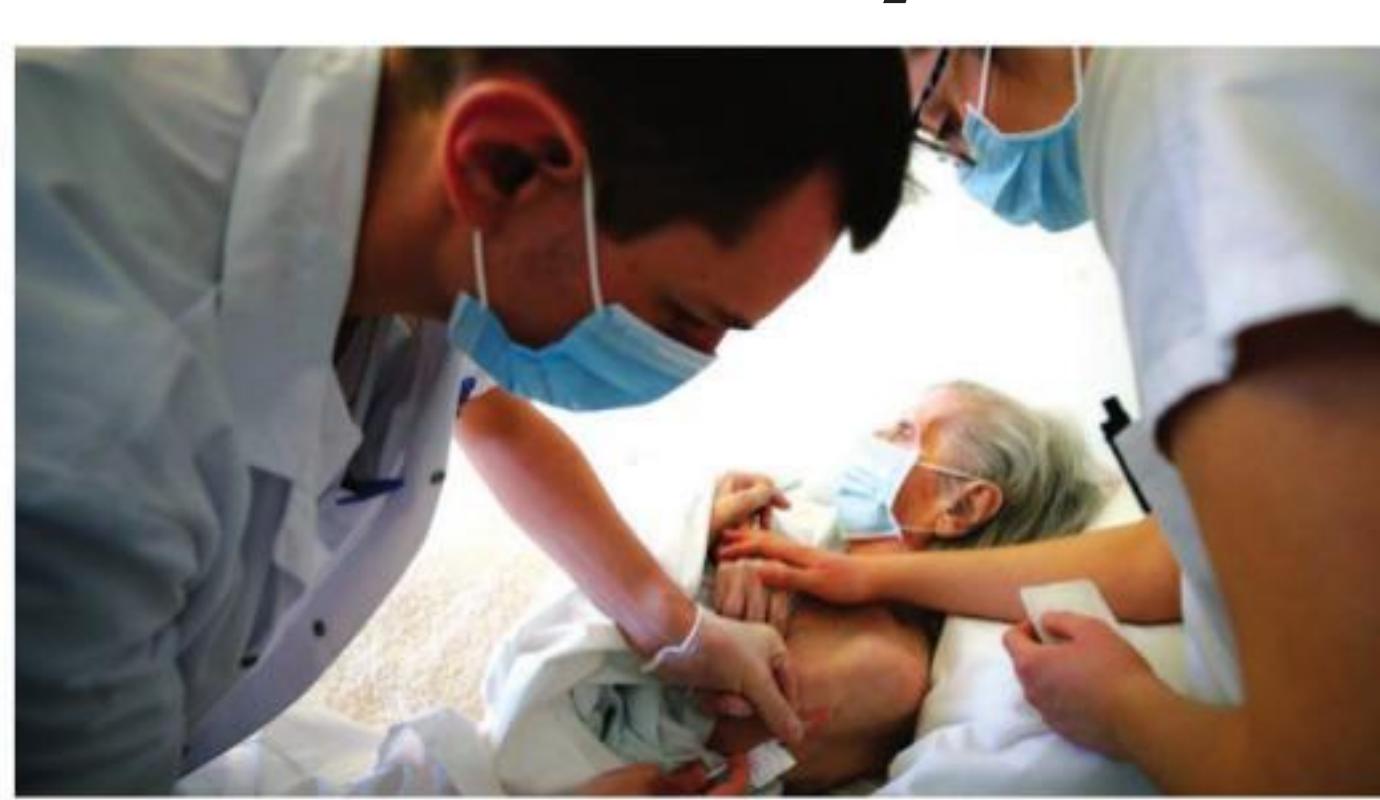
ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARIS, 9 JANUARY

The few hours it took to give the first coronavirus vaccine shots to 14 residents of the John XXIII nursing home, named after a Pope and not far from the birthplace in eastern France of vaccine pioneer Louis Pasteur took weeks of preparation.

The home's director, Samuel Robbe, first had to chew his way through a dense 61-page vaccination protocol, one of several hefty guides from the French government that exhaustively detail how to proceed, down to the number of times (10) that each flask of vaccine should be turned upside down to mix its contents.

Delicately, the booklet stipulates. Do not shake." As France tries to figure out why its vaccination campaign launched so slowly, the answer



lies partly in forests of red tape and the decision to prioritise vulnerable older people in nursing homes. They are perhaps the toughest group to start with, because of the need for informed consent and difficulties explaining the complex science of fast-tracked vaccines.

Claude Fouet, still full of vim

and good humor at age 89 but with memory problems, was among the first in his Paris care home to agree to a vaccination. But in conversation, it quickly becomes apparent that his understanding of the pandemic is spotty. Eve Guillaume, the home's director, had to remind Fouet that in April he survived his own brush with the virus that has killed more than 66,000 people in France.

I was in hospital, Fouet slowly recalled, with a dead person next to me. Guillaume says that getting consent from her 64 residents or their guardians and families when they are not

fit enough to agree themselves is proving to be the most labor-intensive part of her preparations to start inoculations later this month. Some families have said no, and some want to wait a few months to see how vaccina-

tions unfold before deciding.

You can't count on medi-

Tech-Pfizer vaccine in December, Robbe says it took two weeks to put together all the pieces to this week vaccinate 14 residents, just a fraction of his total of more than 100.

Getting consent was the biggest hurdle for a doctor and a psychologist who went from room to room to discuss vaccinations, he says. The families of residents were given a week over the December holidays to approve or refuse, a decision that had to be unanimous from immediate family members.

When one woman's daughter said yes but her son said no, a shot wasn't given because they can turn against us and say, 'I never agreed to that,' Robbe explained. No consensus, we don't vaccinate. Only by cutting corners and perfidiously getting residents to agree could the process go quicker, he says.

My friends are saying, 'What is this circus?' The Germans have already vaccinated 80,000 people and we've vaccinated no one," he says. "But we don't share the same histories. When you propose a vaccine to Germans, they all want to get inoculated. In France, there is a lot of reticence about the history of vaccinations. People are more skeptical. They need to understand. They need explanations and to be reassured. France prioritized nursing homes because they have seen nearly one-third of its deaths. But its first vaccination on Dec. 27, of a 78-year-old woman in a long-term care facility, quickly proved to have been only the symbolic launch of a roll-out that the government never intended to get properly underway before this week.

Only on Monday, as scheduled, did authorities launch an online platform where health workers must log all vaccinations and show that those inoculated got an obligatory consultation with a doctor, adding to the red tape. In some countries that are moving faster than France, the bureaucracy is leaner. In Britain, where nearly 1.5 million have been inoculated and plans are to offer jabs to all nursing home residents by the end of January, those capable of consenting need only sign a one-page form that gives basic information about the benefits and possible side effects.

Germany, like France, also mandates a meeting with a doctor and is prioritising shots for care home residents, but it is getting to them quicker, using mobile teams. At its current rate of nearly 30,000 vaccinations per day, Germany would need at least six years to inoculate its 69 million adults.

## Virus collides with politics as German election year starts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN, 9 JANUARY

The coronavirus pandemic is colliding with politics as Germany embarks on its vaccination drive and one of the most unpredictable election years in the country's post-World War II history.

After months of relative harmony in pandemic management, fingers are being pointed as the center-left junior partner in Chancellor Angela Merkel's coalition government takes aim at what it says has been a chaotic start to vaccinating the population.

The discord is likely a sign of the times to come. An electoral marathon in Germany starts in mid-March, when two of six state elections scheduled this year will be held, and culminates on Sept. 26, when voters choose a new national parliament. Germany's choices will help set the tone for Europe in the coming years.

Merkel, who has led Germany since 2005, plans to step down at the September election. It's the first election since post-war West Germany's inaugural vote in 1949 in which there is no incumbent chancellor seeking another term.

Surveys have shown high approval ratings for the 66-year-old Merkel during the pandemic. She has taken a science-led, safety-first approach that has helped her center-right party into a strong poll lead, although Germany has struggled since the fall to get the coronavirus under control.

We can be glad in Germany and Europe to have such an experienced chancellor as Angela Merkel in this pandemic, Health Minister Jens Spahn said Wednesday.

But with the new year, the end of the Merkel era is looming closer. This week, the center-left Social Democratic Party, which only reluctantly

## Covid vaccine scams in UK

LONDON, 9 JANUARY

Fraudsters are targeting elderly and vulnerable people with a vaccine scam and asking for bank details or cash payments for access to Covid-19 vaccines that are fake or non-existent, the UK's National Crime Agency warned the British public in a message this week.

As the UK's vaccination programme began expanding to National Health Service (NHS) hospitals and centres, the authorities have also been alerted to scams including a case being investigated by the City of London Police of a woman being defrauded of 160 pounds by a man posing as a vaccinator.

The NCA said it is working with the government and law enforcement to urge people to remain vigilant and follow basic advice in relation to the NHS Covid vaccination programme, which will always be free and that the NHS will never ask for payment for vaccines or bank details.

entered a coalition with the longtime leader after Germany's last election, latched onto frustration with the slow start of vaccinations to open political hostilities.



## MATTER OF MORALITY

Newcastle manager Steve Bruce (photo, left) is among only a few to have questioned the morality of continuing the season amid the coronavirus pandemic. The club are still feeling the after-effects of their outbreak which forced the postponement of their Premier League match at Aston Villa

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

**Going slow:** Cheteshwar Pujara's slow batting is pressuring the other Indian batsmen. Ricky Ponting said on Saturday, asking him to change his approach. "I don't think it was the right approach, I think he needed to be a bit more proactive," Ponting tweeted.

**Jadeja's demand:** After a stellar show on the field with a four-wicket haul and a stunning run-out of Steve Smith on Friday, Ravindra Jadeja said he would like to bat up the order as it would give him time to settle down, bat responsibly and build a substantial innings.



**Gayle's choice:** Chris Gayle says he would "love" to see cricket's T10 format in the Olympics. "I would love to see T10 within the Olympics. It would be something huge for the sport from a general point of view. I also think T10 can be (held) within the USA," he said.

**Kallis praised:** England's Jonny Bairstow on Thursday said the addition of Jacques Kallis as batting consultant was a "fantastic addition" to their squad during the Sri Lanka tour. Kallis has flown in from South Africa to join England for their two-Test series in Sri Lanka.

**Boxing polls:** The Boxing Federation of India will hold its elections on 3 February in Gurugram, New Delhi, the nationwide parent body of the sport said on Friday. The BFI said in a statement that Delhi High Court had accepted its proposed schedule for the elections.

**Bayern upset:** Rich and glamorous Bayern Munich's defensive frailties finally took their toll as Borussia Mönchengladbach came from two goals down to beat the Bundesliga leaders 3-2. Bayern were dealt just their second defeat in 15 games on Friday.

**Duo freed:** Marcos Rojo and Sergio Romero are free to speak to other clubs and leave Manchester United this month, says manager Ole Gunnar Solskjær. They have only six months remaining on their Old Trafford contracts and can leave on free transfers.

**Cup scare:** Liverpool on Friday survived a scare from coronavirus-ravaged Aston Villa to reach the FA Cup fourth round with a 4-1 win against opponents missing their entire first-choice squad as the pandemic hit English football. Villa fielded a raw side.

**Tokyo Games:** Covid-19 challenges have not lessened Japan and the International Olympic Committee's determination to host, as scheduled, the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, already postponed for a year due to the pandemic, IOC vice-president Yu Zaiqing said.

**Fifa initiative:** Fifa will have concussion substitutes at next month's Club World Cup in Qatar, soccer's world governing body said on Friday. The decision comes after the game's rule-making body, the IFAB, gave the go-ahead to additional trials last month.

**I-League:** Mohamedan Sporting Club made a dream return to the I-League when they beat debutants Sudeva Delhi FC 1-0 in the opening match. RoundGlass Punjab FC defeated Aizawl FC in their first match 1-0 at Kalyani Stadium. Pritam Singh scored the goal.

# Labuschagne, Smith wrest initiative for Australia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SYDNEY, 9 JANUARY

**F**irst-innings heroes Marcus Labuschagne and Steve Smith steered Australia to an commanding 197-run lead in the high-stakes third Test in Sydney on Saturday, leaving an injury-hit India with a mountain to climb.

They came to the crease after Will Pucovski and David Warner fell early, pushing them to 103 for two at stumps and a strong position with the fourth Test series locked at 1-1.

Labuschagne, who scored 91 in the first innings, was not out 47 and Smith, who blitzed 131 in his first knock, unbeaten on 29. Australia padded up again after taking eight wickets on day three to dismiss India for 244 in reply to the hosts' 338.

It gave them a handy 94-run lead, with India's task made harder by the absence of key spinner Ravindra Jadeja, who was sent for scans after a hit to the thumb while batting.

Wicketkeeper Rishabh Pant joined him in the clinic after a nasty blow to the elbow.

Their problems piled more misery on India, who were already without injured bowlers Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma and batsman KL Rahul, while skipper Virat Kohli is on paternity leave.

Despite this Mohammed Siraj stepped up to remove Pucovski for 10, caught by substitute wicketkeeper Wriddhi-



man Saha, with the debutant unable to replicate the 62 he made in the first innings. Ravichandran Ashwin then took the prized scalp of David Warner for 13, his ninth career dismissal of the opener, trapping him lbw.

But the disciplined Labuschagne and Smith steadied the ship, building a 68-run partnership that is slowly taking the game away from India. India were all out just before tea after some scintillating bowling and razor-sharp fielding, having resumed on a fine day at the Sydney Cricket Ground at 96 for two.

Pat Cummins took 4-29, including the stoic Cheteshwar Pujara for 50 while Josh Hazlewood removed a dangerous

Pant after a breezy 36. The pair's downfall saw the team crumble, with Ashwin and Jasprit Bumrah both run out, joining Hanuma Vihari who suffered the same fate earlier in the day.

A cautious Pujara began the day on nine and captain Ajinkya Rahane two after Hazlewood and Cummins dismissed openers Rohit Sharma (26) and Shubman Gill (50) on Friday.

Rahane, who scored a century in the last Test at Melbourne, had an escape on 16, with a Nathan Lyon delivery ballooning to Matthew Wade at short leg, who could only get his fingertips on the ball.

The skipper then whacked

Lyon for six before his new-found aggression cost him his wicket, chopping a Cummins ball onto his stumps in the next over. Pujara did what he does best at the other end, grinding out singles while occasionally opening his bat, bringing up his 26th half-century.

But the celebrations were short-lived, with Pant out two balls later, edging a Hazlewood delivery to Warner at slip. And it got worse when Pujara was removed in the next over, gloving a rising Cummins ball to wicketkeeper Tim Paine.

India slumped, with Ashwin slow off the mark for a single and Cummins alert, making a quick throw to Labuschagne

standing at the stumps. It followed Vihari being brilliantly run out for four before lunch, attempting a run that wasn't there, with Hazlewood diving to his right and throwing the ball onto the stumps in one movement.

Bumrah became the third run-out of the day, victim of a lightning-fast Labuschagne before Jadeja added 28 runs for the last wicket with Siraj.

## BCCI lodges complaint

The BCCI on Saturday lodged a formal complaint with ICC match referee David Boon after Indian team players, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj, were allegedly racially abused by a drunk spectator here during the third day of third Test against Australia.

According to BCCI sources, Siraj was allegedly referred to as a "monkey" by a drunk spectator in one of stands at the Sydney Cricket Ground, reliving the infamous Monkeygate episode of the Indian team's tour of Australia in 2007-08.

## SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA 1ST INNINGS 338	
INDIA 1ST INNINGS 244	
AUSTRALIA 2ND INNINGS	
D Warner	lbw b Ashwin
W Pucovski c W Saha b Md Siraj	10
M Labuschagne not out	47
S Smith	not out
Extras:	(lb 1, nb 3)
TOTAL:	(29 Ov, RR: 3.55) 103/2
BOWLING:	J Bumrah 8.1, 26.0
M Siraj	8.2, 20.1
R Ashwin	7.1, 28.0

\*MRP (incl. of all taxes). Conditions apply. \*Generally

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SOME BUTTER COOKIES

0.3% - 4% Butter\*

20% - 22% Vegetable Oil\*

Amul BUTTER COOKIES

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TO FIND OUT, READ THE INGREDIENTS MENTIONED ON THE PACK.



## Jadeja out of 4th Test, Pant likely to return

SYDNEY, 9 JANUARY

Depleted India's injury woes worsened on Saturday with senior all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja sustaining a left thumb dislocation and fracture which is likely to rule him out of the final Test in Brisbane, starting January 15.

However, there is some good news for India as wicket-keeper-batsman Rishabh Pant's elbow injury is not serious and he will probably be available when India bat to save the Test match.

Both players underwent scans after being hit by short balls from Australian pacers on third day of the Test match.

"Ravindra Jadeja has suf-

fered a dislocation and fracture on his left thumb. It will be very difficult for him to wear those gloves and bat," a senior BCCI source said. "In any case, he will be out of action for at least two to three weeks which rules him out of the final Test. Pant will be able to bat as his injury isn't that serious."

The visitors' first jolt came when Pant sustained an elbow injury after being hit by a Pat Cummins delivery.

If that was not enough, the Australian fast bowlers inflicted further pain on the Indians with Jadeja suffering a nasty blow to his left thumb. He is unlikely to bowl in the Australian second innings after being taken for scans. PTI

## Being there with the return wallop is what matters

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

**A**fter Melbourne, and ahead of Sydney, the 1-1 scoreline illustrated parity but induced a sort of euphoria in Indian hearts which could be suggestive, to borrow a football expression, of a 3-0 lead at the break. It had everything to do with the way India, after the Adelaide humiliation, had been there with the return wallop, with even their considerably weakened fast-bowling line-up probing and exposing Australian vulnerabilities.

There was no way India could go down 0-4 in the series any more, contrary to post-Adelaide prognostications by Anglo-Australian stalwarts, and it was as if a hush had fallen on them. Not that everything around the Sydney Test was ticket-to-boo then. The quintet's alleged quarantine breach, the dredging up of the putative coronavirus protocol violation before the tour by Virat Kohli and Hardik Pandya, the reports about the Indian reservations about the additionally

## SHORT POINT

cal India-bashing would have taken on a never-before stridency and vehemence in which suspected cricketing ineptitude could be deemed the other side of the dubious coin that jingled in the pocket of the socially inadequate Asiatic.

But Australia, the country, could be seen to have clammed up even if its media hadn't given up on its customary role of the national contingent's permanent 12th man. And Australia, the cricket team, were not talking too much. Obliged to speak, they mostly spoke of their own problems in terms of team selection. David Warner will play even if he wasn't fully fit. Steve Smith can't be got rid

of but will he brush his cigar and light his hair? And what of Will Pucovski, the concussed star in the making?

With each answer, coach Justin Langer abjured magniloquence to embrace a sensible scrutiny of reality. Whichever way the series heads, India aren't quite the poor drooping underdogs

they used to be

once upon a bad time. They have the world's

best bowling attack which can leave any set of rivals outwitted or shell-shocked or both. If you consider how Ravichandran Ashwin and his pacy peers among the Indians have been going about their business, the double whammy that Australia have flourished against on turf that is their own is going to be a memory to cherish from this series.

The depth of India's fast-bowling resources is part of the success story. If Kerry Packer, back in the 1970s, shunned India collectively, well might he have been surprised at the metamorphosis. Win or lose, India are cricket's most powerful magnet now, even in a land where we have won only one Test series so far.

The presence of such seasoned campaigners as Shikhar Dhawan, Suresh Raina and Ishant Sharma will add sheer

## Spot-fixing suspicion dispelled

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI,  
9 JANUARY

An illegal approach was made to an India cricketer during the 2020 Indian Premier League although the Indian cricket board's anti-corruption unit ruled out spot-fixing. A new Delhi-based nurse has been accused of approaching a cricketer, who has represented India in the past, for confidential team information.

She had shown an interest in betting on IPL matches. The approach was, however, reported to the Board of Control for Cricket in India's ACU which found that the nurse had no involvement with any betting syndicate.

## Home season

India will witness its first major cricket tournament in the country since the Covid-19 disruption began when the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy begins the much-delayed domestic season tomorrow, presenting a platform for the hopefuls to impress the franchises before the IPL auctions.

The team has been divided into six groups, five of these

three Plate group teams were staying, were found Covid-19 positive. Ishant Sharma will make a comeback to competitive cricket after suffering a side strain during last year's IPL.

Young left-arm pace bowler Arjun, son of Sachin Tendulkar, has been picked for the Mumbai senior team for the first time and if he plays even one game for the domestic giants, he will be eligible for IPL auctions.

While champions Karnataka will be looking to retain the title, they will face a stiff competition.

**Groups:** Elite Group A: Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Railways, Tripura (venue Bengaluru); Elite Group B: Odisha, Bengal, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Hyderabad (venue Kolkata); Elite Group C: Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Baroda, Uttarakhand (venue Vadodara); Elite Group D: Services, Saurashtra, Vidarbha, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Goa (venue Indore); Elite Group E: Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Mumbai, Kerala, Puducherry (venue Mumbai).

Plate Group: Chandigarh, Meghalaya, Bihar, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh (venue Chennai).

Board of Control for Cricket in India decided to conduct the tournament at six different venues with as many bio-secure bubbles.

The teams have been divided into six groups, five of these

elite and one Plate, and league-stage matches will be played at Mumbai, Vadodara, Indore, Kolkata, Chennai and Bengaluru with the knockouts scheduled to be held in Ahmedabad.

The lead-up had its share of controversies with many players lodging a complaint after being given poor-quality food in a south Mumbai hotel. Then, some staff members of a hotel in Chennai, where players of

the tournament but one of the biggest talking points in the lead-up has been Sreesanth's (in photo) comeback to top-flight cricket after serving a ban for his alleged involvement in the 2013 IPL corruption scandal.

Sreesanth, 37, will turn out for Kerala in the national T20 championship from 10 January. The tournament also assumes significance as it is an opportunity for the new senior selection committee to draw up a wider pool of players for the T20 World Cup, to be played in India later this year. No cricket activity had taken place since mid-March last year and after meticulous planning, the

had pushed Parag Shrivastava's long throw-in in the box.

Steinmann put SCEB in the lead in the 20th minute with a fine outside-foot finish. Ankit Mukherjee's cross was not dealt with cleanly by Ajith and Juanan and it found Narayan Das on the left. Narayan then played a low cross to Steinmann in the middle, and he scored his third of the season.

SCEB were in total control of the game at this point and made Bengaluru chase shadows. The Kolkata side created a couple of chances before the half-hour mark and nearly extended their lead. Ankit sent in a perfect cross into the box, but Narayan's diving finish diverted it wide.

Minutes later, a chance came begging for SCEB, as Harmapreet Singh couldn't get to the end of Ankit's through pass.

## Top ones among men and women to quarantine in Adelaide

AGENCIES  
MELBOURNE, 9 JANUARY