



ALLOWED TO
FESTER



MADURO ALLIANCE
CLAIM VICTORY
IN ELECTIONS



JOE BIDEN PICKS
CALIFORNIA AG TO
HEAD HEALTH DEPT



GOING GETS TOUGH
FOR ZIDANE AND
REAL MADRID



WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Dense fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 27 and 11 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100% Min: 58%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 26.3°C (+2) Min: 12.0°C (+3)

SUN RISES

07:03 hrs

MOON RISES

05:55 hrs

SUN SETS

17:25 hrs

MOON SETS

13:03 hrs

THUMBNAILS



BJP's Sushil Kumar Modi, elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha from Bihar, receives certificate of election in the presence of Bihar CM Nitish Kumar. In Patna on Monday. IANS (P4)

Navy teams recover missing pilot's body: Rescue teams of the Indian Navy have recovered a body, believed to be that of pilot Commander Nishant Singh who went missing after his MiG-29K aircraft crashed into the Arabian sea 11 days back, official sources said on Monday. They said DNA testing is being carried out to ascertain the identity of the body. Navy pilot Singh went missing after his MiG-29K aircraft crashed into the Arabian Sea on 26 November.

Jet Air to resume service: The consortium of UAE-based businessman Murari Lal Jalan and London's Kalrock Capital ~ which has won the bid to revive Jet Airways ~ on Monday said it expects to start operating the airline by the summer of 2021. The consortium is awaiting NCLT and other regulatory approvals, including reinstatement of slots and bilateral traffic rights by the civil aviation ministry and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). P8

Active Covid count falls below 4L after 140 days

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

The Covid-19 active caseload in the country has fallen below the 4 lakh-mark at 3,96,729, the lowest after 140 days, comprising just 4.1 per cent of total infections reported so far, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday. The total active cases were 3,90,459 on July 20, the ministry said.

Continuing with the trend of the last 10 days, India has reported more daily recoveries than daily new cases in a span of 24 hours.

While 32,981 new positive cases were found in the country in a day, 39,109 new recoveries were registered during the same period.

The difference of 6,128 between new Covid-19 recoveries and new cases has led to a net decline of 6,519 cases from the total active case-load in a span of 24 hours," the ministry underlined.

New cases per million population in India recorded in the past seven days are amongst the lowest in the world; the figure for the last seven days is 182, it highlighted. "The number of cases

per million population has also been historically low for India. India's case per million is 6,988 against the world average of 8,438," it said further.

The total recoveries have surged to 91,39,901. "The gap between recoveries and active cases has crossed 87 lakhs (87,43,172) as on date," the ministry said.

Of the new recovered cases, 81.20 per cent are from 10 states and UTs.

Maharashtra has reported the maximum number of single day recoveries with 7,486 newly recovered cases. Kerala follows with 5,217 new recoveries. Delhi registered 4,622 new recoveries.

The ministry said that 76.20 per cent of the new cases are from 10 states and UTs.

Kerala reported the highest daily new cases at 4,777. This is followed by Maharashtra with 4,757 new cases.

A total of 391 case fatalities have been reported in a span of 24 hours.

Ten states and UTs account for 75.07 per cent of new deaths. Delhi saw the maximum casualties (69). West Bengal and Maharashtra follow with 46 and 40 daily deaths, respectively, the ministry said.

People of all age groups were prone to the infection. The officials said even people who have been drinking treated water and mineral water were also infected.

About 22 water samples were collected. About 307 people

are yet to be known.

According to officials who briefed chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy during his visit to Eluru today, (photo) the cases were being reported from Eluru rural and Denduluru apart from Eluru urban area.

People of all age groups were prone to the infection. The officials said even people who have been drinking treated water and mineral water were also infected.

About 22 water samples were collected. About 307 people

from Eluru, another 30 from Eluru (rural) and 3 people from Denduluru have been affected. The symptoms include a single episode of

STATESMAN NEWS

NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

Delhi's single-day virus tally dips to 1,674 thus came down to 3.15 per cent.

The infectious, deadly virus claimed 63 more lives in Delhi, which pushed its Covid death toll to 9,706, the health bulletin stated.

The count of Covid patients who recovered during the last 24 hours was 3,818, which raised the cumulative number of such recoveries in Delhi to 5,61,732, the bulletin said. The recovery rate rose to 94.57 per cent.

(SEE P2)

These new coronavirus cases were detected out of 53,207 tests. The positivity rate

per million population has also been historically low for India. India's case per million is 6,988 against the world average of 8,438," it said further.

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FACT FILE

TOTAL CASES	
96,77,203	
ACTIVE CASES	
3,96,729	
NEW CASES	
32,981	
NEW RECOVERIES	
39,109	
TOTAL DEATHS	
1,40,573	

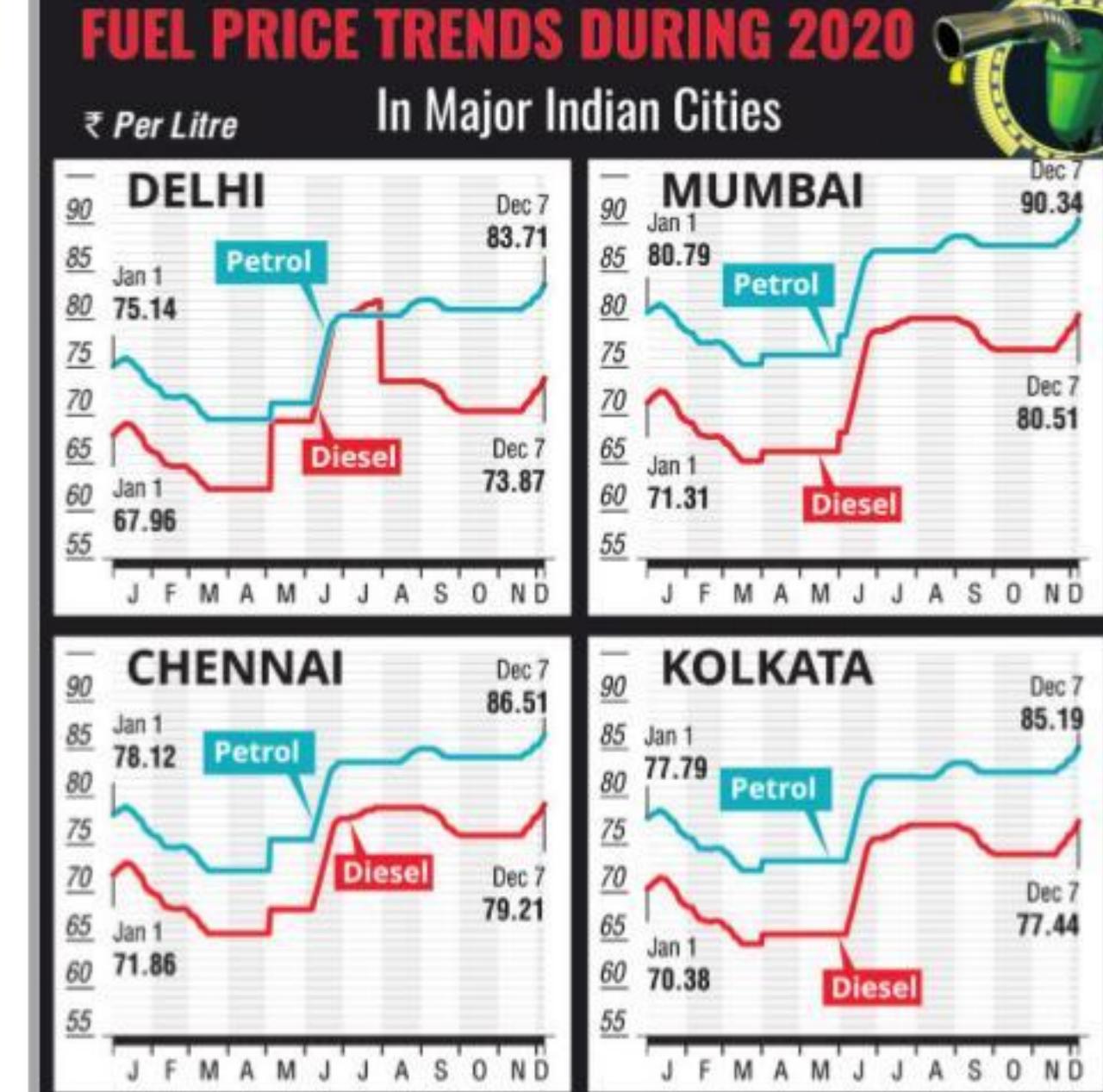
UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8:00 A.M. MONDAY 07 DECEMBER 2020

Source: Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell

PRICEY FUEL

FUEL PRICE TRENDS DURING 2020

In Major Indian Cities



Siliguri BJP worker dies in clash with police

SILIGURI/KOLKATA, 7 DECEMBER

One BJP worker died allegedly when police rained batons on a protesting mob of BJP workers at Fulbari in Siliguri today. Sources said several BJP workers, including six leaders of the party's women's wing, were injured, along with several police personnel. BJP leaders said at least 50 party workers, including women, were injured in the clash and that many of them had been hospitalised.

Hundreds of BJP workers and supporters marched towards Uttarkanya, the state government's branch secretariat, protesting the state government's "misrule," here today, when police stopped them.

The BJP state leadership has called for a 12-hour shutdown in north Bengal tomorrow, the day anti-BJP political parties have also called a 'Bharat Bandh' in protest against the new farm sector laws.

BJP state president Dilip Ghosh alleged that his party worker, Ulen Roy, a resident of Gazoldoba in Jalpaiguri district, succumbed to his injuries in hospital after he was hit by "PNG gun bullets" and police beat him up.

He further alleged that miscreants who posed as police opened fire on BJP activists.

"Police will have to clarify who opened fire with PNG guns from the police side. Miscreants also hurled bombs from rooftops on both sides of the road," Ghosh said.

On the other hand, while tourism minister Gautam Deb said there were conflicting claims from BJP leaders on the death, the state police said in Kolkata that the actual cause of the death would be known only after a post-mortem. Police also denied resorting to any lathi-charge or using fire arms during the clash.

Even as speculations went on, unidentified persons in Siliguri attacked BJP leader Kailash Vijayvargiya's car. Meanwhile, the state BJP leadership met Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar in protest against today's incident.

SNS

Centre rushes 3-member team to Eluru in wake of mystery disease

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 7 DECEMBER

state government for failing to supply clean drinking water now accused the government of a cover-up.

According to the collector of West Godavari Revu Muthyalu Raju, the total number of people who have fallen ill due to mysterious ailment stands at 340 out of which 157 are currently in hospital. 14 people were shifted for better treatment.

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We have given more than ₹1,300 cr since 2017 (to resolve the problem). Even after three years, ₹726 cr remained unspent

UNION JAL SHAKTI MINISTER GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT
ON THE JAL JIVAN MISSION PROJECT IN WEST BENGAL

Delhi Police arrests 5 suspected terrorists after encounter

PTI
NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

Five suspected terrorists, two of whom were allegedly involved in the murder of Shaurya Chakra winner Balwinder Singh in Punjab, were arrested on Monday in east Delhi's Shakarpur area after an encounter and have revealed Pakistan spy agency ISI's attempt to link up terror outfits in Kashmir with Khalistan operatives, officials said.

According to police, three of the five arrested are from Kashmir, while the rest are from Punjab.

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miris. On this specific information, five people were arrested after a brief exchange of fire from the Laxmi Nagar area in Delhi."

Three pistols, two kilograms of heroin and Rs one lakh cash were recovered from them along with the two cars in which they were travelling, he said.

During preliminary investigation, it has emerged that there was an attempt to link up terror outfits active in Kashmir with Khalistan operatives by Pakistan's ISI, he said.

The three Kashmir-based men were supplying money to the other two to carry out targeted killings. The money was from the sale of drugs.

"They were selling drugs and the proceeds were used for financing terror in Punjab," the officer said. Further investigation is on.

CM visits protesting farmers to express his solidarity

Kejriwal visits Singhu border to review arrangements for protesting farmers; says he did not reach there as Delhi CM but as 'sewadar' to serve farmers since it is 'our responsibility to support farmers'

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

The Delhi chief minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) supremo, Arvind Kejriwal, today visited the Singhu border on the Delhi-Haryana border — where thousands of farmers have been protesting against the Narendra Modi-led central government's controversial farm laws for the past several days — and reviewed arrangements made for them by his government.

"We are working like 'sewadar'. Here I have not come as a chief minister but as a 'sewadar' to serve the farmers. It is our responsibility to support the farmers. I hope soon a solution is reached," he told reporters.

On the countrywide bandh called by farmers tomorrow against the Centre's "anti-farmers" agriculture laws, Kejriwal said, "AAP will participate in the nationwide strike. I hope the whole country joins it peacefully and I appeal to them to join and support the farmers."

"I have come to survey the arrangements. The toilets are clean.

received a lot of pressure to allow the use of stadiums as temporary prisons but we did not give permission and I feel this helped the movement. Since then our party MLAs and ministers have been involved in ensuring that farmers do not face any discomfort," the CM said.

"We are working like 'sewadar'. Here I have not come as a chief minister but as a 'sewadar' to serve the farmers. It is our responsibility to support the farmers. I hope soon a solution is reached," he told reporters.

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CM Arvind Kejriwal visits the Singhu site at the Delhi-Haryana border to meet protesting farmers on Monday. DEEPAK

Water isn't reaching all points so a motor and a pipeline will be placed," he said.

The farmers said they are happy with the arrangements. Our MLA Jarnail Singh spent the night here in support of them. All our volunteers and

over this move. Thousands of farmers, mostly from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, have been protesting at various border points of Delhi for the past several days against the new central farm laws.

The Centre's offer to amend the contentious laws failed to cut ice with farmer groups during their fifth round of talks last Saturday.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF
SH. MADHUR BAJAJ
Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurgaon
Notice to Defendant
through Publication
(Publication Under Order 5,
Rule 20 C.P.C.)
Case No. CS/2658/2020
CNR No. HRGR02-003307
2020
Next Date: 08-01-2021 at
10-00 A.M.
M/s. Omkar Trust for
Charity
— Plaintiff
Versus
General Public
— Defendant
Suit Seeking Permission to
Sale Properties of the Trust.
Notice to:
General Public.
— Defendant

In above titled petition, the defendant could not be served. It is ordered that the defendant should appear in person or through counsel on 08-01-2021 at 10-00 a.m.

For details logon to
<http://ecourts.gov.in>

Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurgaon

Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF
SH. MADHUR BAJAJ
Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurgaon
Notice to Defendant
through Publication
(Publication Under Order 5,
Rule 20 C.P.C.)
Case No. CS/2556/2020
CNR No. HRGR02-002804-
2020
Next Date: 14-12-2020 at
10-00 A.M.
Anju Sharma
— Plaintiff
Versus
General Public And Ors.
— Defendants
Suit for Declaration
Notice to:
General Public.
— Defendant

In above titled petition, the defendant No. 1 could not be served. It is ordered that the defendant No. 1 should appear in person or through counsel on 14-12-2020 at 10-00 a.m.

For details logon to
<http://ecourts.gov.in>

Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurgaon

Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF
SH. MADHUR BAJAJ
Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurgaon
Notice to Defendant
through Publication
(Publication Under Order 5,
Rule 20 C.P.C.)
Case No. RP/37/2020
CNR No. HRGR02-002158-
2020
Next Date: 20-01-2021 at
10-00 A.M.
Mrs. Saroj Sabharwal
— Plaintiff
Versus
M/s. Blue Leaf Corporate
Solutions Pvt. Ltd.
— Defendant
Suit for Eviction.
Notice to:
M/s. Blue Leaf Corporate
Solutions Pvt. Ltd. having its
Administrative Office at 230
Central Arcade, DLF Phase
II, M G Road, Gurugram-122002
(Through its Authorized
Person Mr. Surer Tarnam)
And also at M/s. Blue Leaf
Corporate Solutions Pvt. Ltd.,
JCM 20 DLF Phase-II, Gurugram
— Defendant

In above titled petition, the defendant could not be served. It is ordered that the defendant should appear in person or through counsel on 20-01-2021 at 10-00 a.m.

For details logon to
<http://ecourts.gov.in>

Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurgaon

Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF
SH. MADHUR BAJAJ
Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurgaon
Notice to Defendant
through Publication
(Publication Under Order 5,
Rule 20 C.P.C.)
Case No. RP/37/2020
CNR No. HRGR02-002158-
2020
Next Date: 20-01-2021 at
10-00 A.M.
Mrs. Saroj Sabharwal
— Plaintiff
Versus
M/s. Blue Leaf Corporate
Solutions Pvt. Ltd., having its
Administrative Office at 230
Central Arcade, DLF Phase
II, M G Road, Gurugram-122002
(Through its Authorized
Person Mr. Surer Tarnam)
And also at M/s. Blue Leaf
Corporate Solutions Pvt. Ltd.,
JCM 20 DLF Phase-II, Gurugram
— Defendant

In above titled petition, the defendant could not be served. It is ordered that the defendant should appear in person or through counsel on 20-01-2021 at 10-00 a.m.

For details logon to
<http://ecourts.gov.in>

Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Gurgaon

Seal of the Court

NOTICE U/S 11 OF ACT NO.
VIII OF 1890 OF GUARDIAN
& WARD ACT.
IN THE COURT OF SH.
DHARMESH SHARMA
District & Sessions Judge
RCT/West District
Room No. 201,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
MHA - 03/2020
(PUBLICATION/CITATION)
Jayesh Kharbanda, s/o Sh.
Yash Pal Kharbanda, r/o E-
27, Green Wood City, Gur-
gram, Haryana-122001.
Versus

Additional District
Judge-02 (South)

Saket District Courts,

New Delhi

PC/LA-5/2020

Date of hearing : 11-01-2021

Jai Gupta, s/o Late Major
Nripendra Nath Gupta (Retd.),
r/o 231, DDA Flats, (RPS),
Sheikh Sarai, Phase-I, New
Delhi-110017.

— Petitioner

The State & Ors.

— Defendant

Whereas, the petitioner abovenamed has applied before a petition under Section 278 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of Letters of Administration, or Probate or Succession Certificate in respect of the estates left by the deceased Late Major Nripendra Nath Gupta, s/o Late Major Nripendra Nath Gupta, r/o 231, DDA Flats, Sheikh Sarai, Phase-I, New Delhi-110017 (in Death Certificate Flat No. 363, Sec-29, Arun Vihar, Noida, Dadri, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh) died on 22-06-2018.

Notice is hereby given to the General Public having any interest in the Letters of Administration/Succession Certificate of the Estate of the abovenamed deceased if he/she desires, appears in this Court on 11-01-2021 at 10-00 a.m. and participate in the proceedings before the grant of Letters of Administration/Probate/Succession Certificate or if desire to oppose the application of the petitioner abovenamed, he/she should enter appearance in persons in this court on the abovesaid date and be prepared to adduce on that day any documentary and oral evidence which he/she may

desire to adduce in support of his/her claim to opposition to the application of the petitioner abovenamed.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on the 2nd day of December, 2020.

Additional District
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New Delhi

PC/LA-5/2020

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Additional District
Judge-02 (South)</

The BJP government (at the Centre) should immediately withdraw the farm bills or step down. It should not continue to remain in power after sacrificing the rights of the farmers



MAMATA BANERJEE
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

Capt tears into Kejriwal over farmers issue

Describing his Delhi counterpart's bid to champion the protesting farmers' cause as a 'political stunt', the Punjab CM sarcastically asks him whether he knew the 'difference between wheat & paddy'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH / NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

Mocking his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal for calling himself a "sewadar" of the protesting farmers, Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh today asked Kejriwal sarcastically if he even knew the "difference between wheat and paddy".

"For a man who had wasted no time in notifying one of the three Central farm laws and publicly declared himself to be helpless in the matter, Kejriwal's claim of being a sevadar of the farmers was simply ludicrous," alleged Capt Amarinder, ridiculing the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) chief's "latest stunt" of going to the Singhu border on the Delhi-Haryana border today to meet the farmers, who have been protesting at the national capital's borders against the Narendra Modi government's controversial farm laws for the past several days.

The AAP, which rules Delhi, is a major Opposition



party in the Congress-ruled Punjab.

Capt Amarinder challenged Kejriwal to cite one instance of anything his government had done for farmers in Delhi. "You did not even bother to convene a session of the Delhi Assembly on the issue," he quipped while launching a scathing attack on Kejriwal whom

he called "nothing more than a master-twister who could stoop to any level to further his political interests".

If Kejriwal thought all the farmers' demands to be valid, why he did not get amendment laws passed in Delhi on the lines of Punjab and some other states, to negate the "devastating effects of the anti-farmers

central laws", asked Capt Amarinder.

He dared the Delhi CM to back his claims of supporting the farmers' demands by opposing the farm laws openly and constitutionally, as the Punjab government was doing, instead of indulging in "political drama for public consumption". "This political spectacle is not going to

help the farmers," the Punjab CM said.

Kejriwal and his AAP did not even have the courage to question the Centre's haste in bringing the farm laws amid the Covid pandemic, Capt Amarinder said, claiming that the "whole drama" of supporting the farmers' Bharat Bandh call and standing with the farmers was being enacted by the AAP with an eye on Punjab Assembly elections due in early 2022.

"You and your party members in Punjab had exposed your deceit and double standards back in 2017, and your wishy-washy stand on the farmers' issue now has again nailed your lies," he told Kejriwal.

After failing to take a stand for the farmers on the farm laws' issue, Kejriwal was now desperately looking for an opportunity to salvage his party's lost ground among the farmer community, claimed Capt Amarinder, adding that the Delhi CM had seen an opportunity in the Bharat Bandh call to woo the farmers, who had "totally rejected" the AAP in Punjab.

UHF ranked 11th among agri varsities

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 7 DECEMBER

Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry (UHF), Nauni, in Himachal Pradesh has been ranked 11th in the ranking of agricultural universities and research institutes conducted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) for the year 2019. The rankings were released last week by the ICAR.

A varsity release here said that despite increased competition and a new system of online ranking, the university has improved one position in this year's rankings.

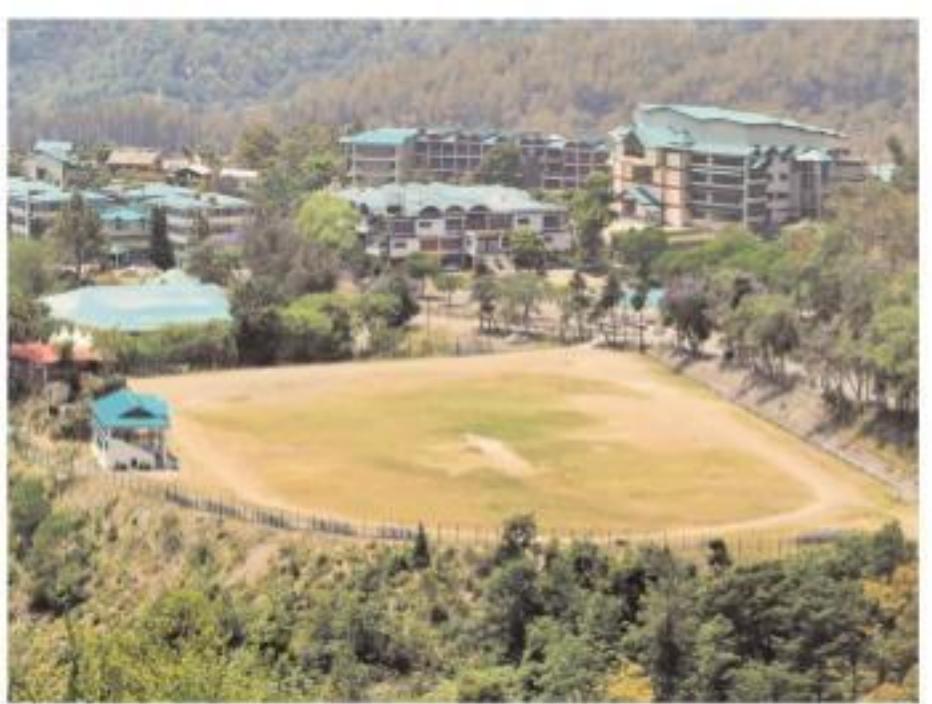
Last year the university was ranked at 12th position in this list.

The release said UHF has been making steady progress in these rankings which started in the year 2016 when the university was placed at 51st position, which it improved to 38 in 2017.

Last year, UHF stood at 12th position in this ranking which it has further improved to 11th position in the latest ranking.

Vice Chancellor of UHF, Dr Parvinder Kaushal said the efforts of the university scientists and staff have enabled it to bag 22 research projects worth around Rs 8 crore from various funding agencies in the past year.

In all, 67 agricultural universities and ICAR institutes of the country featured in the ranking this year. The universities were judged on parameters like student and faculty profile, publications and citations, research, technologies commercialized, etc.



front, the challenges brought to the fore due to the COVID-19 pandemic have also been converted into opportunities. The University has been successful in the transfer of technology to its end users and entrepreneurs and has even devised online mediums for the dissemination of information to farmers and students. Apart from online teaching and extension, online examination and admission to UG & PG programmes, the university has also started online booking of planting material for the farmers.

Dr Kaushal said that to compete with global universities, UHF is strengthening its career and placement cell and improving collaborations with world-class institutions and industries. He added that the university will continue to strive in the areas of academic, research and extension education.

HP BJP, Cong play blame game over farmers' stir

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 7 DECEMBER

The Himachal Pradesh Congress and the state Bharatiya Janata Party on Monday accused each other of ignoring farmers and started a blame game over farmers' protests in Delhi over the new farm laws.

Congress blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi government for the crisis by selling farmers' interests to few big businessmen while BJP accused the opposition party of backtracking on the issue of farm reforms.

State Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore said the new farm laws introduced by PM Modi had sold the interests of farmers to business men and these had created existential crisis for them.

"Now the BJP government

is in collusion with few businessmen is trying to discredit the entire movement by hatching conspiracies but the opposition wouldn't let PM Modi government in succeeding in such plans," he added.

Rathore said Congress party had extended full support 'Bharat Bandh' call of various farmers organizations and the state unit would stage protests in all districts and blocks to extend support to farming community.

"Senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has already extended support to Punjab and Haryana farmers who are demanding repeal of the new farm bills," he said.

Rathore urged all sections of the society to unite and extend support to the farmers' fight against the draconian laws of PM Modi government.

"Congress in its manifesto

for 2019 Lok Sabha elections has clearly mentioned that if the party comes into power, it will disband APMC markets and evolve new system for marketing of agriculture products.

The manifesto also promised to give right to farmers to sell their products in other states too and no restrictions will be imposed on interstate trade of farm produce.

Besides, the party has also promised to remove Essential Commodities Act and bring new act to replace old one," he added.

He added the party was now protesting against the same laws which had been introduced by the PM Modi government and it seems that Congress was keeping its political interests ahead of farmers' welfare.

HP CM attacks Opp for backing farmers' Bharat bandh call

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 7 DECEMBER

this agitation was to remain in news and misguide the farmers by raising up baseless issues," he added.

He said the Congress party in its election manifesto in 2009 had categorically said that Congress would abolish the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee Act and would also abolish Essential Commodities Act and bring new laws instead of this.

"In fact, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi in his press conference on 27 December 2013 had said that the Congress ruled states would de-list fruits and vegetables under APMC Act so that their prices could be brought down.

The main objective behind this agitation was to remain in news and misguide the farmers by raising up baseless issues," he added.

gress party is opposing the Acts," he said.

He further stated that NCP chief Sharad Pawar when he was Agriculture Minister in the UPA government had desperately tried to implement agricultural reforms.

"Sharad Pawar had written a letter in August 2010 and November 2014 to Chief Ministers of all the states to implement Model APMC Act and amend states APMC Act.

As Union Agriculture Minister had openly supported the Agricultural Market Reforms in May 2012 but now he had taken a U turn and was opposing the Act.

Besides, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Aam Aadmi Party which is oppos-

ing these laws and supervising the whole movement, have implemented this law on 23 November in his state," he said.

He said that Swaraj Party Chief Yogendra Yadav and Akali Dal had also supported the reforms in the past but now they were opposing it just to gain lost political grounds.

Thakur urged the people of the state to stay away from 'Bharat Bandh' call as this was a handy work of rejected and dejected political parties.

"The interests of farmers are safe in the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was committed to double the income of farmers by 2022," he added.

SJVN signs MoU with IREDA for green energy projects

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 7 DECEMBER

The Shimla-based Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) Limited has entered into an Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd (IREDA). The IREDA will provide its services to the SJVN for green energy projects.

The MoU was signed by Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Nand Lal Sharma, SJVN and Chairman and Managing Director (CMD), IREDA, Pradip Kumar Das in the presence of other senior officials on Monday through virtual mode.

CMD, SJVN Ltd, Nand Lal Sharma said that as per MoU, IREDA will undertake techno-financial due diligence of renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation Projects for SJVN. Under the MoU, IREDA will also assist SJVN in developing an action plan to create and acquire renewable energy projects



IREDA will be long lasting and fruitful for both.

CMD, IREDA, Pradip Kumar Das said, the MoU highlights IREDA's continuous efforts for the development of the renewable energy sector in line with Prime Minister's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

This is a transformational opportunity for IREDA and SJVN to work together forming a perfect synergy between both the organisations.

He also emphasised that the partnership of SJVN &

Take stern action against violators of Covid SOPs: HP CM to officers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 7 DECEMBER

All the district officers and other field officers of Himachal Pradesh must ensure effective implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) regarding the limit of maximum fifty persons in social gatherings such as marriages etc. for checking the spread of the Coronavirus.

This was stated by chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Monday while presiding over a meeting with the Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, Chief Medical Officers, SDMs, Tehsildars, Naib Tehsildars and BDOs through video conference from Shimla.

The chief minister said that there has been a sharp spike in the number of Covid-19 patients in the state which is per capita report are being attributed to the large number of gatherings in social functions such as marriages, religious functions etc. He directed the field officers to ensure that stern action was taken against the violators.

He said that all the Deputy Commissioners must take daily report from their respective field officers regarding such celebrations in the State. He said that the officers must ensure proper counselling of the families prior to the function so as to motivate them to ensure not more than

fifty persons in such functions. He directed the Tehsildars and Naib Tehsildars to ensure daily monitoring of marriages and other social functions in their respective areas.

Thakur said that effective mechanisms be evolved to ensure at least one telephone call by a doctor to patients under treatment at home to enquire about their health. He said that the doctors and paramedical staff must daily record the health status and parameter of the patient under home isolation, which would help in their proper treatment. He said

that regular and daily monitoring of such patients would not only help in getting effective information about the health parameters of the patients, but would also help in boosting the morale of the patients. He said that sanitizers be also made available to the persons under home isolation and also ensure that proper sanitization of area and home be done after the patient under home isolation turns negative.

The chief minister said that telephone calls were also being made through chief minister Helpline-1100 to Covid-19 positive patients undergoing treatment at home to boost their morale to fight this virus. He said that the State Government would not hesitate in taking stern action against the officials showing laxity in this regard.

Thakur said that it must be ensured that patients may suffer from proper ambulance and transportation facilities for covid-19 patients under treatment. He said that additional vehicles be deployed to facilitate the patients in particular in rural

areas.

Health Minister Dr Rajiv Saizal said that greater stress must be laid on contact tracing to check the spread of this virus.

He said that Chief Medical Officers and Block Medical Officers must ensure greater field visits. He said that Kada must also be provided in the health kit of the Corona patients under home treatment. He said that this would help in boosting the immunity of the patients.

Chief Secretary Anil Khachi said that a common format would be provided to the field officers to effectively regulate the number of guests in the social events. He said that all the events require prevent counselling so that people voluntarily avoid inviting more than fifty guests. He said that mapping of patients under treatment at home has been done to facilitate the better contact between the patients and doctors.

Secretary Health Amitabh Awasthi said that a dedicated helpline would be provided for establishing better communication between the doctors and covid patients in home isolation.

Additional Chief Secretary Revenue R.D. Dhiman, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister J.C. Sharma, DGP Sanjay Kundu, Director National Health Mission (NHM) Nipun Jindal and other senior officers attended the meeting.

Haryana govt extends affiliation of unrecognised pvt schools by 1 yr

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 7 DECEMBER

In good news for unrecognised private schools in Haryana, the state government on Monday extended the temporary affiliation of all such schools to the Board of School Education Haryana for the year 2020-21.

An official spokesperson said keeping the future of children studying in various unrecognised private schools across the state, this recognition has been extended for one year on the basis that the management of the said schools can meet the standards set by the Haryana government.

A delegation of private schools had recently met education minister Kanwar Pal and requested to extend temporary recognition of their schools with the Board of Education for another year (2020-21).

The schools while making

the application taken by the Board of School Education, Bhiwani were cited. Therefore considering this, the state government has decided to give the said relief for one more year to all such schools, the spokesperson said.

There are 639 such schools in Haryana that are still awaiting permanent recogni-

tion, while 699 schools are

still running despite can-

cillation of their recogni-

These schools were granted temporary recognition for one year that is for the year 2019-20, with the condition that temporary recognition will not be granted from the following year, said the spokesperson.

He said that every year, some people have challenged the matter of giving temporary recognition to such schools in Punjab and Haryana High Court citing that Haryana School Education Act 2003 is being violated due to such recognitions.

The spokesman said after the directions given by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, a committee was formed under the leadership of the director secondary education department to address the subject.

The committee was rep-

resentative of the advocate general as members.

The said committee has given its report. The Haryana government will take a decision on this report soon. Schools must meet the standards and rules set by the committee so as to get permanent recognition, said the spokesperson.





Narendra Modi has brought a revolutionary change in India's political sphere, this transformation has jolted those who considered politics their dynastic property

UNION MINISTER MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI

WHILE INAUGURATING PROJECTS IN RAMPUR, UTTAR PRADESH

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ndia

THUMBNAILS



Bangalore Medical College doctors and medical students protest to push for their various demands at BMC premises, in Bengaluru on Monday.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
7 DECEMBER

As the first phase of the three-tier local body elections is just a day away in Kerala, political parties and traditional fronts have expressed sky-high confidence of garnering maximum number of seats in the crucial polls, which is considered the semi-final ahead of the Assembly elections due next year.

Five southern districts—Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha and Idukki—would go for polls on Tuesday. Adhering to Covid-19 protocols, a total of 88,26,620 electors including 46,68,209 women and 70 transgenders would exercise their franchise in 11,225 polling stations in the first phase, State Election Commission (SEC) officials said.

This time, the civic body polls have gained more significance as its result is generally considered to reflect the political mindset of the southern state which would go to Assembly elections after some months. Despite Covid protocols and restrictions, the state wit-

nessed a fierce campaign in which everything right from national politics to state issues figured.

Social media campaigns and virtual rallies and gatherings were new modes of campaigns this time in the wake of pandemic.

The ruling CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF)'s prime focus during the campaign was the achievements under the four and half-year old Pinarayi Vijayan government.

Effective disbursal of social welfare pensions, steps taken to tackle the coronavirus pandemic and implementation of various programmes through the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Board (KIIIB) and hi-tech school project were among the various initiatives touted as the achievements of the Left government during the campaign. LDF convener A Vijayaraghavan has said the ruling front was facing the civic polls with confidence and the recent controversies against the government had not dented its image.

The first phase of voting, being held in 6,911 wards, is to elect representatives for 395 local bodies.

Palghar lynch case: A Thane court on Monday granted bail to 47 people arrested in the Palghar mob lynch case. District Judge P P Jadhav ordered that the accused be released on a sum of Rs 15,000 each. Last month, the court granted bail to 58 accused in the case. Nearly 200 people have so far been arrested in connection with the case. Advocates Amrit Adhikari and Atul Patil, appearing for the applicants, submitted in the court that their clients had no role in the incident. PTI

Kerala all set for first phase of civic polls today

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

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TENDER

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice

The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/Freight, Northern Railway, New Delhi invites E-tender for the contract of "Truck/Tempo/Cargo Vehicles Parking cum Management and Stacking of Parcels contract" at New Delhi Railway Station (area in front of inward parcel office & Tempo Parking area in front of Parcel Office, Ajmeri Gate) for three years. The details are as under.

Tender Opening Date: 08.01.2021

S N	Station/ Name	Station category	Type of work	Total Area (in sq. mtr)	Advertised Value/ Reserve Price for One (1) year (in Rs.)	Total Reserve Price for Three (3) years (in Rs.)	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) (in Rs.)	Tender cost including GST @ 18% (in Rs.)	Tender No
1.	New Delhi Railway Station (area in front of inward parcel office & Tempo Parking area in front of Parcel Office, Ajmeri Gate)	A-1	"Truck/Tempo/ Cargo Vehicles Parking cum Management and Stacking of Parcels contract" at New Delhi Railway Station (area in front of inward parcel office & Tempo Parking area in front of Parcel Office, Ajmeri Gate)	Total area 5650.82 (which includes parking Area of 1695.25 sq.m and Parcel stacking area of 3955.57 sq.m.)	4,17,29,988	12,51,89,972	25,03,800	11,800	C IID PoumS-NDSLs-AGS-Dec-20 Dean (R&C)

Interested bidders may please visit official website for E-tendering i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for further details and submitting the tender.

Important Note :

1. Bidders who wish to participate in the e-tendering will have to procure class-3 valid Digital Security Certificate (DSC) as per information Technology Act, 2000. Bidders can procure this certificate from any of the certifying authority of Controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA), Government of India. Details of certifying authorities can be obtained from www.cca.gov.in.
2. The bidder has to register, (if not registered earlier) with www.ireps.gov.in using DSC to participate in tender process. Detailed procedure for registration, system requirements and bidding are also available on www.ireps.gov.in

No. C IID/Parking-Stacking/NDSLs/AGS/2019 Date : 07.12.2020

Serving Customers With A Smile

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate/percentage rate tender on Form No. 6&8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Arki Division, HP, PWD. Arki on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh for the following works from the competent (In this regard the decision of the Executive Engineer shall be final) contractors enlisted with HP, PWD in appropriate class whose registration stood renewed as per revised instruction and also registered dealers under the Himachal Pradesh sales Tax Act, 1968. The application for tender form will be received on 14.01.2021 upto 4.00 P.M. The tender form will be issued on 15.01.2021 upto 4.00 P.M. The tender form will be received on 16.01.2021, up to 10.30 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M. in the presence of the contractors or their authorized representative who may like to be present. The form can be had from this office against cash payment as shown below (Non refundable) during the working hours on 14.01.2021. The earnest money should be deposited in the shape of National Saving certificate, Time deposit/Post Office saving bank account in any of the Post Office in H.P. duly pledged in the name of the Executive Engineer, Arki Division, HP, PWD. Arki and tender form will be issued only those contractors who will deposit the Earnest Money at the time of sale of tender. The conditional tenders shall not be entertained. If holiday is declared suddenly by the govt. on the above date due to some reason the tender shall be received and opened on the next working day. The intending contractors/firms will have to produce all required documents at the time of making application such as Income Tax clearance certificate for the proceeding year, registration/renewal of registration and sales tax number (Under H.P.G.S.T.) Act. Special care should be taken to write the rates both in figures and in words, failing which their tender will be rejected. No tender form shall be issued to the contractors/firms who have already two works in H.P.PWD. The offer of the tender shall remain open for 120 days from the date of opening of the tender. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept or reject the tender without assigning any reason.

S.No	Name of work	Estimated cost.	Earnest money	Form	Cost of form	Time
1.	C/o link road Larech to Harizen Basti Dora Khetat Km. 0/0 to 2/00(SH-C/o V shape drain in Km. 1/0 to 1/300,Parapets Km. 0/0 to 1/500 & edge wall in Km. 1/170 to 1/245	4,97,806/-	10,000/-	6&8	350/-	1 Months
2.	C/o link road from Shalaghat Sorai road to village Palata Km. 0/0 to 1/00(SH-C/o B/wall in Km. 0/560 to 0/630	3,74,703/-	7500/-	6&8	350/-	3 Months
3.	C/o link road Syar Javi to Chalama Km. 0/0 to 3/200(SH-P/L Kharanja stone soiling and PCC at Rd 0/210 to 0/410	3,05,521/-	6100/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
4.	A/R & M/o K.B.S.B road Km. 0/0 to 56/200(SH-C/o B/wall at RD 37/070 to 37/085 & cutting with rock breaker 0/105 to 0/115	1,56,409/-	3100/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
5.	C/o of K.B.S.B road Km. 0/0 to 39/0(SH-C/o R/wall at RD 35/294 to 35/314	3,05,848/-	6100/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
6.	C/o link road Lanthana from Thalog Kotli road to 0/0 to 1/075(SH-Widening of road at Rd 1/180 to 1/160/Balance work	3,87,608/-	8000/-	6&8	350/-	1 Months
7.	A/R & M/o of link road from Karcham to Suawa Km. 0/0 to 0/270(SH-F/C in Km. 0/0 to 0/045, C/o side drain, P/L WBM Gr. & Gr.II in Km. 0/0 to 0/270	2,54,631/-	5100/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
8.	Construction of Govt. Sr. Secondary school building at Balera in Tehsil Arki Distt. Solan(SH-P/L Steel truss, Mumti & prepanited steel sheet roofing etc.	2,02,675/-	4100/-	6&8	350/-	3 Months
9.	C/o link road Banighatti to Bainghat road Km. 0/0 to 9/500(SH-C/o R/wall in Km. 2/545 to 2/565 and 3/50 to 3/195	2,93,686/-	6000/-	6&8	350/-	1 Months
10.	A/R & M/o to link road village Batal Km. 0/0 to 1/00(SH-C/o R/wall at RD 0/315 to 0/340	1,33,543/-	2700/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
11.	A/R & M/o Galog Kunihar road Km. 0/0 to 14/465(SH-P/L Patch work at RD 8/600 to 12/150	4,16,601/-	9000/-	6&8	350/-	1 Months
12.	A/R & M/o Galog Kunihar road Km. 0/0 to 14/465(SH-P/L Patch work at RD 12/150 to 14/500	1,25,364/-	3000/-	6&8	350/-	1 Months
13.	C/o link road village Kotla Km. 0/0 to 1/276(SH-C/o B/wall at RD 0/925 and U shape drain Km. 0/925 to 0/980	4,01,915/-	9000/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
14.	C/o Govt. T.T.I building at Arki in Tehsil Arki Distt. Solan(HP)SH-C/o Sewerage pipe and sewerage chamber covers etc.	2,89,328/-	5800/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
15.	C/o link road Kotla Dasal Chamyawal road Km. 0/0 to 14/500(SH-Formation cutting 5/7mtrs wide in Km. 0/810 to 7/735/Black spot)	2,22,357/-	5000/-	6&8	350/-	1 Months
16.	C/o link road from Surangalghati to Sarai More(SH-P/L Interlocking concrete Block pavement 80mm in Km. 0/120 to 0/170	1,29,283/-	2600/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
17.	Special Repair to PHC Bhumpti Tehsil Arki Distt. Solan(SH-Repair of facia & ceiling and C/o Rain harvesting tank etc.)	2,22,272/-	5000/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
18.	S/R to PHC building at Bhumpti in Tehsil Arki Distt. Solan(SH-C/o R/wall & B/wall	4,99,271/-	10000/-	6&8	350/-	2 Months
19.	Improvement of Black spot on SAKB road Km. 0/0 to 32/300(SH-Improvement of curves at RD 14/840 to 15/235	4,95,369/-	10000/-	6&8	350/-	3 Months

TERMS & CONDITIONS:- The tender documents shall be issued only to those contractors/firms who fulfill the following criteria:-

- The latest renewal of enlistment/proof of valid registration and income tax clearance certificate/Permanent Account Number (PAN) must accompany the request for obtaining the tender documents.
- The contractor should be registered under H.P. General Sale Tax Act, 1968 and a proof thereof must accompany the request for obtaining the tender documents.
- The applications for obtaining tender documents must be accompanied with earnest money in the shape of National Saving certificate/Time deposit account in any of the Post Office in H.P./F.D.R. from any Nationalized Bank duly pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer. Tender applications received without Earnest Money shall not be entertained and out rightly rejected and no tender form will be issued.
- Ambiguous/telegraphic/Conditional tenders or tender by fax/E-mail shall not be entertained/considered and will summarily be rejected.
- The Assistant Engineer, reserve the right to reject/cancel any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons.
- The offer of the tender shall remain valid upto 120 days after the opening of tender.

4803/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

Narendra Modi has brought a revolutionary change in India's political sphere, this transformation has jolted those who considered politics their dynastic property

UNION MINISTER MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI

WHILE INAUGURATING PROJECTS IN RAMPUR, UTTAR PRADESH

JD-U leaders blame BJP for party's poor show in Bihar

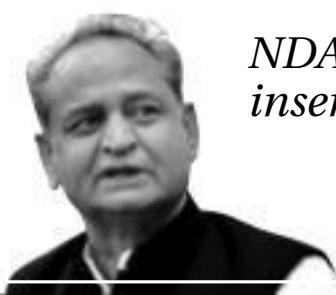
JD-U leaders are airing anguish over how BJP conspired with LJP to halt party tally in the polls

Sushil Modi gets elected unopposed to RS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PATNA, 7 DECEMBER





NDA govt must shun its arrogance,
insensitivity and roll back farm laws...

RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER ASHOK GEHLOT
ON THE ONGOING PROTEST AGAINST NEW FARM LAWS

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 08 DECEMBER 2020

Plea in SC seeks CBI submit status report in Sushant Singh death case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

A PIL was filed in the Supreme Court on Monday seeking direction to the CBI to submit a status report in the ongoing probe into the mysterious death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

The plea, filed by advocate Puneet Dhanda, said the apex court passed an order for the CBI enquiry on August 19 and despite lapse of almost four months the probe agency is yet to conclude its investigation. The CBI is not acting responsible in the present case and there is a delay in the conclusion of the investigation, it said.

Even in serious offences like murder, the law stipulates filing of charge sheet in 90 days

but in the present case the premium investigating agency has failed miserably in their role and the unnecessary delay in the present case is bringing bad name to the administration of justice not only in our country but across the globe, the plea said.

It sought direction to the CBI to complete its probe within two months and submit a final report in the concerned court. It said Rajput was found dead in mysterious circumstances and the probe was initially conducted by Mumbai Police.

On dissatisfaction being shown by the family of the late actor this Court directed the CBI to conduct an enquiry in the mysterious death of late actor, the plea said.

Central team surveys damage by cyclone, rains in Puducherry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUDUCHERRY, 7 DECEMBER

A four-member inter-ministerial Central team deputed to assess the damage caused here by cyclone *Nivar* and rain visited several villages in the Union Territory on Monday. Farmers showed the team damaged paddy crops and also banana crop.

Development Commissioner of Puducherry Anbarasu and the District Collector Purva Garg accompanied the team during its visit to the rain-ravaged villages and the fishing harbour.

At one stage of the inspection, there was heavy rain, yet the team listened to the woes of the farmers.

Later, the team held discussions with chief minister V Narayanasamy and Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi at their respective offices.

The chief minister told reporters after the meeting that he had told the team that he had requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah to earmark immediately an interim relief Rs 100 crore to Puducherry.

The chief minister informed that he had requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah to earmark immediately an interim relief Rs 100 crore to Puducherry

im relief Rs 100 crore to Puducherry.

He said the total loss due to the cyclone that hit Puducherry in November was pegged at Rs 400 crore. He said the relief should be decided upon on a revised assessment.

Such assessment, he said, introduced some 15 years ago was outdated and would not be relevant now.

The compensation to the hut-dwellers, farmers and also for infrastructure should be revised, the chief minister said. He said the team had assured him that a detailed report would be submitted to the Centre as soon as possible.

'Opp joins farmers' stir to save existence'

BJP accuses rivals of 'shameful double standards' as they back 'Bharat Bandh'



Farmers take rest at Delhi-Haryana's Singhu border on the 12th day of their protest against the Central government's three new farm laws, on Monday. IANS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

With the Opposition rallying around the farmers' protest against the Narendra Modi government's agric reforms, the BJP on Monday accused its rivals of "shameful double standards" as it claimed that parties like the Congress and the NCP had once supported what are now key provisions of the new laws.

Noting that Opposition parties have backed the protesting farmer unions' call for 'Bharat Bandh' on Tuesday, senior BJP leader and Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said they have joined the agitation in a bid to save their existence after being repeatedly rejected by people in different elections across the country.

He said a section of farmers has fallen in the grip of some people with "vested

interests" and asserted that the government was working to address their misgivings about the reforms, which have drawn strong protests from different groups of cultivators, especially from Punjab.

He appreciated the protesting farmer unions for not associating their stir with any political parties. Addressing a press conference, the BJP leader said the Congress' manifesto for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls had promised repeal of the Agricultural Produce Market Committee Act and make agri-trade free from all restrictions.

"In 2013, Rahul Gandhi had given direction to all the chief ministers of Congress-ruled states to delist fruits and vegetables from the APMC and allow them to sell it directly in the open market," Prasad said. "Now they are opposing what they had been working to do when in power. This exposes their shameful dou-

Gujarat man booked for Facebook support to farmers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 7 DECEMBER

Even as some groups of farmers from Gujarat have extended their support to the ongoing agitation demanding repeal of the three contentious laws, the Gujarat police have booked a man for his Facebook post supporting the stir.

The police felt that Shailesh Parmar's Facebook post in support of the farmers' agitation in Delhi is an attempt to disrupt national unity.

Parmar has a Facebook page called 'Khambat ki Shaan' in which he has posted his support for the farmers, a kind of content the police think 'incendiary'.

The young farmer has, however, continued his motorcycle journey to Delhi to join the agitating farmers.

by November and out of this 202 lakh tonne was lifted from Punjab alone.

Prominent leaders, including Congress president Sonia Gandhi, NCP leader Sharad Pawar, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, DMK chief M K Stalin and PAGD chairman Farooq Abdullah, also issued a joint statement backing the proposed day-long strike and pressed the Centre to meet the legitimate demands of the protesters.

Centre will be responsible for inconvenience: Cong

The Congress Monday said the Centre would be responsible for any inconvenience caused to people during the 'Bharat Bandh' called by protesting farmers.

The Congress and several other Opposition parties have supported the 'Bharat Bandh' call.

Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar said the farmers were justified in opposing what he alleged was "corporatisation of agriculture" and urged all sections of people and political par-

ties to support the Bharat Bandh, blaming the government for bringing the matter to such a pass.

Jakhar accused the government of following the US model in acting as a "lobbyist" for corporates.

"Please do not follow America. The government should not become a lobbyist for the corporate. Corporatising agriculture is not acceptable. The Prime Minister should take note of it," he said.

Jakhar also said the intent of the government behind bringing the three laws is "suspect" and accused the ruling dispensation of "misleading" the country on the three legislations. The Congress leader reiterated his party's demand to call a special session of Parliament to discuss the matter afresh and repeat the three farm laws.

The Congress and several other opposition parties have supported the 'Bharat Bandh' called by the protest.

Badal asks PM to immediately scrap three farm Acts: Five-time Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal on Monday called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "show magnanimity" and immediately scrap the three controversial farmers Acts "as a first step" towards the resolution of the serious crisis confronting the country today. In a four-page letter to the PM, the Shiromani Akali Dal leader also demanded that "100 per cent procurement of farmers' produce be purchased at Minimum Support Price (fixed as per Swaminathan Formula) and that this be made a statutory legal right of the farmer. He stressed the need for making India a truly federal country.

Yechury says BJP misleading people: CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury on Monday lashed out at the BJP for allegedly misleading the people of the country and spreading misinformation about the Opposition parties who have shown solidarity with the farmers. Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had accused the Opposition parties of having double standards for opposing the farm reforms and cited their earlier support to many provisions of the new laws. "Mr Prasad mentioned that all these parties which were part of the UPA had supported such a law, I want to make it clear that as long as the Left parties were supporting there was nothing like this that was discussed, this is absolute untruth," said Yechury.

Cops detain Akhilesh Yadav: Police took Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav into custody on Monday after party workers led by him broke through a security cordon to sit on a dharna in Lucknow to oppose the new farm bills. TV footage showed police using *lathis* to push back SP workers. While being whisked away to Eco Garden by the police, Yadav said: "This is a dictatorial approach of the BJP. It has blatantly violated the Constitution. The BJP can hold meetings and election campaigns anywhere, and for it there will be no coronavirus threat. The government wants to kill democracy on the pretext of coronavirus."

ing farmers who have been demanding the new laws be abolished.

Meanwhile the BJP has been circulating letters of ex-Union agriculture minister Sharad Pawar randomly to "confuse" people after the Nationalist Congress Party declared support to farmers agitating against the Centres new farm laws, the NCP said on Monday.

The letters by Pawar, who handled the key portfolio of agriculture during the Congress-led UPA government, have become a source of controversy with the BJP using them to attack the NCP president whose party has opposed the new farm laws and backed the ongoing agitation by farmers.

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J&K records 41 per cent votes in phase-IV of DDC polls



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 7 DECEMBER

polling booths in the north and central Kashmir. Polling was brisk in the Jammu division.

Polling booths in the three districts of south Kashmir wore deserted look probably due to fear created among the electorate by miscreants who had last week targeted property of some of those who came out to cast their vote in Pulwama.

Lowest polling was recorded in Shopian where only 1.76% votes were cast till 1 p.m.,

an hour before close of polling at 2 p.m. Polling percentage in Pulwama slightly improved to 5.66% and in Kulgam to 6.59% at 1 p.m. after having remained dull in the initial hours.

The overall voting percentage till 1 p.m. across Jammu and Kashmir was 41.94%. The Kashmire division recorded 25.54% polling, whereas it was 59.38% in the Jammu division. Polling began at 7 a.m. and concluded at 2 p.m. but the final polling percentage was expected to come late in the evening.

The Doda district of Jammu division had recorded highest voting of 67.86% till 1 p.m.

As per the figures given by the state EC, in Kashmire Division, Kupwara had recorded voting of 28.77%, Bandipora 44.82%, Baramulla 37.40%, Ganderbal 43.45%, Anantnag 23.63% and Budgam 36.36%.

As many as 249 candidates were in fray for 34 DDC constituencies. Besides, bypoll for 50 vacant seats of sarpanch



Minor girls repatriated: Two minor girls from Pakistan-occupied J&K, who had on Sunday crossed over to India in the Poonch Sector following a tiff at home, were on Monday repatriated through Chakan-da-Bagh along the LoC. The girls were handed over to the officers of the Pakistani army and civilian officers who had come on the LoC point to receive them. The girls were seen carrying boxes of gifts when they were repatriated.

and 216 vacant seats of panchayats were also held.

As many as 1910 polling booths were established, 1129 in Kashmir and 781 in Jammu, during the fourth phase.

Change of guard is party leadership's job: Singhdeo

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, 7 DECEMBER

Keeping the political observers guessing over the change of guard in the state, Chhattisgarh health minister and one of the key architect of the two year old Congress dispensation, T S Singhdeo said that only party high command can decide about the leadership change in the state.

Responding to a query regarding the change of guard in the state, Singh Deo philosophically said that change is a natural process but only Congress top brass can decide on as to who will be the CM of the state. As per his yearning to head the government is concerned, he is happy with his portfolio and would love to be the same in future, he quipped.

His comment came in the wake of growing speculations about a change of guard as the Congress dispensation in Chhattisgarh inches closer

to complete its two and half years in office. A huge constituency of political pundits believe that a fifty-fifty power-sharing formula was agreed upon by both CM Bhupesh Baghel and health minister TS Singh Deo in December 2018 amid an intense fight between the satraps for the top job. As per the so-called agreement reached between Baghel and Singh Deo, it was decided in the presence of then Congress president Rahul Gandhi that both Baghel and Singh Deo will head the government alternatively for two and half years each.

Responding to a query regarding the change of guard in the state, Singh Deo philosophically said that change is a natural process but only Congress top brass can decide on as to who will be the CM of the state. As per his yearning to head the government is concerned, he is happy with his portfolio and would love to be the same in future, he quipped.

His comment came in the wake of growing speculations about a change of guard as the Congress dispensation in Chhattisgarh inches closer

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that one person **Named: Nawal Kishor, Sl: Lt. Shri Ram Ashre, R/o: 333/1 Shri Ram Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi, Age: 27 Years, Height: 5'3", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Thin, Eyes: Black, ID Mark: Lahnus mark on neck at left side, Mental Status: Unstable, Wearing: Grey Colour Lower, Grey Colour Jersey, Green Colour T-Shirt and Blue Colour Hawaii Chappal in Feet and has been missing from 20.11.2020 from the area of P.S. Mansarovar Park, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 55A, Dated 27.11.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Mansarovar Park, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing person please inform the undersigned.**

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>

SHO P.S. Mansarovar Park, Delhi Ph.: 011-22599374 & 7065036029

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that in addition to already announced some trains whose Arrival/Departure time has been revised, the timings of the following Special Trains will also be revised as under:

REVISED TIMINGS OF SPECIAL TRAINS

Spl Train No.	Station From	Dep. Time	Station to	Arr. Time	Revised Timings Effective From
05955	KAMAKHYA	14:35	DELHI JN	04:30	20.12.2020
05956	DELHI JN	23:40	KAMAKHYA	13:30	17.12.2020
05211	DARBHANGA JN	17:20	AMRITSAR	01:45	14.12.2020 to 31.12.2020
05212	AMRITSAR	19:15	DARBHANGA JN	02:55	16.12.2020 to 31.12.2020
05022	GORAKHPUR JN	13:50	SHALIMAR	09:30	14.12.2020
05021	SHALIMAR	20:20	GORAKHPUR JN	16:30	15.12.2020
02587	GORAKHPUR JN	14:20	JAMMU TAWI	13:00	14.12.2020
02588	JAMMU TAWI</td				

Allowed to fester

It is difficult not to conclude that the Indian establishment is overreacting to concerns voiced overseas on the right of its farmers to protest laws they deem unfair. The decision by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to skip a meeting of global foreign ministers called by his Canadian counterpart to craft a unified response to the coronavirus epidemic a month after he had seemed to heartily welcome the initiative, was clearly provoked by remarks of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that India deems ill-informed and unwarranted. The External Affairs ministry has cited scheduling issues as the reason for Mr Jaishankar's decision, which if true would suggest the Minister maintains a messy diary for on 3 November, he had tweeted he would be "pleased to participate". While indignation and even anger may be justified, the response paints India into a corner for it suggests two things. First, that South Block accords a lower priority to a global response to Covid than it does to undiplomatic comments. Second, it creates a template that India will be forced to follow should other leaders voice similar concerns. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has also expressed concern at the matter; will India now reluctantly boycott the General Assembly? While Mr. Trudeau's remarks were provoked by the presence in the Canadian ruling coalition of persons of Indian descent, and thus were targeted more at a domestic audience than they were at India, the days ahead might see other expressions of support for democratic protest. Already, the Indian diaspora which had been assiduously wooed by the establishment in New Delhi over the past six years, has expressed concern about the farmers' cause, including through a well-attended demonstration in London over the weekend. These expressions of support must be countered rationally and with the arguments that the establishment proffers in support of its decision, not with the stand-offishness it has displayed so far, including in largely ignoring the protests until they reached Delhi a few days ago.

It is unfortunate that the issue was allowed to fester for so many months. Even if farmers were misguided as the government stubbornly maintains, their concerns merited attention. Instead, they were first ignored and then officially dismissed, the task of dealing with them initially left to faceless bureaucrats who were told to hold firm. Now, with the movement having gathered such momentum that it threatens to hamper daily life, the government wants to suggest that it is backpedalling furiously when in fact it is refusing to budge more than an inch or two. With the economy in some distress because of the epidemic, and with Opposition parties – belatedly it must be said – sensing an opportunity, it will take either considerable skill or capitulation to defuse the situation. Having antagonised a significant section of its own people, the Government should be careful not to open flanks overseas. The United States under President Trump or China under President Xi can cock a snook at the world. Can India?

Obvious ploy

The sheer hypocrisy of the USA can sometimes be breathtaking. The latest salvo from top American diplomat Robert A Destro, Special Coordinator for Tibetan Issues, is of a kind. Criticising the Chinese government for its "repressive" regime in Tibet exemplified by its restrictions on visits to the Top of the World, Destro has urged all countries to pass their own versions of a US law that denies entry to America for Chinese officials known to be involved in preventing access to what China calls the Tibet Autonomous Region. The Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act signed into law by President Donald Trump in 2018, stipulates that Chinese officials known to be involved in creating roadblocks for foreign and domestic citizens, officials and media who attempt to visit Tibet and/or are involved in rights violations there will not be allowed into the USA. The law is ostensibly aimed at forcing greater transparency on Beijing and protecting Tibet from the tender ministrations of the Han-dominated officialdom of the totalitarian system in the People's Republic of China. In reality, it is no more and no less than an obvious ploy to keep the pressure on China as it emerges as the most powerful challenger to global American pre-eminence.

It has very little to do with the Tibetan cause. For, the orders in China, given the structure of the State, flow top down as anyone with even a scintilla of sense would know. So, is Washington suggesting banning access to President Xi Jinping, top-ranking members of the Chinese Communist Party, and the Central Military Commission? That is the logical outcome of the US law Destro has urged other nations to emulate. Colloquially put, even America's closest allies across the world could be forgiven for asking – are you serious? But this self-delusion is not harmless. It is posturing that will make life tougher for Tibetans and do untold damage to the cause of their freedoms.

Ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide in Tibet are now, heartbreakingly, an accomplished fact. The world's nations and India in particular, if at all they care about the plight of Tibetans in China or outside, need to focus all their attention on the Dalai Lama succession issue.

If Beijing gets its way – even if His Holiness does, as he has indicated, leave instructions that his reincarnation be identified from the Tibetan diaspora and not from China-controlled Tibet – in propping up and recognising a rival claimant, the game is over. Over time, given China's economic heft and the integration of a large swathe of the globe in its supply chain, Beijing's man or woman will prevail. And the Chinese are nothing if not patient.

Basic solutions

One of the cruel legacies of the Green Revolution has been the shift away from diversified agriculture to the dominance of cash crops such as cotton and sugarcane, and grains such as wheat and rice

The farmers' agitation against the new farm laws is far from ebbing. The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) has got a boost from 10 Central trade unions pledging support for its actions and protest march to Delhi. Of grave concern is the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, aimed at ending monopoly of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) Mandis, where all farmers were required to sell their produce at government-regulated markets. Any impartial observer who understands India's farming distress would normally agree that Indian farmers require solutions to their fundamental problems and not any grandiose reforms.

Family-owned farms still produce some 80 per cent of the world's food. There is an inextricable link between farmers with small landholdings and our survival and the health of our planet. They play a highly critical role in protecting the environment. But they are among the most underserved population. They often lack the technology, infrastructure, and market access needed to increase their productivity and incomes. This makes them extremely vulnerable to economic and climactic variability.

In India about half of them live in the vast stretches of the Deccan and East Indian plateau, practicing rainfed farming due to lack of irrigation. Farming is therefore typically limited to monocropping, and is done only in the monsoon months.

Small farmers often lack basic tools and new technologies and don't have networks to access them, the financial services to afford them, or the markets to profit from investments in them. They are also plagued by low productivity as they do not have access to quality farm inputs such as good seeds and fertilisers, training and capital and technology and knowledge that can make their enterprises commercially viable.

Hence, they remain trapped in a cycle of low investment, poor productivity, low value-addition, weak market orientation and depressed margins, leading them to abandon farming and migrate from rural areas, often in conditions of great and slow distress.

According to National Sample Survey Office data, almost 70 per cent of agricultural households have to spend more than they can earn, and more than half of all recognised farmers are in debt. The Green Revolution started in the 1960s saw the widespread rollout of new agriculture technologies leading to a massive boost in crop production. But its focus on large-scale and water intensive farming came at great ecological cost. There were several bad consequences in the long term. One of the cruel legacies of the Green Revolution has been the shift away from diversified agriculture to the dominance of cash crops such as cotton and sugarcane, and grains such as wheat and rice.

The Green Revolution brought in new strains of seeds generated through modern methods of plant breeding which gave high yields; intensified the use of fossil fuel fertilizers; increased acreage through double cropping; used pesticides and mechanical equipment exten-



sively and massively; and drilled into groundwater reserves through deep borewells. Native heirloom seeds adapted to local diets and conditions were replaced by expensive corporate-produced hybrids, often dumped in the country after having failed elsewhere. Although the new high-performance varieties guaranteed high yields, they degraded soil quality, harmed biodiversity, polluted the environment and irreversibly damaged human health.

The large-scale cultivation of a single crop variety made it highly vulnerable to pests. These unwise farming policies have caused millions of farmers to lose their livelihoods, and hundreds of thousands to end their lives.

There has been a failure of agricultural strategy over the last decade. Food crops have gradually been abandoned in favour of cash crops which are more profitable but are also highly water-intensive. The high yielding variety (HYV) seeds which entered Indian fields during the Green Revolution were less resistant to droughts and floods and needed delicate management of water, insecticides, pesticides and chemical fertilisers. Farmers found them highly sensitive to climate variations.

These crops also attract more pests forcing farmers to apply chemical pesticides to save them. So, every year the farmer had to spend more to grow such crops. Typically the commercial seeds had to be purchased year after year, and farmers could not reuse seeds from their crop, with seed manufacturing giants filing lawsuits against small farmers who did so. It became a perpetual treadmill. Families faced crippling healthcare costs, crop failures, loss of income, and debt, all directly related to pesticides.

The overuse of chemical fertilisers for augmenting yields in the short term led to physical and chemical degradation of the soil by altering the natural microflora and increasing soil salinity and alkalinity. Higher yields and profits in the short term have come at a huge socio-ecological cost such as biodiversity loss, environmental pollution, land degradation, increased damage from climate change, decline in human health and livelihood, and the erosion of agricultural expertise. Exposed to

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plant seeds several times because they may go to waste by delayed or excess rain.

Farmers in most middle-income countries need more capital than they can afford to generate through their savings. In fact, "developed" agriculture means capital-intensive agriculture. Most farmers have been made to descend the socioeconomic ladder, where a farmer becomes a sharecropper, then a peasant without land, then an agricultural labourer, then is eventually forced into exile. These circumstances must be changed.

Small and marginal farmers are also denied access to institutional credit. Most of them depend on village traders, who are also moneylenders, to give them crop loans and pre-harvest consumption loans. Credit histories and collateral may serve to qualify middle-class customers for loans, but most rural small-

holder farmers have neither.

The superior bargaining power of village traders and the middlemen means that the prices received by farmers are low. On account of the small size of the farms, they can rarely apply technological solutions that work best on a large scale. And with government extension workers not properly trained, small farmers do not have access to knowledge about best practices, for example, crop rotation techniques to help reduce pests.

Small farmers need to practise smart agriculture like harvesting rainwater, using organic fertilisers and undertaking intercropping to protect soil. They also need to revive some traditional farming practices that have been lost in the rush of new technology. To make farming sustainable and resilient, farmers must be encouraged to diversify into allied activities. They can be encouraged and financed to build ponds, bunds and set up horticulture farms.

Secondary agriculture too should be promoted by public/private sector. Income-generation activities that use crop residues – paddy straw, fodder blocks and crop residue briquette – can supplement income from primary agriculture. The output from the farm should also be put to gainful use – either as fodder or for mulching. Cleaning, sorting and grading of agri-produce to make it saleable must also be promoted as supplementary enterprise. When farming fails, livestock can serve as fall back. Tribal communities already keep backyard poultry, ducks, goats and sheep. Bee keeping, mushroom cultivation, backyard poultry, dairying and sheep rearing can be managed by women farmers in the family. Unlike more valuable operations on farms in India – crops or cattle, for example – goats and sheep are managed almost exclusively by women. They bring them out for grazing, take care of them when they're ill, and sell them at the market. And the most critical point is that the money women earn from their goats stays in their hands.

Agro-processing needs medium-level entrepreneurs. It's difficult for farmers with a hectare of land or 50 to 200 mango trees to set up an agro-processing unit. Entrepreneurs do not want to go to small towns and rural areas, because of inadequate infrastructure, transport and electricity. No bank will finance them.

Sustainable agriculture must build capacity to adapt to climate variability, so that farmers can conserve resources during years of good rainfall and harvests to adjust for years with poor production. Climate variability has always been a challenge and is set to assume historic proportions. Larger-scale innovation to make staple crops more climate-resilient is essential for food security.

We need to understand crop-specific challenges and figure out farming models that can combine the best of high-tech and environmentally sound agricultural practices, bridging the gap between scientific know-how and farmers do-how. It is important to harness all the tools that indigenous wisdom and contemporary science can offer. Only sincere cooperation between the two can ensure an agricultural revolution suited to our times.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Need to fight AIDS

This year's World AIDS Day is like no other. The Covid-19 pandemic is threatening the progress that the world has made in health and development, including the gains we have made against HIV over the past four decades. This year the theme of World AIDS Day (on Tuesday) is "Global solidarity, shared responsibility". Over the past year the HIV movement has mobilized to defend our progress, to protect people living with HIV and other vulnerable groups and to push the novel coronavirus back. In China, we witnessed solidarity and shared responsibility between Government and Community Groups in ensuring continuity of HIV services even during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. Such efforts included ensuring multi-month dispensing of HIV treatment; organizing deliveries of treatment and prevention commodities to people living with HIV; and providing financial assistance, psychosocial support and essential personal protection equipment to at-risk groups. These acts of solidarity and shared responsibility were also extended to the world with China sharing its experiences of responding to HIV with other developing countries. It is the sheer determination of the Chinese government, the solidarity of community groups, the dedication of health practitioners and the shared responsibility of all Chinese people that made the impossible possible during this difficult time and I salute you all! But we know that we cannot rest on our laurels especially because we are now fighting two colliding epidemics of HIV and Covid-19. As the United

CHINADAILY

Nations secretary-general said in his World AIDS Day Statement: "Despite significant successes, the AIDS emergency is not over. HIV still infects 1.7 million people each year and kills some 690,000. And inequalities mean that those who are the least able to stand up for their rights are still the most affected." In responding to Covid-19, the world cannot make the same mistakes it made in the fight against HIV. I still remember the early years of the AIDS pandemic when millions of people in developing countries died while waiting for HIV treatment which was available in richer countries. Even today, more than 12 million people are still waiting to access HIV treatment. That is why UNAIDS, with the strong support of the UN secretary-general has been calling for a "People's Vaccine" against the coronavirus and they are supported by a growing list of current and former heads of state who have signed up to support this call. Global problems need global solidarity. As the first Covid-19 vaccine candidates become available, there are serious threats to ensuring equitable access. The UN commends China for joining the COVAX facility and salutes the commitment by President Xi Jinping that a vaccine produced in China will become a global public good. Wealth should not determine whether people get the healthcare they need. We need a Covid-19 vaccine (and HIV treatment and care) that are affordable and available to everyone, everywhere. Our goal of ending the AIDS epidemic was already off track before Covid-19. We must now put people first to get the AIDS response back on track. We must end the social injustices that put people at risk of contracting HIV. And we must fight for the right to health and ensure universal access. Barriers such as up-front user fees that lock people out of health must come down. Women and girls must have their human rights fully respected, and the criminalization and marginalization of gay men, transgender people, sex workers and people who use drugs must stop.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editor@thestatesman.com

Let's listen to experts

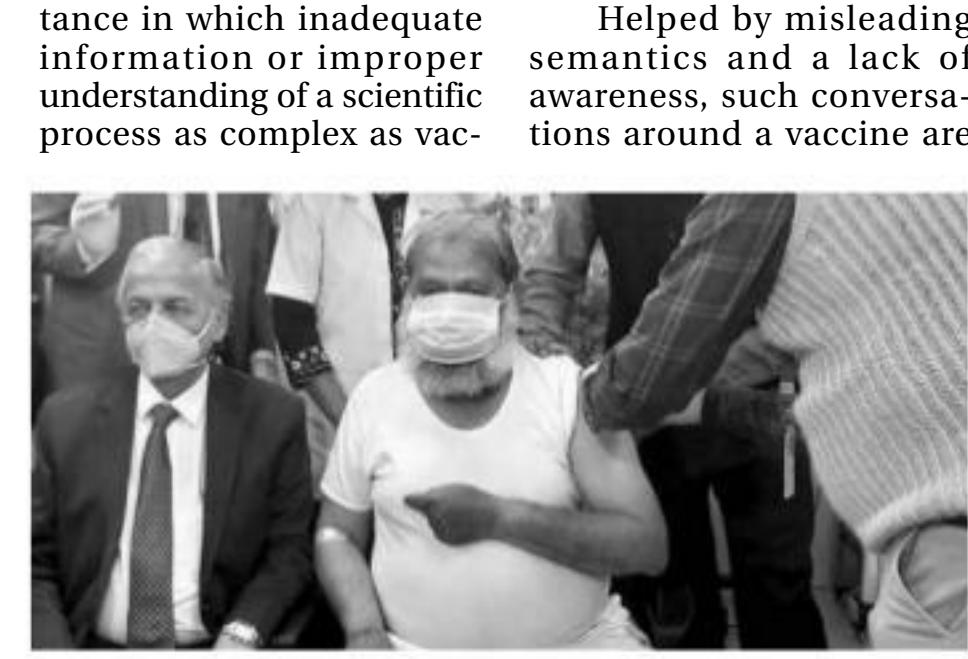
SIR, This refers to your report 'Haryana minister tests Covid positive days after getting trial dose of vaccine', (*The Statesman*, December 6). Haryana's health minister Anil Vij announced that he tested positive for Covid-19, leading many to draw connections with his participation in the trials of one of the vaccine candidates. The immediate media coverage and the social media conversations that followed conflated Mr Vij's diagnosis with the trial in a way that suggested that Covaxin from Bharat Biotech is ineffective. In reality, it isn't known whether the minister was given a placebo or the actual vaccine. As per medical experts, even if he did get a shot of Covaxin, it

isn't meant to protect until he gets at least two doses (he got only one) and his immune system has had 14 days after that to build the necessary protection.

This is not the first instance in which inadequate information or improper understanding of a scientific process as complex as vac-

cine development has gained traction on mainstream as well as social media. A little earlier, the coverage of a volunteer participating in the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine trial in Chennai amplified allegations that were later disproved.

Helped by misleading semantics and a lack of awareness, such conversations around a vaccine are



prone to misinformation and could erode trust. This problem has been particularly pronounced in the West – recent polls showed only 60 per cent of Americans are willing to take the vaccine – although it hasn't taken hold in a country like ours, where most people have seen disease closely. But Indians are not less susceptible to misinformation on an issue where the difference between a headline and nuance could often be the line dividing fact and myth. The spread of misinformation is more damaging and harder to mitigate. In these days, we must listen to experts first, before not just voicing but also forming our own opinions.

Yours, etc., N Sadhasiva Reddy,
Bengaluru, 7 December.

HORRIFIC METHOD

SIR, Your editorial 'Year of the Dragon' (6 December) is excellent. You have written "All these developments suggest that even if the virus was not a Chinese creation, as has been alleged by many around the world, the global outbreak has been used by Beijing to stamp its authority on the world. Truly this has been China's year". Absolutely true but who can deny that the virus did not originate in the Chinese city of Wuhan. It is quite natural that China will be blamed. China had practically committed a heinous crime as it hid the menace under the carpet and kept the world in the dark for some time thus helping it spread throughout the globe.

On the one hand, democracies throughout the world are struggling to contain the virus because of internal political differences on life or livelihood. On the other hand, authoritarian China had forcibly prevented its citizens from coming out of their cocoons and achieved early success. Its economy is now back on track.

Democracies around the world will take time to contain the virus because dissent is the key in such systems.. Obviously this year belongs to China but the method adopted to remain ahead of others is horrific.

Yours, etc., Aranya Sanyal, Siliguri, 6 December.

It is best to ignore Trudeau

HARSHA KAKAR

Justin Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, walked into controversy by commenting on the farmer agitation in India. He stated during an online interaction with the local Sikh Community on Gurpurab, "I would be remiss if I didn't start also by recognising the news coming out of India about the protest by farmers. The situation is concerning, and we're all very worried about family and friends." He added, "Canada will always be there to defend the rights of peaceful protesters. We believe in the process of dialogue. We've reached out through multiple means to the Indian authorities to highlight our concerns."

In India in response summoned the Canadian High Commissioner, Nadir Patel, and issued a strong demarche. The demarche stated that remarks made by PM Trudeau "would have a seriously damaging impact on ties between India and Canada". Trudeau was unwilling to retract.

Earlier, Jagmeet Singh, the leader of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in Canada, which backs the Trudeau government, had supported the farmers agitation in a message on Twitter. The MEA added that these comments encouraged gatherings of extremist activists at the Indian High Commission and consulates in Canada.

In response, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar skipped Canada-led meetings to formulate Canada-led meetings to formulate



criticised, even in Canada, for its lack of official business. Other than one delegation level meeting, the visit yielded nothing except photo-ops of the Trudeau family visiting tourist spots.

The reason for Trudeau supporting the farmers agitation is his domestic compulsions. His is a minority government supported by the NDP. Sikhs in Canada form a major vote bank and in case of fresh elections, he would seek their support. With Jagmeet Singh having commented on the agitation, Trudeau was expected to follow suit.

Officially, Canada has been against the Minimum Support Price (MSP), a major aspect amongst the agitators' demands. BJP's spokesperson, Vijay Chauthaiwale tweeted, "Canada's criticism of India on farmer's issues is nothing but

hypocrisy. Canada is a strident critic of MSP and other agriculture policies at the WTO, and often questions India's domestic agriculture measures including food and livelihood security." Thus, the reason for Trudeau walking into the controversy is solely internal domestic compulsions.

Israeli policy against the Palestinians is dominated by coalition partners within the ruling government. Since every government in the country has been a coalition, the Prime Minister is duty bound to carry all partners along in every decision. Even the temporary coalition between Benjamin Netanyahu and Benny Gantz, post three failed elections, has differing views. Netanyahu wanted to annex a large part of the West Bank this year, while Gantz was reluctant without the support of the international community which strongly

opposes annexation. Netanyahu was compelled to pull back.

Donald Trump ignored demands for action against Saudi Arabia on the killing of Jamal Khashoggi and India on revoking of Article 370 and imposing restrictions in Kashmir, due to his personal equations with both heads of state. He preferred exploiting PM Modi for his re-election bid, rather than tamper with relations by criticizing Joe Biden may have a different approach.

Even in India, domestic political compulsions have impacted decisions and comments. The UPA government led by Manmohan Singh was unable to sign defence agreements with the US, mainly on account of objections from the CPI, which was a coalition partner. In the summer of 2008, Manmohan Singh had threatened to resign in frustration, if the UPA coalition

was to buckle under CPI pressure on the Indo-US nuclear deal.

The Congress' Sri Lankan policies were perpetually impacted by political parties of Tamil Nadu. While India continues to raise the issue of devolution of powers to Sri Lankan Tamils, part of the 13th Amendment, the Modi government no longer exerts the same pressure. Security concerns carry greater emphasis.

In Kashmir, in deference to the once powerful Hurriyat and seeking to retain support from radicalised youth, local political parties have been demanding talks with Pakistan, aware that problems in the region were their creation and talks with Pakistan would never yield results. Mehbooba Mufti had recently stated, "China grabbed our land, but we are talking to them. Soldiers at both sides of the border are dying, why can't we hold talks with Pakistan?"

Valley politicians have even supported terrorists claiming they were fighting for a cause. Mehbooba stated in a press interaction, "The youth today believes that now they have no choice, it is better to pick up weapons and die." These comments from Kashmir are more for local consumption and securing vote banks. She is aware that her coalition with the BJP had led to a revolt in her home turf of South Kashmir by the Jamaat-e-Islami, fuelling the post-Burhan Wani violence. She is now seeking to regain her hold and one of the means is to play to the gallery.

Globally, domestic politics have dominated internal and external relations and comments. Under these considerations comments by Trudeau are not far out of tune. They are not aimed at challenging Indian actions nor in genuine support of the agitators, but to safeguard a domestic electoral base. It is more pronounced as these comments flow from a nation which is against the very policies against which farmers are protesting. While global leaders need to be wary, some of their comments are best ignored.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

A memoir has been published by the Medical Research Council giving the results of elaborate experiments that have been conducted at the Psychological Laboratory at Oxford on the influence of alcohol on mental activities, including accuracy, memory, and powers of observation. The experiments were of a very delicate nature, laboratory apparatus being chiefly employed, and the results are stated with scientific exactitude. Absolute alcohol mixed with water increased the mean number of errors in recording observations from 80 to 97 when 10 cubic centimeters had been swallowed; from 77 to 109 after 15 cubic centimeters; and from 17 to 97 after 20 c.cm. In all cases the subjects of the experiments, who did not know whether they were receiving alcohol with their food or not, had the pleasing conviction, when they were influenced by alcohol, that their work was unusually good. Experiments were also made to determine the effect of different dilutions of alcohol and of variations in the period which had elapsed between its ingestion and that of a meal. The errors increased 160 per cent after taking 20 c.cm. alcohol in 33 per cent solution, compared with 22 per cent after taking the same amount in 10 per cent solution. When 30 c.cm. of alcohol diluted to 60 c.cm. was taken directly after a meal, the increase of errors was 6 per cent; the same does not take from two to eleven hours after a meal was followed by an increase of errors amounting to 118 per cent.

NEWS ITEMS

MANAGEMENT OF KHALSA COLLEGE

Meetings of the Khalsa College Council and Managing Committee were held at College today. The Managing Committee considered the report of the Sub-Committee appointed to consider what substitutions should be made in the fundamental rules which the Managing Committee had decided should be deleted, in order to remove all Government control from the management of the institution. The Sub-Committee's report was accepted almost in its entirety. The only recommendation of the Sub-Committee which the Managing Committee did not accept was a proposal that the funds of the institution should be vested in five trustees. The Managing Committee decided to obtain legal advice on the subject. The Council met immediately after the meeting of the Managing Committee and accepted all the proposals of the Managing Committee.

IRRIGATION IN BENGAL

The Department of Agriculture, Bengal, are trying some irrigation experiments, which, if successful, will be of immense benefit to the whole province. Bengal with its heavy rainfall is not generally considered to be a province that needs irrigation, but in the opinion of Mr. G. Evans, the present Director of Agriculture, there are certain parts of the province which would be immensely benefitted by a judicious application of irrigation water during the cold weather. There are certain parts of the province which grow only one crop of aus paddy during the year. The highly red soil of the Madhupur jungle tract to the north of Dacca, extending up to Mymensingh, and a large part of north Bengal many be quoted as typical cases. The soils in these places dry up after the aus paddy.

THE OPERATIONS IN WAZIRISTAN

A report on the operations in Waziristan has been published in the form of a despatch by the Commander-in-Chief. The close of these operations brought to an end Frontier Campaign of unparalleled hard fighting and severity. The enemy fought with a determination and courage which has rarely, if ever, been met with by our troops in similar operations. The character of the terrain, combined with trying and arduous climatic conditions, alone presented difficulties before which the most hardened troops might well have hesitated. The resistance of the enemy has been broken, and the difficulties successfully overcome by a force composed almost entirely of Indian troops. No British troops, except for the Royal Air Force and a British Battery of Mountain Artillery, were employed.

DEATH OF BOMBAY JOURNALIST

Mr. G.C. Plinston died at his residence in Bombay on Monday night. Mr. Plinston came out to India in 1887, and was editor of the Bombay Gazette for many years until it ceased in 1914. On his return from England in that year he took up the secretaryship of the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, and was a regular contributor to many newspapers. He took an active interest in various commercial activities of Bombay and was on the directorate of several companies. He leaves a widow and two sons, one of whom is a major in the Indian Army. His funeral took place this evening and was largely attended.

Free speech and freedom to offend



KASHIF ISLAM

The brutal beheading of a French schoolteacher for showing cartoons of Prophet Muhammad triggered a wave of protests and debate all over the world. Within France itself, there was anger at the brutal killing for exercising what they believe to be the fundamental right of speech, while Muslim protesters took to the streets throughout the Islamic world denouncing France and President Emmanuel Macron.

At stake were two varying and irreconcilable views over what constituted free speech in society. France, led by President Macron, insisted that freedom of speech included the freedom to offend other religions. For many Muslims the world over, where

the mere portrayal of Prophet Muhammad is considered derogatory, the cartoons were perceived as intolerable provocation.

France is an outlier in its treatment of the freedom of speech applied to religion. Few countries enforce state neutrality - relegating religion to the private sphere or allow mockery of organised religion verging on the offensive as does France. *Laïcité*, the French term for secularism, is a cornerstone for all political parties, even those on the far right. Religion has little resonance with a largely nominally Catholic population.

The history of mocking organised religion goes back to the 17th century Enlightenment values. Famous philosophers led by Voltaire and

Diderot routinely attacked the church for corruption and irrational beliefs. The French Revolution of 1789, which involved large-scale expropriation of church lands and exodus of the clergy from France to other countries, further weakened the hold of the church in national affairs.

In an alternate universe where the majority of France had remained homogenous, white and non-denominational, there would have been few conflicts with *laïcité*. But the France of today is hardly a mono-cultural society imbued with Enlightenment-era, post-Christian values. In fact, following decolonisation and World War II, millions of people from former colonies in North Africa have made France their home. Muslims now form around a 10th of the country's 60 million-odd citizens, comprising for the most part second- and third-generation immigrants from North and West Africa, along with a small number of native converts.

This large minority remains mostly concentrated in suburban ghettos and neglected neighbourhoods infamous for crime and poor public infrastructure. Educational achievement as well as participation in public life remains below the national average. As borne out by research, having a Muslim-sounding name diminished the chances of finding employment appropriate to one's qualifications. Echoing the experience of American blacks, French people with an immigrant background also have higher rates of criminality and are subject to intrusive policing.

It is in this context that commentators have termed the poor taste of the cartoons an affront to a down-trodden and marginal population, rather than an impartial exercise of the right to speech. After all, French Muslims have no problems with criticism of Islam per se, long the staple of newspapers and magazines in France. A few observers see the persistence of

colonial French attitudes to Islam on the demands made on French Muslims.

In fact, French immigrants, and Muslims in particular, are, at present, confronted with challenges on two different fronts. Firstly, there is a squeeze by the political and the ruling class. The far right have always seen non-white immigrants as against the French way of life. Though they have remained marginal to French politics, as pointed out by observers, they tend to leave their imprint on mainstream politics, who adopt right-wing vocabulary and tactics.

An even greater point of contention has been the attitude of the official establishment comprising the state and its institutions. Ostensibly neutral, many French Muslims have come to feel that the government action such as restricting the public display of religious affiliation seems to affect the Muslim community disproportionately. France remains one of the few countries in the world where wearing scarves in public institutions constitutes an offence; even mothers dropping their kids to school are discouraged from doing so. Courts have even upheld firing workers for not removing their headscarves.

While the French state and the native white population refuse to acknowledge discrimination, French Muslims themselves have another story to tell. In a study carried out in 2019, four out of 10 Muslims, and one in two Muslim women in France, claimed to have been direct victims of religion-based discrimination in access to education, housing and the job market, at least once in their lifetime.

The second challenge facing French Muslims is the rise of extremism amidst their ranks. While the vast majority remains moderate and law-abiding, the radicalisation of even a tiny proportion is a worrying matter for both the community and French

society at large. What made the Chechen-origin youth with no previous antecedents so brutally attack the schoolmaster? Was it the influence of peers, extremist preachers, or radicalisation through social media? It will be impossible to say. That this was no isolated incident is made evident by the fact that hundreds of French citizens travelled to fight in Syria, and that several French Muslims were also involved in several terrorist attacks carried out on behalf of the Islamic State.

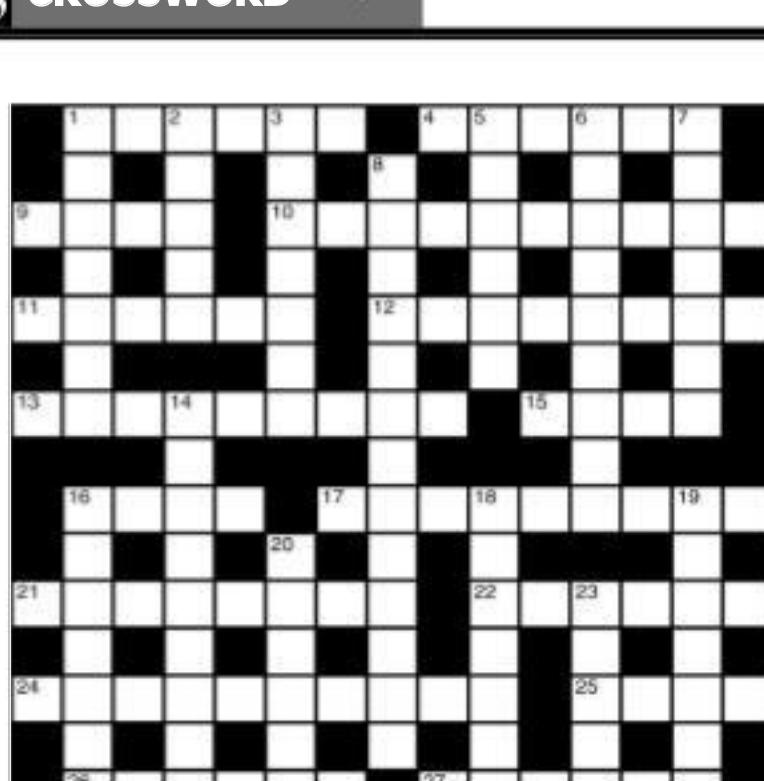
The expected response of the French state has been increased policing and surveillance of suspect individuals. While this may certainly help prevent radicalised individuals from perpetrating acts of violence, the state must also more actively engage with moderate Muslim voices, help them integrate more fully without asking them to forego their cultural and religious specificities.

In fact, these challenges are not limited to France alone. Many other European countries with sizeable Muslim populations such as the United Kingdom, Germany or Spain are grappling with issues of social backwardness and radicalisation of their Muslim populations. While immigrant populations everywhere end up more or less integrating outwardly - speaking the local language and adopting the local culture - there has been no significant appreciation of their persistent economic and social differences leading to their continuing marginalisation.

In the specific case of France, acknowledging these differences would amount to some sort of affirmative action involving additional state funding in schooling, housing and higher education for immigrant populations. Ironically, entrenched notions of the equality of citizens and the refusal to accept religious or ethnic identities may yet prevent the French state from acting on behalf of marginalised immigrant populations.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN

NO 28158



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1 Porridge maybe? Visit company stocking it (6)
- 4 Extremely happy taking part in best classes (6)
- 9 Ignore number in boat (4)
- 10 Horses stood nervously in group (10)
- 11 Animal circles farmer's last source of milk (6)
- 12 A bundle of nerves, band meets hero (8)
- 13 I cried during speech, being stared at (9)
- 15 At least one drop should help this fashion lacking length (4)
- 16 Mark correct disease vector (4)

DOWN

- 17 Cultivated angelicas offering relief (9)
- 21 Wild swimmer always dives in (8)
- 22 Cocky parish priest is seen in posh (6)
- 24 Border is quiet at this place, one of two in the world (10)
- 25 Pacify Liberals mobbing leader of Unionists (4)
- 26 Band play, heading off across river (6)
- 27 Organ spotted outside public library (6)
- 1 Benefit from merger, say, releasing a bit of work in city (7)
- 2 Rather upset, having swallowed one (6)

- 3 Like ring road section during test (7)
- 5 Defeat current racket appearing in The Mercury (6)
- 6 Corn grows here - not much to eat at first (6,3)
- 7 Mike bore nasty 14 (7)
- 8 Order huge necktie to keep performing for fun (6,2,5)
- 14 Bug etc turns up in contents of meal prior to X-ray (9)
- 16 Name first words of Somewhere (7)
- 18 Spoil left overs then finish (5,2)
- 19 Slight cut in hormone (7)
- 20 Spot empty mousetrap in big house (6)
- 23 Vegan food that's often taken by medical staff (5)

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

CROSSWORD





We are seeing a revival in the economy, with demand picking up in the building and construction and automotive sectors

SATISH PAI

MANAGING DIRECTOR, HINDALCO INDUSTRIES

THUMBNAILS

DCB rate cut: Private sector DCB Bank on Monday said it has reduced marginal cost of funds based lending rates by up to 0.18 per cent across various tenors. The benchmark one-year MCLR has been cut to 9.67 per cent, the bank said in a release. It was 9.85 per cent earlier. The new rates will come into effect from 8 December 2020, DCB Bank said.

Aditya Birla Sun Life: Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance, the life insurance subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited, on Monday announced the launch of its new plan ABSLI Assured Income Plus. ABSLI Assured Income Plus offers guaranteed monthly income to fulfil monetary requirements of an individual and their family's recurring needs for up to 30 years while building a financial safety net, said a company statement.

Amazon: Amazon India on Monday announced the deployment of "distance assistant" across its operational sites in the country, following the successful roll-out of the technology in the US and a few other countries. The AI-powered innovation will remind associates while on site to maintain a safe proximity from others by providing social distancing feedback in real-time, said a Press release.

Samsung: Samsung has announced exciting programmes for customers buying Galaxy smartphones from Samsung exclusive stores, comprising Samsung Smart Café and Samsung SmartPlaza. The new programmes will enhance the shopping experience for consumers, said a Press release.

Moody's on HDFC Bank: Global rating agency Moody's on Monday said HDFC Bank's multiple digital outages are credit negative as such recurring incidents could lead to moderation in revenue and flight of customers to other banks.

Jet Airways likely to resume operations by summer 2021

Murari Lal Jalan-Kalrock Capital consortium is awaiting the NCLT and other regulatory approvals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 7 DECEMBER

The consortium of UAE-based businessman Murari Lal Jalan and London's Kalrock Capital - which has won the bid to revive Jet Airways - today said it expects to start operating the airline by the summer of 2021.

The consortium is awaiting the NCLT and other regulatory approvals, including reinstatement of slots and bilateral traffic rights by the civil aviation ministry and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

It is also planning to launch dedicated freighter services once the carrier takes off the ground again.

The committee of creditors (CoC) has already approved the airline's revival plan submitted by the consortium in October.

Jet Airways was grounded on 17 April due to liquidity crisis and subsequently went into administration in June 2019. "As per the resolution plan, Jet Airways intends to operate all of its historic domestic slots in India and restart international operations.



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The Jet 2.0 programme is aimed at reviving the past glory of Jet Airways, with a fresh set of processes and systems to ensure greater efficiency and productivity across all routes.

of starting a new airline but some of the inherent strengths of Jet Airways like the optimal flight slots, brand value and reputation for best-in-class inflight service and safety, giving Jet 2.0 an edge over others, were too tempting to resist, the release added.

The consortium has decided that it would be advantageous to re-energise and start Jet Airways on a clean slate with an established brand, it said, adding the vision is to regain the lost ground, set new benchmarks for the airline industry with the tag of being

the best corporate full-service airline operating on domestic and international routes. "Jet Airways has been a brand with a glorious history of over 25 years, and it is the vision of the consortium to put Jet Airways back in the skies at the earliest opportunity. We aim to re-energise the brand by infusing energy, warmth, and vibrancy into it while making it bigger and better," Manoj Narendra Madnani, board member of Jalan Kalrock Consortium, said.

Over the years, the brand has created loyal customers

and the consortium wish to bring in freshness by adding value - an Indian brand with a global outlook, he said, adding "with the revival of Jet Airways, it will restore the confidence among the Jet customers to fly again and experience its world-class facilities".

The Jet 2.0 hubs will remain in Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru like before as the revival plan proposes to support tier 2 and tier 3 cities by creating sub-hubs in such cities. This would boost the economy in these cities, help Jet Airways stand back on its feet fast and support the overall vision of the government to promote aviation business through tier 2/ tier 3 cities in India, the release said.

Besides, the consortium is also planning to increase cargo services to include dedicated freighter service, a market currently under-served by any Indian carrier, the release said, adding given India's position as a leading centre for global vaccine manufacture, cargo services have never been more required.

Hindalco to invest ₹730 cr to set up new plant in Silvassa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

Aditya Birla Group firm Hindalco Industries today said it plans to set up a 34,000-ton aluminium extrusion plant at Silvassa, in Dhad and Nagar Haveli union territory, at an investment of Rs 730 crore.

In a regulatory filing, Hindalco said the new plant will service the fast-growing market for extruded aluminium products in the western and southern regions.

Hindalco said the Rs 730-crore project in Silvassa signals a big step forward in Hindalco's downstream strategy as the company revives its long-term downstream investment plan.

The company said its intent is to build a larger

value-added product portfolio over the next few years.

"This investment indicates confidence in the economic revival, which in turn will grow the demand for downstream value-added products," the company added.

Pai said: "Over the next few years, as part of our downstream strategy, we intend to enhance our capacity from over 3,00,000 tons currently, to more than 6,00,000 tons with investments of around Rs 7,000 crore. Hindalco's existing extrusion plants in Renukoot in Uttar Pradesh and Alupuram in Kerala cater mainly to the auto, defence, aerospace and industrial segments."

Hindalco said the aluminium extrusion market in India is expected to grow exponentially from the cur-

rent level of around 373,000 tons to reach about 850,000 tons by 2030.

"The western and southern regions of the domestic market account for over 60 percent of the extrusion market," the company added.

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years, as part of our downstream strategy, we intend to enhance our capacity from over 3,00,000 tons currently, to more than 6,00,000 tons with investments of around Rs 7,000 crore. Hindalco's existing extrusion plants in Renukoot in Uttar Pradesh and Alupuram in Kerala cater mainly to the auto, defence, aerospace and industrial segments."

Hindalco said commercial production at the plant is expected to start in 24 months.

Franklin seeks unit-holders nod for winding up of six schemes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund today said it has sought consent of the unit-holders for the orderly winding up of the six fixed income schemes.

The electronic voting will take place from 26 to 28 December and the meeting of unit-holders of relevant schemes on 29 December, Franklin Templeton MF said in a statement.

The unit-holders would have to take a call on whether to give consent to the winding up decision or withholding it, which would allow the schemes to reopen for purchase and redemption.

The move comes after Supreme Court on Thursday asked Franklin Templeton MF to initiate steps within one week for calling a meeting of unit-holders to seek their consent for closure of six mutual fund scheme.

resulting in a reduction in the net asset value (NAV) of the schemes and substantial losses for unit-holders," the fund house noted.

Franklin Templeton MF closed six debt mutual fund schemes on 23 April, citing redemption pressure and lack of liquidity in the bond market. The six schemes are Franklin India Low Duration Fund, Franklin India Ultra Short Bond Fund, Franklin India Short Term Income Plan, Franklin India Credit Risk Fund, Franklin India Dynamic Accrual Fund and Franklin India Income Opportunities Fund. From 24 April to 27 November, the schemes under winding up have received over Rs 11,576 crore from maturities, pre-payments, and coupons.

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Dabur, Marico spat over claims on honey, both approach ASCI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

Two leading homegrown rival FMCG brands Dabur and Marico are in an open spat with each other over claims regarding their honey brands and have taken the matter to advertising regulator ASCI.

Dabur on Sunday said it is filing a complaint against rival Marico before the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) for claiming its Saffola Honey sample being passed through the NMR test.

The Noida-based company claimed Marico's Saffola honey has failed the NMR (Nuclear Magnetic Resonance) test and is misleading the consumers.

"Dabur is filing a complaint in ASCI against Marico as their Saffola Honey sam-



ple from the market has failed the NMR test. Test reports clearly indicate the presence of sugar syrup in Saffola honey. Their claim on NMR test is misleading the consumers," Dabur claimed in a statement.

However, Dabur's claim was refuted by Marico contending that Saffola Honey is also compliant with each of the quality parameters mandated by FSSAI.

Earlier, Marico had filed a complaint before the ASCI on 1 October, over Dabur's claims of NMR of its honey

Dabur that its honey has passed the German NMR test.

The complaint has been admitted by ASCI and taken on record for further hearing, said Marico.

Without naming the brand, ASCI said it has received four complaints against honey brands over the past few months.

Three of these complaints were upheld as they contravened the ASCI code. The advertisers were unable to provide adequate substantiation for the claims they were making, and hence these advertisements were considered misleading, said secretary-general Manisha Kapoor in an emailed reply.

As per the ASCI process, the advertisers are required to modify their claims or withdraw the advertisements.

Suitor signs binding deal for RFL, sale likely soon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

Debt-ridden Religare Enterprises Ltd's (REL) search for a suitor to sell its NBFC arm as part of corporate debt restructuring seems to have come to an end with U GRO Capital believed to have signed a binding term-sheet, and a deal is likely to be clinched in coming months, sources said.

U GRO was among the three potential suitors which did the due diligence for Religare Finvest Ltd (RFL), sources said, adding the deal investment could be higher than that of Purnendu Chatjee-controlled TCG which failed to get clearance from the Reserve Bank for the acquisition of RFL in March.

When contacted on signing of the binding term-

sheet, number of aspirants who did the due diligence and the time line, a REL representative said: "Religare Group and RFL are working with all stakeholders towards its business and financial revival of RFL. We do not wish to comment anything at this juncture given the confidentiality and importance of these matters."

The development comes against the backdrop of Delhi High Court issuing a notice to DBS Bank India on the RFL's plea to substitute refund claims of fixed deposits of Rs 750 crore along with interest from Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) taken over by the foreign bank.

The high court had said that the reply be filed to the application within five weeks and listed the matter for further hearing on 25 February.

As per the debt restructuring plan was progressing with the lenders, a simultaneous exercise for identifying potential partners was underway, she had said.

NTPC offers to buy back masala bonds worth ₹4K cr

NEW DELHI, 7 DECEMBER

State-run power giant NTPC has made an offer to buy back its masala bonds worth Rs 4,000 crore from bondholders or lenders. Masala bonds are issued outside India but denominated in Indian rupees, rather than the local currency. NTPC has launched a cash tender offer to buy the masala bonds worth totalling Rs 4,000 crore.

According to company statement, the offer includes the rupee denominated Rs 2,000-crore 7.375 per cent notes issued on 10 August 2016, payable in USD and due on 10 August 2021 ("2021 notes").

The offer also includes rupee denominated Rs 2,000-crore 7.25 per cent notes issued on 3 May 2017, payable in USD and due on 3 May 2022.

The company had issued the 2021 notes, which are currently listed on Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited (SGX-ST), the London Stock Exchange's Professional Securities Market, the NSE IFSC Limited (NSEIFSC) and the India International Exchange (IFSC) Limited (India INX). The 2022 notes are currently listed on SGX-ST, London Stock Exchange's International Securities Market, NSE IFSC and India INX.

The tender offer memorandum has not been, nor will it be, registered, produced or published as an offer document (whether as a prospectus or otherwise) with any registrar or companies in India, Sebi, any Indian stock exchange or any other statutory or regulatory body of like nature in India, except for filing of any information which is mandatory required to be disclosed or filed in India under any applicable Indian laws.

Equity benchmarks close at fresh lifetime highs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 7 DECEMBER

Domestic equity indices sprinted to fresh lifetime highs today as investor sentiment got a lift after Pfizer and Serum Institute applied for emergency use authorisation for their Covid-19 vaccines in India.

Robust buying in finance, FMCG and banking counters offset weak global cues and a depreciating rupee.

Rising for the third straight session, the 30-share BSE Sensex soared 347.42 points or 0.77 per cent to its fresh closing peak of 45,426.97 points, after touching a record intra-day level of 45,458.92 points.

Similarly, the broader NSE

Nifty rose 97.20 points or 0.73 per cent to an all-time closing high of 13,355.75 points.

It touched its record intra-day peak of 13,366.65 points in early trade.

The Nifty has now made fresh lifetime highs for five straight sessions.

SENSEX JUMPS 347 PTS

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India (DCCI) for emergency use authorisation for the AstraZeneca-Oxford Covid-19 vaccine in the UK and Bahrain.

Earlier on Saturday, the Indian arm of US pharmaceutical giant Pfizer became the first company to seek similar approval from India's drug regulator for its coron-

virus vaccine in the country, after securing such clearance in the UK and Bahrain.

"News of progress in the Covid vaccine and healthy inflows by FIIs helped markets to continue the upward trend... We are seeing buying interest emerging on every dip, thanks to rotational partici-

pants across the sectors.

"Technically, the Nifty could face a hurdle around 13,450. The stock-specific trading approach is yielding decent returns so far and we suggest continuing with the same. Also, keep a close watch on global markets and upcoming domestic macro data for

cues," said Ajit Mishra, VP - research, Religare Broking.

BSE telecom, FMCG, healthcare, oil and gas, industrials, teck and capital goods indices climbed up to 2.78 per cent, while consumer durables and realty closed with losses.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices rallied up to 1.30 per cent.

Globalequities wobbled as fresh US-China tensions and prospects of a no-deal Brexit weighed on market sentiment.

In Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Tokyo ended in the red, while Seoul finished with gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were largely trading with losses in early deals.

Meanwhile, the global oil



We believe we can solve the problems of the eastern Mediterranean by not excluding each other

TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN

CALLING FOR NEGOTIATIONS OVER ENERGY EXPLORATION RIGHTS IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 08 DECEMBER 2020

Sweeping victory, claims Maduro

The win in boycotted elections gives Nicolás Maduro control of the last major branch of government outside his grasp

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CARACAS, 7 DECEMBER

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's political alliance claimed a sweeping victory Monday in congressional elections boycotted by the most influential opposition politicians and widely criticized internationally as being fraudulent.

The win gives Maduro control of the last major branch of government outside his grasp. It plays out in the waning days of the Trump administration, which leaves office with Maduro firmly entrenched despite its efforts to bring about his departure through diplomacy and sanctions.

"We have recovered the National Assembly with the majority vote of the Venezuelan people," Maduro said in a televised address. "It's a great victory without a doubt for democracy."

Maduro's United Socialist Party of Venezuela and



allied parties captured 67% of seats in the National Assembly in Sunday's election, said Indira Alfonzo, president of Venezuela's National Electoral Council. Just 31% of the 20 million registered voters participated in the election, she said.

The National Assembly has been led by U.S.-backed politician Juan Guaidó, who has pressed to oust Maduro for nearly two years and end Venezuela's deepening crisis. He's backed by Washington and dozens of nations that consider Maduro's presidency illegitimate.

The election's outcome, however, appears to weaken both Maduro, who's accused as overseeing a fixed vote, and Guaidó, whose legal claim to the presidency hinges on his role as National Assembly head, while his own popularity fades after failing to oust Maduro.

The opposition boycott stems from a Supreme Court ruling this year appointing a new election commission, including three members who have been sanctioned by the U.S. and Canada, without participation of the opposition-led Congress, as the law

requires.

The court also removed the leadership of three opposition parties, including Guaidó's, appointing new leaders the opposition accuses of conspiring to support Maduro.

A small number of opposition parties not associated with Guaidó have held dialogue with the government and participated in the election. Critics say this allowed Maduro to maintain the semblance of a valid contest. Maduro campaigned for his party's candidates, including his son and wife, promising to finalise the right-wing opposition, which he accuses of inciting violent street protests and inviting US sanctions.

The election comes amid uncertainty over the impending change of US administration. Like outgoing President Donald Trump, President Joe Biden has called Maduro a "dictator," though it's unclear what approach he'll take toward Venezuela's crisis.

Despite Venezuela's political turmoil, voting took place with no apparent problems in Caracas, where polling places were operated by civilian militia members and armed soldiers alongside election workers.

As a light flow of voters entered the polls, long lines of drivers throughout Caracas waited to fuel up their cars as the oil-rich nation struggles to produce gasoline to meet domestic demands.

Guaidó's opposition movement is holding its own referendum over several days immediately after the election. It will ask Venezuelans whether they want to end Maduro's rule and hold new presidential elections. "Although I cannot promise a magic solution today, I can tell you with certainty and security: You are not alone. We will not give up," Guaidó said in a video message. "We are going to give everything until we win."

Surveys indicate that neither Maduro nor Guaidó are

popular among Venezuelans at a time the nation's economic and political crisis is deepening despite having the world's largest oil reserves.

Karol Teran, a nurse and single mother on her way to work in Caracas, said she didn't vote because it would have no impact. The election is controlled, she said.

"I don't feel like wasting my time, giving these people the opportunity, so I simply don't vote," she said. "We're tired of all this. I'm tired of all of this. It's not easy."

She was still considering whether to participate in the opposition's referendum.

More than 5 million people have fled the country in recent years, the world's largest migration after that of war-torn Syria. The International Monetary Fund projects a 25% decline this year in Venezuela's GDP, while hyperinflation diminishes the value of its currency, the bolívar, now worth less than a millionth of a dollar on the free market.

University protest: HK police arrest 8

HONG KONG, 7 DECEMBER

Hong Kong authorities on Monday arrested eight people in connection with an unauthorised protest at a university campus last month, police and local media said, amid a widening crackdown on dissent in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

The arrests were reportedly made in relation to a demonstration at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in which over 100 people protested a decision to hold graduation ceremonies online. Such ceremonies are often used as a way for students to express political views.

Some protesters had called for Hong Kong's independence, and held up signs that read "Liberate Hong Kong, Revolution of our times, which are considered to have secessionist notions and are outlawed under the city's national security law."

Police said they arrested eight people for unauthorised protest and inciting secession, but did not specify who they were or whether the arrests were related to the university protest. Arthur Yeung, a graduate from the university who also ran in the city's district council elections last year, is suspected to be among those arrested. The eight arrested are currently being investigated by national security officers.

WHO tries to bolster fragile funding with new CEO

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS, 7 DECEMBER

withdrawal from the world health body, has exposed WHO's fragile funding base. The organisation relies largely upon voluntary contributions from member nations as well as a handful of large foundations. That has left it open to criticism that it's vulnerable to outside influence at the expense of global health priorities.

In an interview ahead of the WHO Foundation announcement, Soni said his priority is to seek out corporate and individual donations. He said the foundation will ultimately assume control of the Covid-19 Solidarity Response Fund.

We believe we can solve the problems of the eastern Mediterranean by not excluding

Erdogan calls for energy talks as EU considers sanctions

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ANKARA, 7 DECEMBER

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday called for negotiations over energy exploration rights in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, a region fraught with tensions this year between rivals Greece and Turkey.

However, he said Turkey would not accept plans and maps that aim to confine us to the shores of Antalya, a reference to the maritime boundaries that Turkey says other countries are seeking to impose on it.

EU leaders are meeting Thursday in Brussels and will address Turkish missions to explore gas reserves in waters claimed by EU members Greece and Cyprus.

We believe we can solve the problems of the eastern Mediterranean by not excluding

each other but by bringing all the actors together around the same table, Erdogan said in a video message to a university forum on the eastern Mediterranean Sea, a region fraught with tensions this year between rivals Greece and Turkey.

EU leaders are meeting Thursday in Brussels and will address Turkish missions to explore gas reserves in waters claimed by EU members Greece and Cyprus.

At a summit in October, European leaders warned Turkey to withdraw its ener-

gy research ships or face punitive measures.

Late last month, the Turkish seismic survey vessel Oruc Reis returned to port, as it had done before October's EU meeting. However, another research ship, the Barbaros Hayreddin Pasa, remains off Cyprus' southwest coast.

Erdogan called for the EU to rid itself of its strategic blindness and not be used as a tool of Greece and Cyprus.

Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias last week described Turkish efforts to de-escalate the crisis as unconvincing and demanded action to rein in Ankara.

New roads pave way for massive growth of Israeli settlement

ASSOCIATED PRESS
JERUSALEM, 7 DECEMBER

projects signal that Israel intends to keep large swaths of the occupied territory in any peace deal and would make it even harder to establish a viable Palestinian state.

"This is not another hundred housing units there or here," said Yehuda Shaul, an Israeli activist who has spent months researching and mapping out the new projects.

This is de facto annexation on steroids.

Construction already is underway on a huge tunnel that Shaul says will one day allow settlers from Maale Adumim, a sprawling settle-

ment east of Jerusalem, to drive into the city and onward to Tel Aviv without passing through a military checkpoint or even hitting a traffic light.

South of Jerusalem, work is underway to expand the

main highway leading to the Gush Etzion settlement bloc and settlements farther south, with tunnels and overpasses designed to bypass Palestinian villages and refugee camps.

Palestinians will be allowed to drive on many of the new roads, but the infrastructure will be of limited use to them because they need permits to enter Israel or annexed east Jerusalem.

Israel seized the West Bank and east Jerusalem in the 1967 war and has since built a far-flung network of settlements that house nearly 700,000 Jewish settlers.

The Palestinians want both territories for their future state and view the settlements as a violation of international law and an obstacle to peace, a position with wide international support.

Supporters of settlements view the West Bank and Jerusalem as the historical and biblical heart of Israel, seeing the settlements as a way of preventing any partition of the Holy Land. But most Israelis live and work in the main cities. Except for an ideological minority, most Israelis would be uncomfortable living deep inside the West Bank,

where two-lane roads pass through military checkpoints and Palestinian villages, and where clashes and rock-throwing can erupt at any time.

The new roads promise to change all that, transforming settlements into affordable suburban communities with safe, easy access to cities and public transportation.

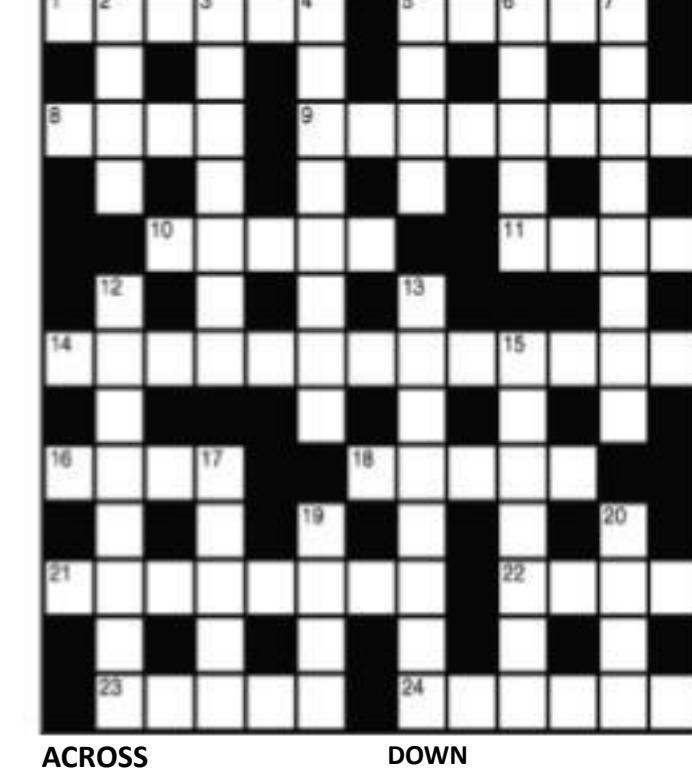
Shaul estimates the new infrastructure could facilitate plans for more than 50,000 settler housing units in the West Bank and another 6,000 in east Jerusalem.

People don't bring roads,

roads bring people, he said. Shaul, an army conscript during the Israeli military's suppression of the second Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s, is a co-founder of Breaking the Silence, a group of former Israeli soldiers who document human rights abuses in the occupied territories. In recent months, he has turned his attention to Israeli planning. His findings are based on minutes from several meetings held in recent years by parliamentary sub-committees charged with improving West Bank infrastructure.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



CROSS
1 English artist (6)
5 Consider (5)
8 Apartment (4)
9 Conscious (8)
10 Movies (5)
11 Implement (4)
14 Radiation detector (6,7)
16 Party-giver (4)
18 Backbone (5)
21 Robust (8)
22 Weaving apparatus (4)
23 Dart (5)
24 Oppose (6)

DOWN
13 Nearby, 15 Contemptuous, 16 Star, 18 Calliope, 20 Recess, 21 Lion cub, 22 Eat, 23 Pimples, 24 Agonise, 25 Craft, 26 Free, 27 Apostle, 28 Star, 29 Terse, 30 Pale, 31 Craft, 32 Stout.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD
By arrangement with The Independent
Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

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BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



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• U.P. Roadways 23868709

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Instructions: Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in your rack. Add points of each letter, using scoring table below. 7-letter words get 50% more points. Double letter tiles may be used as any letter. All double letters are in the Official Scrabble Dictionary (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary). Judging is at the discretion of the tournament director tomorrow.

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The top priority is that both sides should work together...and achieve a smooth transition in China-US relations

CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTER WANG YI

CALLING FOR RESET OF ITS TROUBLED TIES WITH US AHEAD OF JOE BIDEN'S PRESIDENCY

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	32	25 H
HONG KONG	24	16 CL
TOKYO	16	6 CL
LONDON	4	0 H
DUBAI	26	23 H
SAN FRANCISCO	22	10 CL
NEW YORK	4	-2 H
MOSCOW	-6	-11 CL

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

THUMBNAILS



A woman wearing a face mask passes by a wall mural of a shopping center in Seoul, South Korea on Monday.

AP

Egypt's El-Sissi visits France: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sissi is paying a state visit to France for talks on fighting terrorism, the conflict in Libya and other regional issues, amid criticism from human rights groups over the Egyptian leader's crackdown on dissent.

AP

Cleric supporters shot: Indonesian police early Monday fatally shot six followers of a firebrand cleric who returned last month from a 3-year exile in Saudi Arabia after criminal charges against him were dropped, officials said, prompting fears of more violence.

AP

Pope to visit Iraq in March: Pope Francis will make a pilgrimage to Iraq in March, pandemic conditions permitting, the Vatican said on Monday, in announcing what would be the pontiff's first trip aboard in more than a year. Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni on Monday said Francis will make the March 5-8 visit, with stops in Baghdad.

AP

EU weighs new dawn for trans-Atlantic ties under Biden

BRUSSELS, 7 DECEMBER

European Union foreign ministers were debating Monday ways to work together more closely with the United States on global diplomacy, with the bloc hopeful that the arrival of President-elect Joe Biden will breathe new life into trans-Atlantic relations.

With Joe Biden's election as the new American president, there are a lot of major opportunities that we as Europe want to take, said German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency until the end of the month.

Not everything will be different, but a lot will be better, and we must be clear what part of our responsibility we will take, and where we will cooperate with the United States, be it in our direct or indirect neighborhood, in the western Balkans, in eastern Europe, but also in Africa, Maas said.

Trans-Atlantic ties have eroded over the last four years under President Donald Trump. He has slapped tariffs on European exports and pulled the United States out of a number of security agreements that they hold dear, notably the Iran nuclear deal. Trump also abandoned the Paris climate change agreement, and has spurned the multilateral approach that is part of the EU's DNA. As ties have unraveled, Russia and China have become more assertive. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, who is chairing the meeting, said the aim is to establish a new, refreshed start of our engagement with the US. The bloc's leaders will also discuss trans-Atlantic ties this week at a two-day summit starting on Thursday.

AP

Key day ends, Brexit stalemate continues

Britain's currency fell more than 1% against the dollar to under \$1.33 amid uncertainty as UK and EU are still stuck on the same issues

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BRUSSELS, 7 DECEMBER

One of the most intense days in the long-running Brexit trade negotiations produced few signs of progress and gloomy forecasts Monday, with the United Kingdom and the European Union seemingly still stuck on the same issues that have dogged the stand-off for months.

EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier had no news of a breakthrough when he briefed ambassadors of the 27 member states on the chances of a deal with London before the December 31 deadline.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said Barnier's message was "very down-beat."

"I would say he is very gloomy, and obviously very cautious about the ability to make progress today," Coveney told Irish broadcaster RTE.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen are due to speak by phone at 1600 GMT (11 a.m. EST) Monday for the second time in 48 hours, to decide whether to pull the plug on talks ~ a decision that could cost hundreds of thousands of jobs on both sides and disrupt cross-Channel trade for years to come.

One official from an EU nation said "the difficulties persist" over the legal oversight of any trade deal and standards of fair play that the UK needs to meet to be able to export in the EU. On fisheries too,

lot of work remains, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the talks were ongoing.

Britain's pound currency fell more than 1% against the dollar to under \$1.33 amid the uncertainty.

Johnson's spokesman, Jamie Davies, declined to offer odds on a deal being struck.

"I'm not going to put a percentage on it," he said. "We are prepared to negotiate for as long as we have time available if we think an agreement is still possible."

While the UK left the EU politically on January 31, it remains within the bloc's tariff-free single market and customs union through December 31. Reaching a trade deal by then would ensure there are no tariffs and trade quotas on

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 7 DECEMBER

Britain said on Monday that plans are being put in place to ensure the transportation of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine against Covid-19 is not affected in the event of no agreement being clinched with the European Union by

the end of the Brexit transition period on December 31.

The first vaccine doses have been arriving from Pfizer's manufacturing site in Belgium after the UK's independent regulator gave the official go-ahead for its rollout from this week. However, the bulk of the supply is expected in the New Year

and the UK's Road Haulage Association has warned that a failure to agree an EU-UK post-Brexit trade deal by the end of this month could see "significant disruption" to the flow of goods for many months. If both sides fail to reach a deal, it would mean import duties and delays on the border for most goods.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron will be major players. Germany wants a deal partly because its massive car industry has always found a welcome export market in

Britain. France, seen by Britain as the "bad cop" in trade negotiations, has taken the lead in demanding that UK companies must closely align themselves with EU rules and environmental and social standards if they still want to export to the lucrative market of 450 million people.

The politically charged issue of fisheries also continues to play an outsized role. The EU has demanded widespread access to UK fishing grounds that historically have been open to foreign trawlers. Britain insists it must control its own waters, doing out quotas annually.

While both Britain and the EU say they want a trade deal, trust and goodwill are strained after months of testy negotiations.

Biden picks California AG to lead Health and Human Services dept

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 7 DECEMBER



President-elect Joe Biden has picked California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be his health secretary, putting a defender of the Affordable Care Act in a leading role to oversee his administration's coronavirus response.

Separately, Biden picked a Harvard infectious disease expert, Dr Rochelle Walensky, to head the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

If confirmed by the Senate, Becerra, 62, will be the first Latino to head the Department of Health and Human Services, a \$1-trillion-plus agency with 80,000 employees and a portfolio that includes drugs and vaccines, leading-edge medical research and health insurance programs covering more than 130 million Americans.

Biden's selection of Becerra was confirmed Sunday by two people familiar with the decision, who spoke on condition of anonymity ahead of a formal announcement anticipated Tuesday.

Two people also anonymously confirmed the choice of Walensky. The post of CDC director does not require Senate confirmation.

An economic adviser to former President Barack Obama, Zients also led the rescue of the HealthCare.gov website after its disastrous launch in 2013.

And former Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, a co-chair of Biden's coronavirus task force, is expected to return in a new role akin to the top medical adviser.

But the core components of HHS are the boots on the ground of the government's coronavirus response.

The Food and Drug Administration oversees vaccines and treatments, while much of the underlying scientific and medical research comes from NIH. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention takes the lead in detecting and containing the spread of diseases.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services provides insurance coverage for more than 1 in 3 Americans.

FESTIVE MOOD



A woman looks at Christmas decoration inside a shop in central Athens, Greece on Monday. Despite a significant drop in cases over the past week, authorities have extended the countrywide lockdown to December 14, but have allowed certain shops, including those selling Christmas-related merchandise, to open from Monday.

AP

Trump lawyer Giuliani tests positive for virus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON, 7 DECEMBER



Rudy Giuliani, the personal lawyer to Donald Trump, has tested positive for Covid-19, becoming the latest person in the US president's inner circle to be infected by the deadly virus.

Giuliani, 76, has been taken to the Medstar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington DC, according to US media reports.

The news of the former mayor of New York testing positive was first tweeted by President Trump on Sunday.

The president and his team have been criticised for shunning Covid-19 safety guidance.

Trump, 74, was tested positive in October.

Trump, a Republican, who is yet to concede defeat in the November 3 presidential election, tweeted: "Get better soon Rudy, we will carry on!"

Giuliani has been leading the Trump campaign's legal challenges to the 2020 election won by former vice president Joe Biden, a Democrat.

In a tweet, Giuliani thanked well-wishers for their messages, and said he was "recovering quickly".

Giuliani is considered at high risk for complications from the coronavirus due to his age, CNN reported.

Giuliani has spent recent weeks traveling extensively to lead Trump's failed legal challenges in an attempt to overturn the results of the presidential election.

On Wednesday, he was in Lansing, Michigan, where he did not wear a mask while speaking to lawmakers in the key battleground state at a hearing lasting more than four hours. On Thursday, he was in Atlanta, where he

was in Atlanta, where he

talked to Georgia state senators without a mask.

Giuliani is the latest of more than a dozen people in Trump's inner circle who have tested positive since October. Giuliani's son, Andrew Giuliani, who is a White House staffer, said he tested positive on November 20.

Boris Epshteyn, another Trump adviser, tested positive shortly after appearing alongside Giuliani at a press conference on November 25.

Others include the president's chief of staff Mark Meadows and press secretary Kayleigh McEnany, along with his wife Melania and sons Donald Jr. and Baron.

- 1. Wear a mask
Dr Anthony Fauci, CNN interview
- 2. I can't breathe.
George Floyd, plea to police officer, Minneapolis.
- 3. One day it's like a miracle it will disappear
President Donald Trump, referring to the coronavirus in remarks at an African American History Month reception at the White House.
- 4. I see the disinfectant that knocks it out in a minute, one minute. And is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning?
Trump, in remarks at a White House Coronavirus Task Force news briefing.

NEW HAVEN (US), 7 DECEMBER
A plea from Dr Anthony Fauci for people to wear a mask to slow the spread of the coronavirus tops a Yale Law School librarian's list of the most notable quotes of 2020.

The list assembled by Fred Shapiro, an associate director at the library, is an annual update to The Yale Book of Quotations, which was first published in 2006.

Also on the list is I can't breathe, the plea George Floyd made repeatedly to police officers holding him down on a Minneapolis street corner. Several quotes from the presidential campaign appear including Joe Biden telling a student: "You're a lying dog-faced pony soldier."

Shapiro said he picks quotes that are not necessarily admirable or eloquent, but rather because they are famous or particularly revealing of the spirit of the times.

Trump cementing death penalty legacy up to Biden inaugural

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CHICAGO, 7 DECEMBER



As Donald Trump's presidency winds down, his administration is throttling up the pace of federal executions despite a surge of coronavirus cases in prisons, announcing plans for five starting Thursday and concluding just days before the Jan 20 inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden.

If the five go as planned, it will make 13 executions since July when the Republican administration resumed putting inmates to death after a 17-year hiatus and will cement Trump's legacy as the most prolific execution president in over 130 years. He'll leave office having executed about a quarter of all federal death-row prisoners, despite waning support for capital punishment among both Democrats and Republicans.

In a recent interview, Attorney General William Barr

defended the extension of executions into the post-election period, saying he'll likely schedule more before he departs the Justice Department. A Biden administration, he said, should keep it up. I think the way to stop the death penalty is to repeal the death penalty," Barr said. But if you ask juries to impose and juries impose it, then it should be carried out.

The plan breaks a tradition of lame-duck presidents deferring to incoming presidents on policy about which they dif-

fer so starkly, said Robert Durham, director of the non-partisan Death Penalty Information Center. Biden, a Democrat, is a death penalty foe, and his spokesman told the AP that he'd work to end the death penalty when he is in office.

It's hard to understand why anybody at this stage of a presidency feels compelled to kill this many people, especially when the American public voted for someone else to replace you and that person has said he opposes the death penalty, Durham said.

This is a complete historical aberration. Not since the waning days of Grover Cleveland's presidency in the late 1800s has the U.S. government executed federal inmates during a presidential transition, Durham said.

Cleveland's was also the last presidency during which the number of civilians executed federally was in the double digits in a year, with 14 executed in 1896.

The pomp and ceremony of the Nobel prize ceremonies has been reined in this year amid measures to slow the spread of the coronavirus. There will be no glitzy banquet honoring winners in Stockholm or Oslo as the global pandemic curtails the usual celebrations.

Instead, their achievements will be recognised and rewarded at low-key ceremonies where they live and work in Europe and the United States, with the first one Monday in Berlin.

Twelve laureates were named in 2020. A Nobel prize comes with a 10-million krona (\$1.1 million) cash award to be shared in some cases diplomas and gold medals.

Traditionally, the lavish Nobel ceremonies are held Dec. 10, the anniversary of the death of prize founder Alfred Nobel, at an ornate city hall in Stockholm for all but the Peace Prize that is held in Oslo in neighboring Norway. Nobel

wanted it that way, for reasons that he kept to himself.

The 2020 Nobel prizes were announced in October. The prize for physiology and medicine was awarded to Harvey J. Alter, Michael Houghton and Charles M. Rice for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus. The prize for physics honored Roger Penrose, Reinhard Genzel and Andrea Ghez for their breakthroughs in understanding black holes, while the chemistry prize went to Emanuelle Charpentier and Jennifer A. Doudna for a powerful gene-editing tool.

The literature prize was awarded to American poet Louise Gluck for her unmistakable poetic voice that with

Moving across the Atlantic, austere beauty makes individual existence universal.

The World Food Program won the peace prize for efforts to combat hunger. But the pandemic means that the award ceremonies have been dialed down this year. They start in Berlin on Monday where Charpentier of France will receive her medal and diploma from the Swedish ambassador.

Throughout the week, the others will get their medals and diplomas. Penrose, a British scientist, will be awarded his in London by Sweden's envoy to the United Kingdom while German scientist Genzel will

Towards an integrated knowledge structure

Learning Management System has played a huge role in pairing classroom education with digital teaching



PREM DAS MAHESHWARI

The ideal modern Indian classroom today incorporates a mix of traditional methods and digital instruction for a more curated learning experience, especially in tier 1 colleges like IIT and BIT. And this is the way forward: a study found that 59 per cent of students are more motivated to learn in classrooms with blended learning models.

However, the ground reality is still far from what future-proofed education looks like. In India, according to a 2018 survey by the Ministry of Rural Development, more than 36 per cent of schools were operating without any electricity. The digital divide and lack of resources in semi-urban and rural areas are real challenges that need to be addressed.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought about some insights into the sudden challenges that educators may face and the need to combat arising issues in schools. Being prepared for unexpected obstacles is a feat in itself but thankfully education technology offers a world of innovative solutions and educators, as well as learners, are starting to see the value in it. The learning culture is transforming and things are changing.

Our country's vibrant economy with a burgeoning middle class and more than 200

million internet users has made us the third largest online market after China and the United States. Even the government sees the benefits of leveraging technology and channelling focus on the education sector to make learning in India more efficient in the future, and this is reflected in the National Education Policy that supports and encourages digitalisation.

Offering digital channels with traditional teaching has been popularised by schools looking for a more tailored and flexible learning environment. On one hand, students may find face-to-face teaching monotonous but switching to a fully online module may end up being too distant. Traditional classrooms can provide the human touch to learning, with real-time engagement and immediate interaction. Paired with the numerous benefits of digital teaching, the class stands to earn the best of both worlds. To make this happen, the learning management system (LMS) has played a huge role in driving the adoption of blended learning.

Traditional learning requires material resources; textbooks, printing, training venues - all of which can be a colossal drain on resources. These are wear-and-tear assets that take up space in the monthly budget of any educational institution. Implementing an LMS in schools or universities centralises the infor-

mation platform for both online and offline classes and delivers sustainable resource-management. Furthermore, content can be updated as needed and it cuts down on waste.

A distinct benefit of an LMS is unlimited accessibility, which is a significant driver in blended learning for most people. At the click of a button online, learners can have access to any training material put out by educators on the learning site. A study found that 58 per cent of students prefer self-paced learning. Without the need for specific physical locations, students can now go through the content at their preferred place and time.

In the context of education, data and content security is a bane of students and educators alike -- from loss of data and content to requiring physical access. Enter the LMS, where encrypted cloud-based solutions are used to prevent these potential issues.

Cloud-based LMS solutions provide the ability to protect data both in transit (as it travels between the hosting service/data centres and the user device) and at rest (when the data is stored in the hosting service/data centres). For institutions, it is important to take the necessary steps and do the due diligence to ensure that all aspects of this data are as per industry protocols and standards.

There are several considerations in this

aspect. For example, the hosting service provider: Undergoing required audits like the SSAE16; should be ISO 27001 certified; do they have monitoring services in place to manage system events; are there backup and recovery protocols in place for disaster recovery.

Implementing an LMS into the blended learning model allows educators to easily manage and monitor what students are doing from a vantage point. By remaining present and attentive to a student's studies, the individual's needs can be better understood and met. With blended learning, students can engage with the material online before demonstrating learning in a face-to-face classroom.

More and more schools and institutions are investing in technology to enhance learning. Leading schools and colleges, including Manipal Academy of Higher Education, XLRI School of Management, Sunbeam Group of Schools among others have already onboarded D2L's Brightspace learning management system to future-proof the way of learning. With the dual benefit of blended learning and the powerful suite of products that edtech leaders provide, we can move into the future of education with a uniquely curated, integrated learning system.

The writer is business director, South Asia, D2L

DAWN OF A NEW AGE

A balanced modern education system with a combination of on-screen and off-screen learning can help students acquire the skills required to survive and thrive in the 21st century

PRAJODH RAJAN

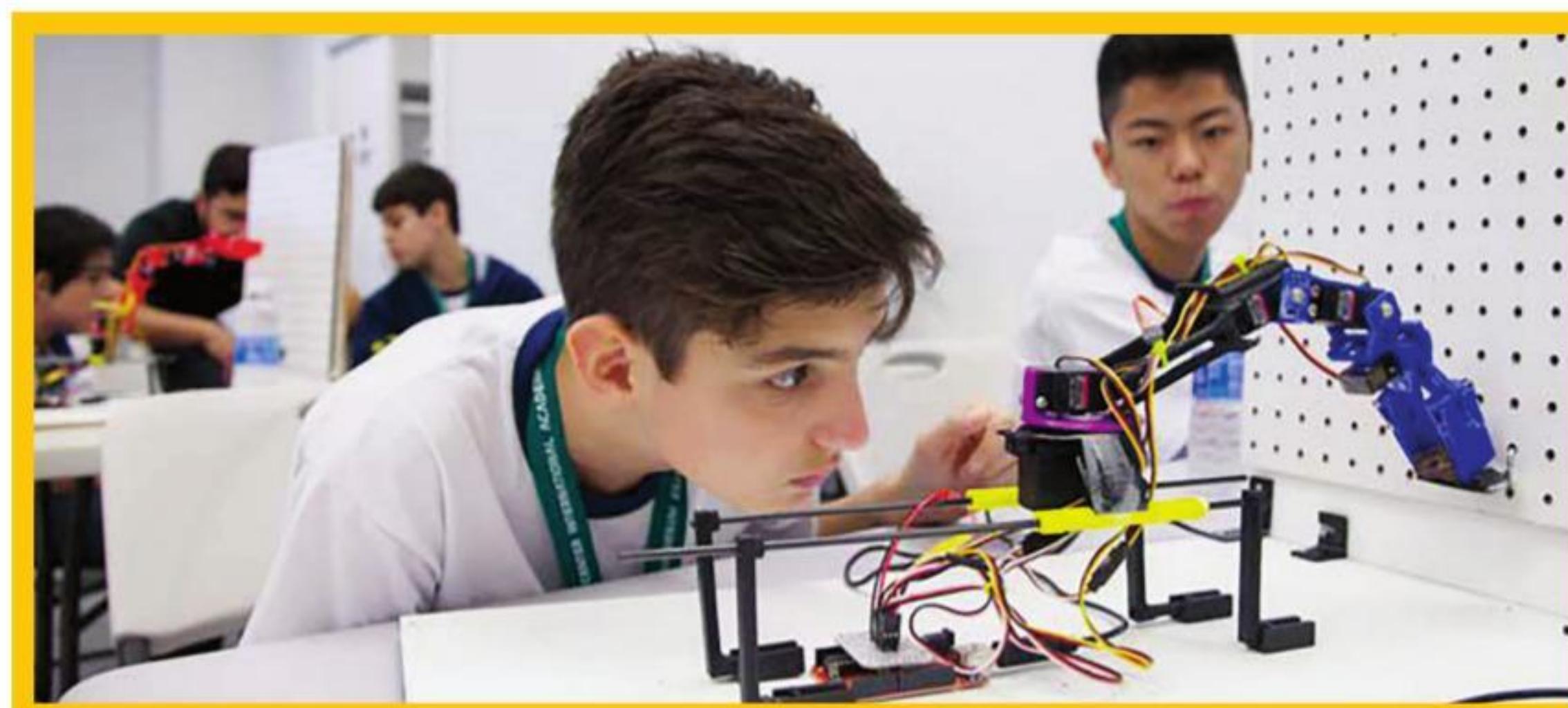
The Covid-19 pandemic has taught us an essential lesson in survival—the need for agility and adaptability in the face of adversities. The virus has forced almost every sector to transition into a digital ecosystem.

Education was not spared either. The journey has been like a fast-paced time-lapse, providing a closer peek at the schools of the future. And this is not just in context to classrooms going virtual but a complete transition in the mindset, outlook, and approach to learning, co-existing with Covid or adapting to uncertainties of the fast-changing world - the virus has led to the dawn of a new age in education.

Greater focus on social-emotional learning

We ascertain, in the future, academic success won't be enough to make a mark. The global work landscape has changed, making way for the emergence of new and innovative skill sets where a fresh set of professional expertise will be demanded. The education system needs to recalibrate, go beyond rote learning, and focus on skill development.

Children must acquire valuable skills such as creativity, out-of-the-box thinking, communication, interpersonal and problem-solving skills to thrive in the emerging global economy. To prepare them for future uncertainties, schools must integrate socio-emotional learning into their regular curriculum to help kids build



resilience, develop patience, mindfulness, and discipline, and most importantly, nurture their emotional intelligence. To help kids develop a well-rounded personality, the curriculum must focus on imparting essential values such as kindness, integrity, and accountability.

New-age education; a hybrid model for future

The pandemic has given us a chance to modernise the education system with a hybrid model – a combination of the best of traditional classroom teaching and remote learning. It will feature learning solutions such as online classes, app-based assignments, video lectures, live classes, online skill-development courses, at-home learning kits, play-based learning, etc.

At the core of this transformation is technology. Instead of just a stopgap during Covid, edtech has started offering full-fledged learning solutions, with many benefits:

Greater engagement

Compared to in-classroom learning, students face less external distractions in virtual learning. On e-learning portals, students can, in real-time, ask and answer questions, have in-depth discussions, and promote better interactions with teachers without classroom chaos.

Adaptive virtual learning

With pre-recorded videos, easy-to-under-

stand instructional simulations, and other online resources, children can learn at their own pace. Technologies like AI can assess their strengths and weaknesses and help build customised study plans for children.

Ease of access

E-learning provides children with easy access to education remotely at their convenience. With both classroom and online learning modes available to families, they can pick the one suiting their interests to ensure uninterrupted learning.

More effective

In traditional classroom teaching, the only way to assess a child's developmental milestones is via tests, which is just one yardstick to measure all learning parameters. New-age virtual learning enables teachers to evaluate progress in real-time, helping them understand the advancement levels, assess gaps, and provide more attention. In a not-so-distant-future, AI can automate many tasks, thereby enabling teachers to focus on a more personalised approach to education.

Future-forward learning

E-learning requires a lot of self-study, which helps students inculcate discipline. Curriculums can now offer interdisciplinary learning and make education more engaging. With digital

learning, students become more tech-savvy; an essential skill for the digital economy.

However, new-age learning also comes with its fair share of challenges. Socio-economic disparity is an obstacle to children from economically disadvantaged families who lack access to devices like laptops, tablets, mobile phones, or internet connectivity. Poor connectivity, device problems, and other technical issues also disrupt a child's learning activities. Constant exposure to screens can cause headaches, eye fatigue, strain, and exhaustion. Poor sitting postures can result in slouching, back and neck pain. Parents need to ensure that children get frequent breaks and practice proper sitting posture to overcome these health issues.

Prolonged device exposure may trigger behavioral issues like gadget addiction, social isolation, poor interpersonal skills, and even mental health problems. Curriculums should be planned so that children get adequate time to socialise, develop hobbies, play, and spend time with friends and loved ones. A balanced new-age education system with a combination of on-screen and off-screen learning described as blended learning can help children keep pace to acquire the skills required to survive and thrive in the 21st century.

The writer is co-founder and group CEO, EuroKids International

PLUS POINTS

Nurturing prowess



Cargill India in partnership with the Institute of International Education (IIE) announced the awardees of the eighth edition of Cargill Global Scholars Programme 2020 recently. The programme provided financial support and was aimed at promoting students who demonstrate exemplary academic achievements, leadership potential and study in food, agriculture and risk management. In India, 10 scholarships are being awarded for this academic year to students from institutions like Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Delhi and Gandhinagar, National Institute of Technology Tiruchirappalli, Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru and Lady Shri Ram College for Women. Throughout the programme, students received experiential learning modules, including leadership development training, coupled with counselling from Cargill leaders. They had opportunities to observe and learn from business and community leaders in their own countries.

Upskilling minds



Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee, in association with AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy, organised a week-long virtual workshop on Electrochemical Energy Conversion and Storage recently. The objective of it was to sensitise the faculty of various engineering colleges towards clean energy technologies. The workshop was inaugurated by Prof Manoranjan Parida, deputy director, IIT Roorkee, in the presence of Prof SK Singal, head of the department of hydro and renewable energy, IIT Roorkee. It witnessed the participation of more than 180 faculty members across India. The organisation of the workshop was led by Prof Amit Bhosale and Prof Pratham Arora from the department of hydro and renewable energy, IIT Roorkee. The topics covered in the workshop included Fabrication in Batteries, scale-up issues in fuel cells, scale-up issues in batteries, flow battery, thermodynamics in the battery system, among others.

Smart creation

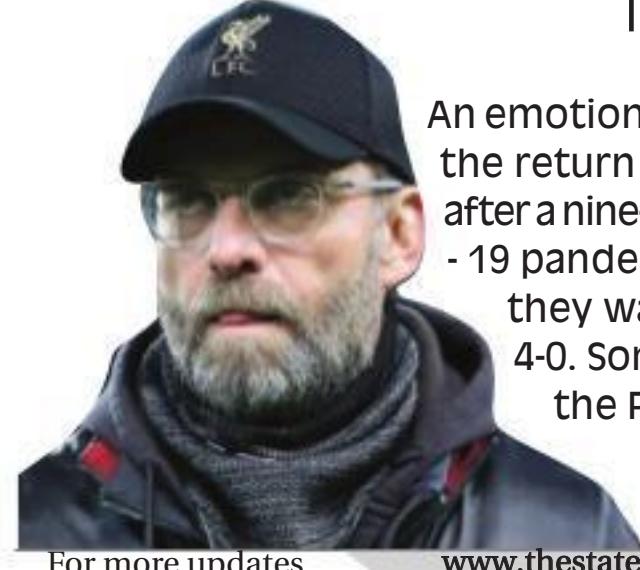


Aditi Bhalekar— a first-year student at Anant National University ideated a smarter version of medical scrubs for frontline Covid-19 warriors. She has created an inventive yet functional product that can be used by nurses, doctors and volunteers. The scrubs are the latest offering of the university to relieve the pandemic.

Bhalekar was encouraged to create this design as part of an in-house contest for the students of the university to make user-friendly scrubs for the health workers of Covid-19 recovery centres. The design is embedded in the need for comfort, cost-effectiveness, and durability of scrubs for healthcare workers. The product has an easy-to-wear and easy-to-remove feature.

Academic support

Sigma-Oikos Jamshedpur— a social initiative student group at XLRI conducted Basic English Learning Programme (BELP) in online mode for students of SOS Youth Homes in Raipur for around four months starting from August. Each session was organised by team Sigma with the help of volunteers from XLRI, who had taken classes for the kids every weekend. The sessions were aimed at imparting basic knowledge of English grammar and improving their communication skills so the students would become more comfortable with the language, and it would help them in the future. On the last day of the programme, easy-to-read storybooks and chocolates were sent to the students as a small token from the team.



THE ANFIELD MOOD

An emotional Jurgen Klopp (in photo, left) said the return of Liverpool supporters at Anfield after a nine-month absence because of the Covid-19 pandemic had given him goosebumps as they watched their side demolish Wolves 4-0. Some 2,000 Reds fans roared them to the Premier League victory on Sunday.

For more updates

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THUMBNAILS

Australian Open: Australian Open organisers are confident details will soon be finalised for the 2021 tournament. It had been due to start on 18 January but strict quarantine rules in the country left Tennis Australia locked in negotiations with the government.

Formula One: Sergio Perez took a remarkable debut Formula One win in the Sakhir Grand Prix in Bahrain after Mercedes had fumbled what should have been a first victory for George Russell, who was standing in for the coronavirus-afflicted Lewis Hamilton.

Mercedes fined: Formula One's Mercedes have been fined 20,000 euros after fitting the wrong tyres to George Russell's leading car at a bungled Sakhir Grand Prix pitstop. This is a breach of the regulations and would normally involve a penalty up to disqualification.

Spurs win: The double act of Harry Kane and Son Heung-Min worked to perfection again to ensure Tottenham Hotspur remained top of the Premier League after a 2-0 win at home over Arsenal in the North London derby. Kane now has 14 goals and 12 assists.

Dembele injured: Barcelona winger Ousmane Dembele has been ruled out of Tuesday's Champions League home game against Juventus owing to a hamstring injury, the La Liga club said on Sunday. Barcelona did not indicate how long the footballer would be sidelined.

Athletes' shoes: Athletes can wear shoes still under development in competitions and events where World Athletics rules apply, upon approval of the shoes' specifications, after a rule change. The shoes will have to meet the right technical specifications.

Match-winner praised: India captain Virat Kohli has identified Hardik Pandya as their "bankable" match-winner for the next four to five years after the all-rounder dazzled in their series-clinching Twenty20 International victory over Australia on Sunday.

Oz leader: Australia head coach Justin Langer has stated that there are some processes to go through before Steve Smith could lead the national side again. "Of course, we talked about a number of things," Langer said when asked if Smith could lead the team again.

Bubble fatigue: All-rounder Tom Curran has become the latest England player to withdraw from the Big Bash League in order to spend time with his family. Earlier, England's Tom Banton had also pulled out of the Twenty20 league citing "bubble fatigue."

Match postponed: The second one-dayer between South Africa and England, fixed to be held at Newlands on Monday, was postponed as the teams awaited the outcome of an independent ratification of the two positive Covid-19 tests in the England camp.

ICC Test ranking: New Zealand captain Kane Williamson on Monday moved up a run to join his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli at the second spot in the latest ICC Test rankings for batsmen. On the other hand, West Indies captain Jason Holder conceded his top ICC Test all-rounder's ranking to England star Ben Stokes after an unimpressive outing against New Zealand in the first Test which his team lost by an innings and 134 runs. Australia's Steve Smith, with 911 points, kept his hold on the pole position in the batting charts.

www.thestatesman.com

Eyeing clean sweep: India ready to crush Aussie morale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SYDNEY, 7 DECEMBER

The series pocketed and their confidence restored, India would eye nothing less than a clean sweep when they take on an Australian side significantly weakened by injury blows, in the third and final T20 International here on Tuesday.

Skipper Virat Kohli (in photo) and his main protagonist of the white-ball leg, Hardik Pandya, will feel a sense of déjà vu given that the script has panned out exactly like 2016 when the team got walloped in the ODIs but came back strongly to rout the Aussies 3-0 in the T20 International series.

After a couple of crushing defeats in the first two ODIs, the Indians have turned a corner starting with the final ODI in Canberra. Even the absence of a white-ball pro like Ravindra Jadeja didn't have an impact during their convincing six-wicket win in the series-clinching second T20 on Sunday.

What will boost the Indian team's morale manifold is the



fact that it had the confidence to rest both Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah, relying on a troika of pacers, who between them haven't played even 40 games collectively.

India's new white-ball sensation Thangarasu Natarajan has had a superb initiation in international cricket with Australian batsmen still finding it difficult to read him. As Pandya so right-

ly put it, Natarajan's spell and the 10 runs that Australia failed to score became the difference between winning and losing on Sunday.

The difference between India and Australia during the last game was the bat-battle of the two teams during the middle overs. Australia lost a bit of momentum after stand-in skipper Matthew Wade was dis-

missed while his opposite number Kohli played some outrageous shots after the Powerplay to up the ante.

Shreyas Iyer's induction in place of an injured Manish Pandey also worked well for the visitors. The only glitch in an otherwise solid show was Yuzvendra Chahal's rare off-day. Not having a sixth bowling option meant that Kohli was forced to have his premier leg-spinner complete his quota.

For Australia, the absence of regular skipper Aaron Finch, David Warner, Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins and Jhye Richardson did have an impact although three of the five did play in the first T20 International that India comfortably won by 11 runs. D'Arcy Short hasn't looked the part as an opener in the two games and one would expect Marcus Stoinis and Glenn Maxwell to shoulder more responsibility as senior players. But Australia's thin-on-experience bowlers will have to play out of their skins to stop the Indian juggernaut which has started rolling.

A 3-0 win would be the perfect booster shot for it before the all-important Test series. In case of Australia, while a thrashing would impact them a lot but they would try and look at it from a different perspective--most of their Test specialists will not have the scars of a clean sweep when they take on India under the lights at the Adelaide Oval, starting December 17.

Squads:

India: Virat Kohli (Captain), Shikhar Dhawan, Mayank Agarwal, KL Rahul (vice-captain and wicket-keeper), Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Hardik Pandya, Sanju Samson (wicket-keeper), Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Navdeep Saini, Deepak Chahar, T Natarajan, Shardul Thakur.

Australia: Matthew Wade (Captain), Sean Abbott, Mitchell Swepson, Alex Carey, Nathan Lyon, Josh Hazlewood, Moises Henriques, Marnus Labuschagne, Glenn Maxwell, Daniel Sams, Steven Smith, Marcus Stoinis, D'Arcy Short, Adam Zampa, Andrew Tye.

Match starts 1.40 PM IST.
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