

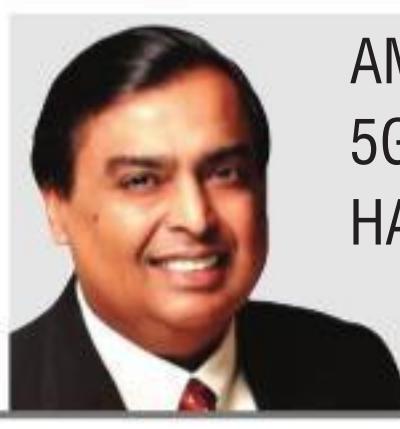


PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



MEHBOOBA NOT  
ALLOWED TO MEET  
EVICTED FAMILIES

P4



AMBANI HINTS AT  
5G ROLLOUT IN 2ND  
HALF OF 2021

P8



UK PM TO VISIT  
BRUSSELS AMID  
BREXIT DEADLOCK

P10



BREAKDANCING  
IS NOW AN  
OLYMPIC SPORT

P12

## WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Moderate fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 27 and 10 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 100%	Min: 41%
TEMPERATURE	
Max: 28.3°C (+4)	Min: 9.5°C (+1)
SUN RISES	SUN SETS
07:03 hrs	17:25 hrs
MOON RISES	MOON SETS
1:58 hrs	13:08 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



CPI-M workers protesting against farm laws block railway tracks during Bharat Bandh called by agitating farmers unions to press for repeal of the Centre's three contentious laws, in Kolkata on Tuesday. ■ IANS

**Mobile technology to be used for Covid-19 vaccination drive:** With the chances of a Covid-19 vaccine being available soon increasing, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the mobile technology will be used for mass inoculation against the pandemic. He also called for the timely roll-out of 5G or 5th generation mobile networks that can deliver multi-Gbps peak data speeds. Speaking at the India Mobile Congress, Modi has mobile technology has helped provide benefits worth billions of dollars to millions. He however did not provide details of the vaccination drive.

**Consolation win for Oz:** A fighting 85 from India captain Virat Kohli was not enough as Australia beat the visitors by 12 runs in the third T20 International in Sydney to avoid a series whitewash. Matthew Wade and Glenn Maxwell's half-centuries and a three-wicket haul by Mitchell Swepson helped Australia beat India, who won the series 2-1.

P12

## Shah steps in to placate angry farmers

Home minister meets farmers ahead of 6th round of negotiations ■ Union Cabinet led by Modi to meet before the final round

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH,  
8 DECEMBER

**A** day before the government's crucial sixth round of talks with representatives of protesting farmers, Home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday met a select group of union leaders in a bid to break the deadlock.

Sources said 13 farmer leaders were called for the meeting, which began after 8 pm. The farmer leaders included eight from Punjab and five from various nationwide organisations.

Sources said the participating leaders included Hannan Mollah of the All India Kisan Sabha and Rakesh Tikait of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU).

Some farmer leaders said they first expected the meeting would take place at Shah's residence here, but the venue was shifted to National Agricultural Science Complex, Pusa.

The meeting came on a day a 'Bharat Bandh' observed by farmers to press their demand affected life in some states.

The meeting, however, appeared to have created discord among the organisations spearheading the protests on Delhi's borders for the past 12 days with the head of the BKU (Ugrahan), which is one of the largest outfits in the bloc, questioning the rationale of the talks a day before the scheduled official consultation.

In a social media post, Joginder Singh Ugrahan, who was not invited to the meeting with Shah, said there was no need for the talks before official con-



### BHARAT BANDH: MIXED BAG

**RAJASTHAN CAPITAL JAIPUR :** Mandis were closed but shops were open. There were reports of clashes between workers of the state's ruling Congress and the BJP

**PUNJAB:** Shops and commercial establishments were closed as were 3,400 fuel pumps. From morning, farmer leaders appealed to shopkeepers and traders to keep their shutters down

**HARYANA:** Farmers assembled on highways and other key roads in both states since morning

**BIHAR:** Train tracks, highways and inner roads teemed with protesters as Opposition parties extended their support

**NATIONAL CAPITAL DELHI:** Most main markets were open but app-based cabs were off the roads. Tension spiralled with the ruling AAP alleging that Delhi police had put chief minister Arvind Kejriwal under house arrest

**WEST BENGAL:** The response was mixed. Life was disrupted with the railway tracks being blocked in several places and sit-ins on major roads and private vehicles off the roads in many parts of the state. However, public transport, including buses and taxis, operated though in fewer numbers

**FARMERS:** Farmers shout slogans at a protest site during a nationwide strike against the farm laws at the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border, in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ AMARJEET SINGH

sultations and hoped that the leaders attending today's meet would keep in mind the view of the larger group.

Farmer leaders have been firm on their demand for repeal of three new farm laws enacted in September, which they claim will benefit corporates and end the mandi system and

the minimum support price (MSP) regime.

"We will demand just a 'yes' or a 'no' from Home Minister Amit Shah," farmer leader Rudru Singh Mansa told reporters earlier in the day at the Singhu border where thousands of farmers have been protesting for the last 12 days.

Earlier today shops and commercial establishments were closed, transport affected and traffic disrupted as protesters squat-

The government has maintained that it is committed to the welfare of farmers and have presented these laws as major reforms for their benefits. The Union cabinet is expected to meet tomorrow at 10.30 am to firm up the government strategy to placate farmers.

Earlier today shops and commercial establishments were closed, transport affected and traffic disrupted as protesters squat-



Shops remain closed in Amritsar on Tuesday. ■ IANS

Kejriwal under house arrest, says AAP; cops deny claim

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday alleged that the Delhi Police has put chief minister Arvind Kejriwal under house arrest.

"On the direction of the Home Ministry, the Delhi Police has put Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal under house arrest ever since he visited farmers at Singhu border. No one has been permitted to leave or enter his residence and he has not been allowed to meet anyone," he alleged.

Addressing a press conference, AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj claimed the Delhi Police has put Kejriwal under house arrest.

"On the direction of the Home Ministry, the Delhi Police has put Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal under house arrest ever since he visited farmers at Singhu border. No one has been permitted to leave or enter his residence and he has not been allowed to meet anyone," he alleged.

(SEE PAGE 2)

ted on roads and train tracks in several parts of the country on Tuesday in response to a Bharat Bandh called by farmers demanding a repeal of the new agri laws.

Emergency services were exempted and banks, too, continued operations as the pan-India shutdown, backed by most opposition parties and many trade unions, came into effect with the maximum impact in states such as Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, the epicentre of the snowballing protests.

Security was stepped up across the country, noisy demonstrations were held

in many places and the numbers swelled at Delhi's border points where thousands of farmers have been camping for the last 11 days. Protesters blocked railway tracks at several places in West Bengal, Bihar and Odisha.

From the Rajasthan capital Jaipur, where mandis were closed but shops were open, there were reports of clashes between workers of the state's ruling Congress and the BJP.

The protesting farmers fear the new laws will pave the way for eliminating the safety of the Minimum Support Price cushion and traders to keep their shutters down.

Opp parties to meet Prez

NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

NCP president Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said leaders from different political parties will discuss and take a collective stand on the contentious farm laws before meeting President Ram Nath Kovind.

Opposition parties are expected to meet Kovind on Wednesday evening to raise their concerns about the three farm laws.

Pawar's NCP is among the parties that have backed Tuesday Bharat Bandh called by farmers' unions.

Leaders from different political parties (those opposing the farm bills) will sit, discuss and take a collective stand on the contentious farm laws before meeting President Ram Nath Kovind," Pawar told reporters. DETAILS ON P4

leaving them at the mercy of big corporates.

The government maintains the new laws will bring farmers better opportunities and usher in new technologies in agriculture.

Farmers from Punjab and also Haryana have been the drivers of the movement. In Punjab, shops and commercial establishments were closed as were 3,400 fuel pumps. From morning, farmer leaders appealed to shopkeepers and traders to keep their shutters down.

The protesting farmers fear the new laws will pave the way for eliminating the safety of the Minimum Support Price cushion and traders to keep their shutters down.

## India's new cases below 27,000 after 5 months

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

The number of new Covid-19 cases reported in a span of 24 hours was recorded below 27,000 after nearly five months on Tuesday, taking India's infection tally to over 97 lakh, while total recoveries surged to 91.78 lakh, according to the Union health ministry.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 97,03,770 with 26,567 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll rose to 1,40,958 with 385 new fatalities, data updated by the ministry at 8 am showed.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 91,78,946, pushing the national recovery rate to 94.59 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stood at 1.45 per cent.

The Covid-19 active caseload remained below 4 lakh for the second

consecutive day. There are 3,83,866 active cases of the infection in the country which comprises 3.96 per cent of the total caseload, the data stated.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7,30 lakh on August 23 and 40 lakh on September 5. It had gone past 50 lakh on September 16, 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, and surpassed 90 lakh on November 20.

**Delhi logs 3,188 cases:** Delhi today identified 3,188 new coronavirus cases detected from 75,409 tests with the positivity rate being 4.23 per cent, according to the latest health bulletin issued by the Delhi government. Its Covid caseload mounted to 5,97,112.

The city recorded 57 fresh Covid fatalities, which pushed its toll to 9,763, the health bulletin said.

Delhi's Covid recovery rate was now 94.62 per cent.

## Three vaccines under active consideration

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

Three Covid-19 vaccines, developed by Bharat Biotech, Serum Institute of India and Pfizer, are under active consideration of India's drug regulator and there is hope that early licensure is possible for all or any of them, the Union health ministry said on Tuesday.

The concern and anxiety following an increase in daily cases of infection in Delhi also looks like to have settled, Paul added.

Asked what steps would be followed by the DCGI in the absence of a water-tight emergency use authorisation law for granting licence to vaccine makers, Union Health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said not all countries' regulatory framework or rules and acts mention emergency use authorisation.

"So, the fact that this



phrase is not used in the

national regulatory framework of any country does not mean that a specific country would not have an enabling provision to accord an approval which is early and distinct from a regular market approval.

"India's regulatory framework has a specific provision for grant of emergency use authorisation, although this phrase is not used," he said.

The New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019, clearly specifies that under specific special situations, relaxation, abbreviation, omission, or deferral of data including local clinical trial data may be considered for approval.

"This is our law. Similarly, other countries too have their laws," Bhushan said.

## Andhra mystery illness: Traces of lead, nickel found in blood of afflicted

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, 8 DECEMBER

Traces of lead and nickel were found in the blood samples of patients suffering from mysterious illness in Eluru of West Godavari district by doctors of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), prompting Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to order a detailed investigation on how the metals found way into the bloodstream of the afflicted people.

Earlier 10 blood samples were analysed for heavy metals which have revealed the high presence of lead and nickel. Now, 40 new samples of blood and urine

have been sent to AIIMS, New Delhi, for further investigations. Since 5 December, a total of 561 people have been admitted to hospitals out of which 450 have been discharged so far. One person died while 73 people were admitted today. A two member team from the World Health Organisation (WHO) arrived today along with an expert team sent by the Centre. A four member team from National Institute of Nutrition has been deputed to Eluru.

The Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IIT) is also running tests for chemical analysis of blood serum samples and the results are awaited.

## 90-yr-old Maggie world's first to get anti-Covid jab

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 8 DECEMBER





The BJP lies, kills people; it holds rallies and kills people. Are you doing it for publicity since there wasn't many people in the rally? The police do not use these... Did you kill a man with pellets for the sake of publicity, for propaganda?

MAMATA BANERJEE  
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

**Capital riots:** Court grants bail to man, says penal section invoked debatable

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

A Delhi court Tuesday granted bail to a man in a case related to northeast Delhi riots, saying one of the offences under which he was booked is debatable.

While granting the relief to Furkan, Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat said that section 436 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was applicable in a case of mischief in respect of destruction of a building, which was ordinarily used as a place of worship, human dwelling or as a place for the custody of property, but the vehicle which was allegedly burnt by the riotous mob was parked at a road.

The court further said that besides section 436, rest of the sections under which Furkan has been booked were bailable.

Furkan was arrested under sections 147 and 148 (rioting), 149 (unlawful assembly) and 436 of IPC.

From the reading of the complaint itself and the FIR, the vehicle in question, which was burnt by fire, was parked at a road. The same is also depicted in the site plan, where the place of incident is marked as A, which appears to be on the road, though adjacent to a house. Consequently, the applicability of section 436 IPC to the present case is debatable, the court said in its order.

It granted bail to Furkan on furnishing a bail bond of Rs 15,000 with one surety of like amount in the case related to burning of a car by the riotous mob in Jafraab area.

# Bharat Bandh: Capital sees mixed response

**Businesses, transport services remain largely unaffected in Delhi, even as farmers, who gave the call for the countrywide strike against the Centre's controversial new agri laws, intensify their agitation**



Police block protesting UP farmers from entering Delhi, at Delhi-UP border on Tuesday.



Security forces take measures as farmers block a highway during their Bharat Bandh against the Centre's farm laws, at Delhi-UP border on Tuesday.

AMARJEET SINGH

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

derpoints, but traffic diversions were made on some routes as a precautionary measure.

Protesting farmers had threatened to block key roads and occupy toll plazas between 11 am and 3 pm as part of their call for a nationwide strike to press for repeal of the Narendra Modi government's contentious new farm laws.

Thousands of farmers have been protesting in and around the national capital, especially at its borders with the neighbouring states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, over the past couple of weeks against the Centre's "anti-farmers" agriculture laws.

Most of the markets, including Chandni Chowk and Sadar Bazar, in the city remained open amid group patrolling by police personnel to maintain law and order. However, there

were not many customers.

Praveen Khandelwal, general secretary of the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), claimed transport services and markets functioned normally in the national capital and other parts of the country, and that the Bharat Bandh had no impact on such activities.

"Trading activities were normal in Delhi markets that were open despite the Bharat Bandh. It was business as usual in all the wholesale and retail markets. Transport of goods is also taking place normally," Khandelwal and CAIT Delhi president Vipin Ahuja said in a statement.

The CAIT and All India Transport Welfare Association (AITWA) have not been part of the Bharat Bandh strike, Khandelwal said.

Also, public transport services in the national capital remained largely unaffected during

Bharat Bandh even though some auto and taxi unions kept their vehicles off the roads in support of the farmers' call for countrywide shutdown.

Kamaljeet Gill, president of Sarvodaya Driver Association of Delhi which represents drivers working with app-based cab aggregators, claimed most of its members were on strike.

"There are around four lakh app-based cabs in Delhi-NCR. Most of our members are on strike," he said. Many users of app-based cab services though said they did not face much difficulty in booking rides.

"Our strike in support of Bharat Bandh has been successful," claimed Samrat. The members of striking auto and taxi unions held an 'Akhand Paath' at Bangla Sahib gurdwara praying for the wellbeing of farmers and drivers, he said.

However, other auto and taxi unions claimed the strike did not have any impact on trans-

port facilities in Delhi.

"All our autos and taxis are running normally and the strike has no impact at all. We support the farmers and their demands, but strike causes problems only to ordinary people," said Rajender Soni, general secretary of the Delhi Auto Rickshaw Sangh and Delhi Pradesh Taxi Union.

Shops near the Tikri border, where hundreds of farmers have been staying for the last 13 days, remained open amid heavy police deployment.

Addressing the protesters, a BKU leader said, "This is the last leg of our 'andolan', and it is important that we remain disciplined to make our protest successful."

All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) general secretary Hannan Mollah called Bharat Bandh a show of strength by the farm-

ers and said their legitimate demands have found support from people across the country.

More farmers from Punjab and Haryana trickled in at the Singhu border with tractor-trolleys packed with supplies, while those already protesting stayed put at the site.

"We start each day with renewed enthusiasm and vigour. More farmers are arriving every day. This fight is ours to win," said Rajinder Singh Kohli, a farmer from Mohali.

Adil Khan, chairman of APMC Azadpur Mandi, said the market is almost closed.

"Many wholesale trader associations have joined Bharat Bandh. Some trucks loaded with vegetables and fruits arrived, but no work is being done there," Khan said.

SP Gupta, APMC chairman of Ghazipur Mandi, said the market was open but many traders have closed their shops to support the strike. Trading is negligible because there are no customers, he added.

Shopkeepers at Delhi's Sarojini Nagar market tied black ribbons around their arms to express solidarity with the farmers' demand.

Taking to Twitter, Delhi Traffic Police said, "Singhu, Auchandi, Piau, Maniyari & Mangesh borders are closed. NH-44 is closed. Please take alternate routes via Lampur, Sufiabad, Saboli & Singhu school toll tax borders."

In another tweet, it said, "Traffic movement at Ghazipur border in the carriageway from Delhi to Ghaziabad is open and Ghaziabad to Delhi is closed."

## Classified

### LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF  
SH. DHEERAJ MITTAL  
ACI/CC/ARC  
Room No. 03, Ground Floor  
Patiala House Courts,  
New Delhi  
Petition No. SC-2020  
Sanjay Jain & Ors.  
Versus  
(Petitioner)  
FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE  
UNDER INDIAN  
SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

To,  
All concerned,  
Whereas in the aforesaid petition, the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased Late Rai Kumar Jain, s/o S. C. Jain, died on Dt. 07-11-2019 at Maharaaj Agarsen Hospital, Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi. Are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undermentioned Court, to be standing in the name of deceased.

Whereas the 21-12-2020 at 10 O'Clock in the forenoon has been fixed for hearing and the application notice is hereby given to all concerned.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 12-11-2020.  
ACI/CC/ARC  
Patiala House Courts,  
New Delhi.  
Seal of the Court

COURT NOTICE  
(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)  
IN THE COURT OF  
MS. SURUCHI ATREJA SINGH  
Additional Principal Judge  
(Additional Family Court),  
Gurugram

Rekha Versus  
Amit Dalal.  
CNR No. HRGR01-017173-  
2019

Next Date: 12-01-2021  
Publication Issued to :  
1. Amit Dalal, s/o Inder Singh, r/o H. No. 418, Gali No. 3, Ward No. 2, Vakil Colony, Siwan, District Bhiwani, Haryana.

2. Jyoti Dhayia, d/o Late Sh. Bhajan Lal, r/o Gali No. 3, Ward No. 2, Vakil Colony, Siwan, District Bhiwani, Haryana.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendants/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 12-01-2021 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to https://highcourtdgkd.gov.in/rts-district\_notice&dis-trict=gorgram.

Dated, this day of 20-11-2020.

Additional Principal Judge  
(Additional Family Court),  
Gurugram

Seal of the Court

I, NO. 14391051N Ex. Hav Nisha Kumar Dutta, residing at 70/H, East Panpara, P.O.: Talukpara, P.S.: Titagarh, Dist: 24 Pgs. (N), W.B., Pin-700123 declare that henceforth the date of birth of my wife Bitika Dutta has changed from 25.02.1974 to 08.02.1972 vide affidavit on 07.12.2020 before Notary Public, Barrackpore, W.B.

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

PUBLIC NOTICE  
Be it known to all that my client Sh. Sandeep Kumar Dahiya, s/o Late Sh. Hari Chand Dahiya, r/o Flat No. 101, Plot No. 17/2, Kautilya Apartment-II, Dhamar Colony, Gurugram, Haryana, has severed all his relationships with his wife Smt. Sharmila Devi & son Ishan from all his properties movable & immovable, whatsoever and wheresoever situated and also severed all his relations, social and economical, with them for their mischievous acts and deeds and cruelties and atrocities, misuse of fund/money, Anybody dealing with them shall be at his/her/ own risks and my client shall not be responsible for their acts, deeds and business transactions etc. whatsoever.

Ved Pal Yadav  
Advocate  
Mob. 9968102116

VERIFICATION of details for eligible voters of West Bengal Academy of Paediatrics is going on. You might receive calls from 9339179344 within next 10 days. Please cooperate to expedite the process.

Returning Officer  
WBAP Election

ON 11-12-2020 at 11 at Directorate Survey (Air) Delhi GDC, West Block-4, Wing-4, R. K. Puram, New Delhi - 2 Toyota Qualis, Entry 10,000/-, Full Payment with Tax.

9818003790

### SALE BY AUCTION

ON 11-12-2020 at 11 at Directorate Survey (Air) Delhi GDC, West Block-4, Wing-4, R. K. Puram, New Delhi - 2 Toyota Qualis, Entry 10,000/-, Full Payment with Tax.

9818003790

### EDUCATIONAL

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

UGC Recognised  
Directorate of Distance Education

P.C. North Bengal University, Dist:-

Darjeeling, West Bengal India, PIN-734013

ADMISSION NOTICE

Online Admission to the 1st Semester (session 2020-2021 from July 2020)

of the P.G. Courses

(English, Bengali, Nepali, History, Philosophy, Political Science & Mathematics) and U.G. Courses (B.A. & B.Com.)

has been extended till 31.12.2020. For further details please visit our website: www.ddebnu.in

Directorate of Distance Education, NBNU

Advt.No.-357/R-2020  
Date: 09.12.2020

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

Office of the Registrar  
Accredited by NAAC with Grade A

ADMISSION TO POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA COURSE IN BIOMINFORMATICS (Session 2020-2021)

Applications are invited from candidates having B.Sc. (Hons.) & B.Tech. or Master's Degree in any branch of Science for admission in one-year Post-graduate Diploma in Bioinformatics (PGDBI) Course. For details please visit University's website: www.nbu.ac.in

Registar  
Advt.No.-356/R-2020  
Dated: 09.12.2020

### TENDERS

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed quotations are invited for printing ID card, academic calendar, installation of iron guard. For details visit us at www.srlm.org

Advdt.No.-356/R-2020  
Dated: 09.12.2020

Dr. Somnath Bandyopadhyay  
Teacher-in-Charge

GOVERNMENT of West Bengal, Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Murshidabad.

Memo No. CM / MSD / 8443, Dated: 07.12.2020, Berhampore, the 22.12.2020

E-Tender Notice — Bids are hereby invited by the CMOH, Murshidabad for operational Waiting Hut for Pregnant Women at Teghri BPHC, Mahesail BPHC, Saktipur BPHC & Beniagram BPHC (Farakkha). Detail is available in the website: www.wbtenders.gov.in or contact office notice board.

Sd/  
P.O. (MGNREGS) & B.D.O.  
Old Malda Dev. Block  
Malda

Chief Medical Officer of Health  
Murshidabad

### TENDERS

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed quotations are invited for rate contract for sale of various types of waste/scrap paper & materials. For details / any amendment please visit: www.wbtenders.gov.in & wbtexbookcorporation.com

TENDER No. WBTBC-2020-0202 Dated: 08-12-2020 — West Bengal Text Book Corporation Ltd. invites offer through e-tender to ascertain the rate for rate contract for sale of various types of waste/scrap paper & materials. For details / any amendment please visit: www.wbtenders.gov.in & wbtexbookcorporation.com

ALL CLASSIFIED ARE CARRIED FREE OF COST ON OUR WEBSITE

### TENDER NOTICE

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

The commissioners of the East and North Delhi Municipal Corporations have been asked to appear before the Environment Committee of the

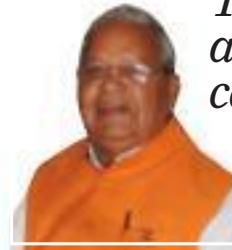
Delhi Assembly to discuss issues related to frequent fire incidents at Ghazipur and Bhalswa landfills in the city.

Stating this here on Tuesday, senior AAP leader and chairperson of the Committee Atishi said a meeting of the environment panel has been called tomorrow to know the reason behind the "poor waste management" of the MCDs

(Municipal Corporations of Delhi) which was leading to frequent incidents of garbage burning and a considerable increase in the height of the landfills in Delhi.

In a statement, the senior AAP leader said on 27 November, a fire broke out at the garbage mountain at the Ghazipur landfill site due to

which the AQI and pollution levels went up, and entire East Delhi was filled with smoke. Three days after the incident, a massive fire was reported at the Bhalswa Dairy landfill. These fire incidents were making the efforts of the Delhi government "redundant"



*The purpose of education is that along with knowledge, one must also get skilled. The educational system has been lacking practical orientation, skill-based education, vocational education and value-based education for a long time.*

KALRAJ MISHRA  
RAJASTHAN GOVERNOR

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 09 DECEMBER 2020

03

# Bharat Bandh flags need for farm laws' repeal: Capt

Punjab CM asks why the Centre could not heed the protesting farmers demanding repeal of its controversial agri laws and why it could not hold fresh talks with all stakeholders on the crucial issue

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 8 DECEMBER

Maintaining that the Narendra Modi government's new farm laws were "anti-farmers" and were brought without any discussion with the stakeholders, Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh today said the unity showcased by the farmers through the Bharat Bandh called by them against the Centre's farm laws has underscored the need for repeal of these laws, which should be followed by a detailed discussion on agricultural reforms in the country.

The Punjab CM asked why the Centre could not heed the demands of the farmers agitating across the country for scrapping of these laws, and hold fresh talks with all stakeholders on the crucial issue.



Asserting that the whole country is with the farmers in their pain and in their fight for survival, Capt Amarinder said the Centre should allow the existing system to continue instead of scrapping the Arthiya (grain commission agent) and Mandi (grain market) system, as the farm laws were designed to do.

why the Modi government was not willing to give legitimacy to the minimum support price (MSP) for farmers' produce if their assertion of not abolishing it was sincere.

"MSP is our right," he said, adding "if MSP is not guaranteed and another political party, apart from the Congress and the BJP, which is promising to conform with the support price, comes to power at the Centre, then who will take the responsibility of the farmers getting their minimum due?" He pointed out that the foodgrains bought at MSP were pushed into the public distribution system (PDS) to feed the country's poor and all that would end if the MSP system goes.

Declaring himself to be "upset" by the Centre's move to "dump" Punjab and its farmers after making use of them when the nation needed them, the CM said that the country might have become self-sufficient for now but could not ignore the possibility of shortages again in the future.

"When they needed us they used us, and now when other states have started producing wheat and paddy too, they are dropping us," he remarked, adding that ending the Mandi system would deprive Punjab of the much-needed funds for rural development.

The CM appealed to the Centre not to write off Punjab's agricultural prowess.

"Crises will come with population growth, and next year is being predicted as a drought year...the country needs us, as we proved even during Covid times when we sent out 50 trains a day to feed the poor," he noted, urging the BJP-led central government not to be "short-sighted".

The CM sought to know

holders on the crucial issue.

Declaring himself to be "upset" by the Centre's move to "dump" Punjab and its farmers after making use of them when the nation needed them, the CM said that the country might have become self-sufficient for now but could not ignore the possibility of shortages again in the future.

"When they needed us they used us, and now when other states have started producing wheat and paddy too, they are dropping us," he remarked, adding that ending the Mandi system would deprive Punjab of the much-needed funds for rural development.

The CM appealed to the Centre not to write off Punjab's agricultural prowess.

"Crises will come with population growth, and next year is being predicted as a drought year...the country needs us, as we proved even during Covid times when we sent out 50 trains a day to feed the poor," he noted, urging the BJP-led central government not to be "short-sighted".

## No regulations yet on min stds for mental health facilities: PIL in HC

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

A PIL has been moved in the Delhi High Court claiming that the Centre and the AAP government have not yet issued any regulations regarding minimum standards to be maintained by different categories of mental health establishments under the Mental Healthcare Act.

The petition by advocate and mental health activist Gaurav Kumar Bansal states that a similar plea filed by him earlier was disposed of by the high court by directing the Centre to treat it as a representation and take a decision on it as expeditiously as possible and practicable.

tre to treat Bansal's earlier similar plea as a representation and to decide it in accordance with the law, rules, regulations and government policy applicable to the facts of the case as expeditiously as possible and practicable.

The direction had come after the central government said the draft minimum standards were ready and would be published/notified as soon as they are finalised. In his latest plea, Bansal states there are many establishments in the country which claim they can cure or treat mentally ill people through Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy.

"However, these establishments never register themselves with the Central Mental Health Authority or State Mental Health Authority as required under the Mental

Healthcare Act, 2017.

"Since till date respondent 2 (Delhi government) has neither issued any notification prescribing minimum standards for such establishments nor has clarified whether such establishments shall be treated as mental health establishments, persons with mental illness are finding it difficult to approach such entities," the petition claimed. He also said in his petition that under the Act, every person has the right to make an 'advance directive' which specifies how he/she, suffering from any mental illness, wishes to be cared for and treated or not treated.

The petition by advocate and mental health activist Gaurav Kumar Bansal states that a similar plea filed by him earlier was disposed of by the high court by directing the Centre to treat it as a representation and take a decision on it as expeditiously as possible and practicable.

However, till date the central government has not notified the minimum standards, he said in the petition.

It further states that under the Mental Healthcare Act of 2017 the minimum standards were to be notified within 18 months of commencement of the statute.

The high court on October 12 had directed the Cen-

## Bharat Bandh a 'failure': HP CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 8 DECEMBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Tuesday termed the call of 'Bharat Bandh' given by farmers' unions, which was supported by all the Opposition parties, as a "complete failure".

Thakur said the 'Bandh' has no impact in the state as traffic movement was smooth as usual barring few incidents of road blockade by Congress

and CPM leaders in Shimla town.

"Opposition leaders have failed miserably to garner support of common man as people of the state know that agriculture laws enacted by the Central government were beneficial for the farmers."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government is committed to double the income of the farmers by 2022 and is taking various pro-farmers decisions in this

direction to make them self-reliant," he added.

Thakur said the opposition parties were desperately trying to rake up this whole issue in a bid to remain politically alive as these parties had supported the same laws during the former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh led UPA government.

He expressed hope that the issue would be resolved through dialogue at the earliest as farmers of the country had full faith in PM Modi.

## Mixed response of Bharat Bandh in Uttarakhand

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
DEHRADUN, 8 DECEMBER

Uttarakhand Congress activists taking out a protest march in support of farmers' Bharat Bandh call against the Centre's farm laws, in Dehradun on Tuesday.

members gathered at Clock Tower in Dehradun and blocked

the Mussoorie highway for about two hours. In most of the places in Uttarakhand, essential item shops remained open. Movement of traffic was normal. Congress blocked the road near Clock Tower in Dehradun to obstruct movement of vehicles for about two hours. Congress party members imposed closure of shops at the Paltan Bazaar in Dehradun. Seeing the protesters the shopkeepers closed their commercial units for a brief period and reopened it once they were away. Big

impact of Bharat Bandh was witnessed in district Udhampur, Kishtwar, Kishanpur and Gagdarpur due to the closure. Even at Roorkee in district Haridwar the impact of the Bandh was high. The demonstration of Congress remained limited to Clock Tower locality in Dehradun. That too for a few hours! Uttarakhand Congress president Pritam Singh said, "Every Indian stands united in the fight for the rights of the farmers."

## SHOWING SOLIDARITY



The CITU members hold demonstration to support Bharat Bandh called by farmer unions to press for repeal of the Centre's farm laws. In Shimla on Tuesday.

## HP Cong, CPM hold protests to back farmers' call for Bharat Bandh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 8 DECEMBER

The Congress party and the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) on Tuesday staged protests across Himachal Pradesh in support of farmers' Bharat Bandh called to seek repeal of the Narendra Modi-led central government's controversial farm laws.

The party workers of Congress and CPI-M staged protests at district and block headquarters across the state and blocked traffic at various locations.

However, no law and order situation was reported in Himachal and the protests concluded peacefully across the state.

After staging a protest in Shimla, State Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore said there seemed to be mala fide intentions behind hasty passing of new farm laws by PM Modi government as neither opposition parties nor the farmers' leaders were consulted

after drafting the laws. "Now the Central government is merely completing its formalities by holding discussions with farmers who were protesting on roads since the last 12 days.

Congress supports and is behind farmers' community in India and the party will not let the Modi government succeed in its plans of selling farmers' rights at the hands of big businessmen," he added.

Rathore added the party will support farmers in their

decisive fight against such draconian laws and the Centre government should withdraw these legislations immediately to provide respite to the farming community.

CPM state secretariat member Sanjay Chauhan said the party was against the new farm laws and demanded that these should be withdrawn immediately.

"PM Modi led BJP government is implementing neo-liberal policies in the country and was handing over the agriculture sector to big corporate houses like Adani, Ambani and multinational agri-business companies," he added.

Chauhan said these Acts will ruin the agriculture sector and farmers and besides, endanger food security of the country.

"These laws will not only harm the agriculture and farmers of the country but also common man because the high prices will hurt them badly and the nation will be pushed to the brink of starvation," he added.

## Himachal govt ensuring devp despite pandemic: Jai Ram

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 8 DECEMBER

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succeed in its plans of selling farmers' rights at the hands of big businessmen," he added.

Rathore added the party will support farmers in their decisive fight against such draconian laws and the Cen-

## APPOINTMENT

### PANIHATI MUNICIPALITY

B.T. Road, Panihati, Kolkata-700114

#### NOTICE

Application(s), through online mode, are invited from bona fide Indian citizens for the post of Health Officer (Contractual) in Panihati Municipality. For details please visit the website: [www.panihatimunicipality.in](http://www.panihatimunicipality.in) and [www.wburban\\_services.gov.in](http://www.wburban_services.gov.in)

Chairperson  
Board of Administrators  
Panihati Municipality  
Date: 08-12-2020



Modi ji, stop stealing from farmers...Make our food growers' struggle successful by fully supporting it

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI  
URGING PEOPLE TO SUPPORT THE BHARAT BANDH

India

## Phase II polling for BTC tomorrow

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

GUWAHATI, 8 DECEMBER

Second and final phase of

### TENDER

#### CORRIGENDUM NOTICE

**Subject:** T.No. OP2/24/2020-21 - DNT for running rate contract for repairing / testing of 11/0.433 KV Aluminium wound 100 KVA, 200 KVA, 300/315 KVA, 500 KVA and 750/800 KVA distribution Transformers under Electy OP Sub Divn no 5 Chd.

The subject cited tender due to be opened on dated i.e. 08.12.2020 at 16.00 Hrs. is hereby extended upto 15.12.2020 at 14.00 Hrs. for uploading and opening date i.e. 15.12.2020 at 16.00 Hrs. due to some administrative reason.

All the other terms and conditions shall remain the same.

-Sd-  
Executive Engineer,  
Electricity (OP) Division No. 2  
Chandigarh, U.T.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering)	
Name of work with its location	
Provision of telecom facility in new constructed office of Engg Department DRM/Office New Delhi.	
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹ 22,86,495.57/- only
Tender Document Fee (₹)	₹ 3,540/- only
Earliest Money Deposit (₹)	₹ 45,700/- only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Annexure-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110005.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender	Tender uploading / closing date & time - 30.12.2020 up to 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> & Notice board at S&T branch, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, DRM Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.
No. 558-Sig-16-Tele-OT-925	Dated: 08.12.2020
	2744/20
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

2737/20  
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

#### PRESS NOTICE

The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Bharmour invites tenders on behalf of Government of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s) through e-tendering process.

Sr No	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earliest money	Time Limit	Cost of tender form
1	Restoration of rain Damages to FIS Bakani in GP Bakani Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- C/o 10 Nos Anchor block & laying jointing and testing of GI pipe	321988/-	6440/-	Three Months	250/-
2	C/o Lts. Radi in GP Radl Tehsil & Distt: Chamba (SH:- Providing interlocking concrete block at ground)	640703/-	12814/-	Three Months	250/-
3	Providing flood protection work to Hadsar Nallath in Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- Providing wire crate at RD 500/250 to RD 500/300) Two layer LHS	499618/-	9996/-	Three Months	250/-
4	Providing flood protection work to Hadsar Nallath in Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- Providing wire crate at RD 500/300 to RD 500/350) Two layer LHS	497436/-	9949/-	Three Months	250/-
5	Providing flood protection work to Hadsar Nallath in Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- Providing wire crate at RD 500/200 to RD 500/250) Two Layer LHS	499010/-	9980/-	Three Months	250/-
6	Providing flood protection work to Hadsar Nallath in Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- Providing wire crate at RD 500/350 to RD 500/400) Two Layer LHS	498472/-	9969/-	Three Months	250/-
7	Restoration of rain damages to WSS Chated Bhangela Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- C/o No intake chan- ber laying jointing and testing of GI pipe 20mm dia at RD 0 to 1250 to	263316/-	5266/-	Three Months	250/-
8	C/o WSS to Kutech in GP Kutech & its surrounding Vill: Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- Protection work C/o RWall back side of filter Bad)	510391/-	10208/-	Three Months	250/-
9	C/o WSS to Kutech & its surrounding Vill: Tehsil Bharmour distt: Chamba (SH:- Protection work C/o R/wall Left side of filter Bad)	328827/-	6577/-	Three Months	250/-
10	Aug. of WSS Kuthen in GP Kuthen Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- Site development for C/o Civil Work)	268247/-	5365/-	Three Months	250/-
11	Aug. of WSS Kuthen Sad and Deosad in Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- Providing painting dis tempering to JE residences in Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba HP)	268711/-	5374/-	Three Months	250/-
12	Repair of B type rest House at Bharmour in Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- Providing and fixing of electrical fitting and PVC sealing for IHP rest house Bharmour	122416/-	2448/-	Three Months	250/-
13	Aug. of WSS Bharmour & its surrounding area in Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (SH:- C/o PCC R/wall & C/o PCC B/Wall to protect the storage tank at NAD Providing Barbed wire fencing around the storage tank	189789/-	3796/-	Three Months	250/-
14	C/o WSS Cham Durge to Hill in GP Shoon (SH:- C/o 2 Nos Intake & L/J of HDPE pipe 25mm =5000' & 20mm = 3200Rmt)	836856/-	16737/-	One year	250/-
15	C/o flood protection work to Sindhar Par in GP Shoon (SH:- c/o protection work in wire crate at RD 0/150 to 0/300 (in double layer)	936595/-	18732/-	Six Months	250/-
16	C/o Flood protection work to Sindhar Par in GP Shoon (SH:- C/o protection work in wire crate at RD 0/375 to 0/450 (in double layer)	468730/-	9375/-	Six Months	250/-
17	C/o Flood protection work to Sindhar Par in GP Shoon (SH:- C/o Protection work in wire crate at RD 0/0 to 0/150 (in double layer)	938757/-	18775/-	Six Months	250/-
18	Remodeling of WSS Holi and its surrounding area in GP Holi Tehsil Bharmour Distt: Chamba (Sh:- Providing and fixing zinc aluminum storage tank 1 No. 50,000 lit. cap.	1205894/-	24118/-	Six Months	250/-
19	C/o WSS from Tadhyal to VIT Kuthath in GP Luj (SH:- C/o 1 No: intake 1 No: 1 No: s/tank 10000 lit. cap: 1/c Exc. In foundation tranches & L/J of HDPE pipe 40mm dia at RD 0/0 to 5/400)	477028/-	9540/-	Six Months	250/-
20	C/o Channalization work from Talha to Rosar Nallath vid Dug Tikkri in GP Luj (SH:- Excavation R/R masonry C.C work & some soling at RD 0/557 to 0/780 with 2 Nos. footpath road crossing	743070/-	14861/-	Six Months	250/-
Last date of sale of tender form from Jai Shakti Division Bharmour on dated 09-12-2020. The tender shall be received on 10-12-2020 till 2:00 PM and shall be opened on the same day at 3:00 PM in presence of tendered or their authorized representative <a href="http://www.hiph.org">www.hiph.org</a> .					
Executive Engineer Jai Shakti Division Bharmour					

4847/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

#### Office of

Executive Engineer B&R Division HP.PWD. Joginder Nagar  
Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department, Mandi-175015

Phone & Fax No. 01908-222033 E-Mail:- ee-jog-hp@nic.in

#### e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

#### INVITATION FOR BIDS (ITB)

The Executive Engineer, B&R Division, HPPWD, Joginder Nagar on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invited the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 cover system for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/firms registered with HPPWD department:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated cost	EMD	Cost of Tender	Eligible class of contractor	Time limit
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
1.	Construction of link road to Harian Basti Pohri Km. 0/0 to 1/500 under SCSP (Sub Head:- 13,17,420/- Providing and laying soiling Grade-I wearing Grade-II and tarring from Km. 0/0 to 1/0).	26,400/-	350/-	All classes deal with bituminous work	Three months (90 days)	

2. Availability of Bid Documents and mode of submission:- The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website <http://htenders.gov.in>. The bidder will be required to register in the website which is free of cost. For submission of the bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA) "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <http://htenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

#### 3. Key Dates:-

- 1. Date of online Publication: - 09/12/2020 10:00 Hrs.
- 2. Document Download Start and end date:- 09/12/2020 10:00 Hrs upto 23/12/2020 17:00 Hrs
- 3. Bid Submission start and end date:- 09/12/2020 10:00 Hrs upto 23/12/2020 17:00 Hrs
- 4. Physical submission of EMD and cost of tender document on or before the time and date of submission of bids:- 24/12/2020 upto 11:00 A.M.
- 5. Date of Technical Bid opening will be 24/12/2020 11:30 AM, Evaluation of technical bid opening and financial bid opening will follow on accordingly.

#### 4. Tender Details:-

The tender documents shall be uploaded online in 2 cover.

i) Cover 1:- Shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/Eligibility information".

ii) Cover 2:- Shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bids" where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

5. Submission of Original Documents:- The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) Original bid security / Earnest Money Deposited (EMD) and other technical Documents in O/C the Executive Engineer, B&R Division HP.PWD. Joginder Nagar District Mandi (H.P) on or before the time and date of submission of bids failing which the bids shall be declared non-responsive. No physical documents will be accepted after the closing date of bid submission.

6. Bid Opening Detail:- The bids shall be opened on 24/12/2020 11:30 Hrs. in the office of Executive Engineer B&R Division HP.PWD. Joginder Nagar District Mandi (H.P) by the authorized officer in their interest the tenderer are advised to be present along with original documents as specified in Key dates at Sr. No. 4. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delay due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidder's responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

9. In addition to instructions for use of standard form in bidding documents the bidder should upload the following information also.

(i) Total annual volume of Civil Engineering construction work executed and payment received in the last five year proceeding this year duly verified by the Chartered Accountant

Executive Engineer,  
B&R Division HP PWD,  
Joginder Nagar  
District Mandi (HP)  
on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh  
Ph. 01908-222033

4831/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

Modi ji, stop stealing from farmers...Make our food growers' struggle successful by fully supporting it

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

URGING PEOPLE TO SUPPORT THE BHARAT BANDH

## Opp to meet Prez on farm laws

Five-member delegation have Rahul Gandhi, Sharad Pawar, DMK's DRaja & Yechury



Farmers protest against farm laws during Bharat Bandh on Tuesday.



A deserted highway at Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border in the Capital on Tuesday, as farmers block the road during a nationwide strike against the newly passed farm laws.

**Police use water cannons to disperse MP farmers:** Farmers and various political groups protested across Madhya Pradesh in support of Bharat bandh call given by farmer organisations on Tuesday against the new agricultural Bills. Congress loyalists and Bhim Army workers along with members of farmer organisations burnt an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Agrasen Square in Dabba of Gwalior district. Police used water cannons to disperse the protesting farmers and political party workers. Protesters also clashed with police in nearby Shivpuri district.

**Partial bandh in Chhattisgarh:** Nationwide bandh call by farmers' organisations and supported by the Opposition had partial effect in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday. Most shops and business establishments in prime areas remained closed till afternoon. However, government offices and shops in residential areas were open throughout the day. Key markets, including petrol pumps, remained closed in Raipur, but traffic was normal across the city.

**Normal life unaffected in TN, hit in Puducherry:** Normal life remained unaffected in Tamil Nadu in view of Bharat Bandh, but wide spread protests marked the day, especially central Tamil Nadu, where farmers' associations have a strong hold. Road blocks and rail roko agitation in various places by the Left parties, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam



Constrained in public interest to call upon CS @MamataOfficial & DGP @WBPolice to see me not later than Dec 12.

WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR JAGDEEP DHANKHAR  
ON THE DEATH OF BJP WORKER IN NORTH BENGAL

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 09 DECEMBER 2020

## THUMBNAILS



During Bharat Bandh against farm laws in Kolkata on Tuesday. SNS

**Booking with contact numbers:** Eastern Railway has urged passengers to provide their mobile numbers while purchasing reservation tickets. The decision comes after the zonal railway observed that some were purchasing tickets through agents or accounts of other persons where the mobile number is not provided in the PRS system. As a result, passengers don't get train information through SMS sent by Railways. SNS

**Profile pictures:** District TMC has created a profile picture for its social media accounts ahead of the visit of Abhishek Banerjee at Arambagh. TMC leadership claims it is an innovative way to reach out to general mass. SNS

# Scrap farm laws: TMC begins sit-in protest

3-day dharna will culminate with Mamata's address on 10 December



SNS & PTI  
KOLKATA, 8 DECEMBER

The TMC on Tuesday began its three-day-long sit-in demonstration against the new farm laws and demanded that the "anti-people" legislation should be withdrawn immediately.

The farmers and agricultural workers wing of the TMC, led by its state president and TMC MLA Becharam Manna, began its sit-in demonstration in front of the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in central Kolkata this afternoon.

Party activists carrying placards and demanding the withdrawal of the new farm laws shouted slogans against the BJP government at the Centre.

"We support the issues

raised by the farmers and will hold protest programmes and sit-in demonstrations. But we are against shutdowns and the bandh culture and will not enforce it in the state," Manna told reporters.

The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal has decided to extend "moral support" to the nationwide strike called by farmers on December 8 to protest against the new agriculture laws and will stage sit-ins in various parts of the state for three days, in solidarity with the farmers.

It will culminate with Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's address at the protest programme on December 10.

The 'Bharat Bandh', called by agitating farmers' unions against the Centre's farm laws, partially affected the state with private vehicles remain-

## BJP holds rallies and kills people: Mamata

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
RANIGANJ (WB), 8 DECEMBER

A day after a BJP worker died during a protest march in Siliguri, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday claimed that the saffron party kills people at its rallies.

"The BJP indulges in lies, kills people; it holds rallies and kills people," Banerjee said at a public meeting

here.

Asserting that the TMC will not allow the BJP-led Centre to sell government-owned coal mines, Banerjee also said "coal mafia are thriving under the saffron party".

"I had proposed that illegal (coal) factories be legalised by the Centre and the state jointly, so that people get employment. The Centre, however, did not respond..." she said.

ers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2020; and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Act 2020.

Supporters of the Congress and Left parties on Tuesday blocked railway tracks at several places and held sit-ins on roads to enforce the nationwide shutdown, which evoked a mixed response in Bengal.

Representatives of thousands of agitating farmers are sitting on various borders of the national capital since November 26 demanding repeal of the three agri laws.

The farmers are protesting against the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, 2020; Farm-

ing off the roads, while public transport, including buses and taxis, operating fewer than the usual.

Supporters of the Congress and Left parties on Tues-

day blocked railway tracks at several places and held sit-ins on roads to enforce the nationwide shutdown, which evoked a mixed response in Bengal.

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ment of Price Assurance and

Farm Services Act, 2020; Farm-

ers Produce Trade and Com-

merce (Promotion and Facili-

tation) Act, 2020; and The Es-

sential Commodities (Amend-

ment) Act 2020.

Enacted in September, the

three farm laws have been pro-

jected by the government as

major reforms in the agricul-

ture sector that will remove

middlemen and allow farm-

ers to sell anywhere in the

country.

The protesting farmers

have

expressed apprehension that the

new laws would pave the way for

eliminating the safety cushion

of Minimum Support Price

and do away with the mandis,

leaving them at the mercy of

big corporates.



Railway track blocked by Left activists at Jadavpur station during Bharat Bandh on Tuesday. SNS

## Bharat Bandh: Few buses, many blockades hassle passengers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 8 DECEMBER

train movements at Jadavpur for about 40 minutes.

ER said 29 trains in the Seal-dah Division and eight trains in the Howrah Division were cancelled following rail block-ade.

Train services over Seal-dah Division were affected at Deula, Madhyamgram, Habra, Ashoknagar, Dum Dum Cantt. South Barasat and Kanki-nara. Banana leaves were thrown on overhead wire between Hotur and Baruipur on the Up line and between Bahirputra and Sangrampur both on the Seal-dah Division Harbour Section.

In the Howrah Division, local trains were disrupted at Rishra, Saktigarh and Bally-simulations. Similarly in SER four spe-cial express trains and 32 EMU locals were halted enroute while two pairs of sub-

urban local trains were can-celled in Kharagpur Division. However, train operations in both the zonal railways were normal later in the day.

The agitators urged auto-rickshaw drivers at Jadavpur not to operate. Buses were obstructed near Howrah station, Moula-li and College Street. Even as state govern-ment buses were spotted, private and minibuses were much lesser in numbers due to lack of commuters.

According to Pradeep Narayan Bose, secretary of Bengal Bus and Minibus Owners' Association, considering the low passenger count, hardly 200 buses from his union plied today. Similarly, hardly 20 per cent buses were run by Joint Council of Bus Syndicates today.

## Adhir to meet party leaders on 17 Dec over poll plans, seat sharing

TIRTHANKAR MITRA  
KOLKATA, 8 DECEMBER

State PCC chief, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury will meet some of the Congress national leaders on 17 December to finalise the party's game plan for the next year's state Assembly elections. The agenda of the meeting between Chowdhury and AICC leaders including Jitin Prasad includes working out the nitty-gritty of the Congress-Left Front understanding for 2021 polls.

An idea of the number of constituencies from which the Congress wants to field its nominees is likely to emerge after the meeting between the PCC and All India Congress Committee (AICC) leaders.

Opinions have been voiced by both outfits on this issue at their last meeting. The decisions arrived at in the 17 December meeting will give

## WBCM flays Centre over privatisation, jobs; announces pension hike for priests

DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY  
RANIGANJ, 8 DECEMBER

Showing solidarity with the farmers' agitation, chief minister Mamata Banerjee today said Trinamool Congress vows to fight for the cause of the farmers and labourers in the country and will not allow Union government to close-down, privatise or merge central public sector units, railways and banks.

Speaking at Raniganj rally in West Burdwan district, Miss Banerjee said, "It is only Trinamul government that has waived off khajna of farmers' lands. Two lakhs are paid to the farmers between 18 and 60 years in case of untimely death. Mutation fee has been abolished for agricultural land purchase."

Taking a jibe at the Centre, she alleged, "They want to privatise CIL, ECL, BSNL, APL, SAIL, HPCL, Air India, Indian Railways and merge the

banks. So many branches have been closed. They talk of generating employment during elections and subsequently decide to sell-off all public sectors." She ques-tioned what development have the BJP MPs from Asansol-Durgapur brought for the state so far.

Due to some technical problems, the state owned Durgapur Projects Limited (DPL) remained closed for the past 11 months, however, despite acute financial crisis, the state government has not stopped payment of its employees till date.

The pensions of the priests will be increased from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 per month, she announced and added, "Tri-

namul government is dis-tributing free ration till June 2021."

Meanwhile, under the Ran-

ganj Coalfields Subsidence

zone Rehabilitation and Re-settlement Plan, the state government is going to set up houses for 29,000 affected families, she assured today. In the first phase, about 9,232 houses will be set up in Andal, Jamarua and Baraboni block. She handed over the keys of 3,584 houses to the affected families and said that by February 2021 all the affected families under phase-I will get the houses.

About 1,529 land losers in the Andal Aerotropolis project were handed over land compensation certificates.

About 1,529 families were offered developed land and 2,143 were provided financial compensation.

"I have allotted Rs 2.76 crores for setting up Jahar Than, Manasa Than, burning ghat and burial grounds. 10 MW solar plant at Chalbalpur at cost of Rs 42 crores, bus terminus at Kalipahari, Circuit House at Ansals will come up," she said.

Referring to the affidavit filed by Indian Banks Association on 25 September, he said that State Bank of India has stat-ed that interest amount from borrowers during six months moratorium works out to be Rs 88,078 crore (approximate-ly) whereas the interest payable to the depositors during the said period works out to be Rs 75,157 crore (approximate-ly).

## Blanket interest waiver on all loans to be ₹6 lakh crore: Centre to SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

regard to all classes and cat-egories of borrowers, the amount to be foregone would be more than ₹6 lakh crore.

It is submitted that if the Government were to consider waiving interest on all the loans and advances to all classes and categories of bor-rowers for the six-month moratorium period announced by RBI in view of Covid-19 pan-demic, then the amount fore-gone would be more than ₹6 lakh crore.

If the banks were to bear this burden, then it would necessarily wipe out a sub-stantial and a major part of their net worth, rendering most of the lenders unviable and rais-ing a very serious question mark over their very survival, it said.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R S Reddy and M R Shah was informed by Solici-tor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, that this was one of the main rea-reasons why waiver of interest was not even contemplated and only payment of installments was deferred.

The top court is hearing a batch of pleas of various bod-ies including from real estate and power seeking sector wise relief in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Reading from the written submission filed in the top court, Mehta said that if the interest is waived on all the loans and advances for the moratorium period, with

## Insurance of car used by CM in Midnapore lapsed in 2019

KANCHAN SIDDIQUI  
KOLKATA, 8 DECEMBER

The SUV chief minister Mamata Banerjee boarded in Midnapore town yester-day, mocked state govern-ment's 'Safe Life' initiative since insur-ance coverage

of the vehicle had lapsed more than a year ago which appears to be a gross irregu-larity on road safety grounds.

As per provisions of Section 81 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 2019, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified that it is "illegal" and a "crime" to drive an uninsured vehicle. The responsibility of driving an uninsured vehicle accord-ingly goes to the driver and the owner of the respective vehicle, according to the Act.

The passengers on board, however are not responsible for the lapses, the Act says.

Banerjee arrived at the venue on a Mahindra SUV (No: WB02/AN3247), which was registered with the Public Vehicles Department (PVD), Kolkata on 6 September, 2018. The technical and mechanical fitness, accord-ing to the Registration Cer-tificate of the vehicle (Engine

No: WRJ4D1XXXX) is valid till 5 September, 2033 and the Road Tax of the vehicle stands valid till 3 Sep-tember, 2023 mid-night.

However, the insurance coverage of the vehicle was valid till 3 Sep-tember, 2019 and the policy (No: 0176143XX) lapsed sub-sequently. The insurance police was commenced by Tata AIG General Insurance Co Ltd - whose RC Book (issued on 6 September, 2018), said the insurance was not renewed further.

The director, PVD, Kolkata, Biswajit Dutta, told The Statesman: "The vehicle owner or the person driving the vehicle are responsible for such gross lapses and needs to be penalized. For coverage of the entire pas-sengers, a valid insurance of the vehicle remains essential but the passengers in no way are at fault about such lapses, if any."

State Transport Secretary, Rajesh Sinha meanwhile said that he had no idea about the status of the SUV the chief minister boarded.

The Hon'ble Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission (UPERC), vide Tariff Order dated 4 December, 2020 has approved the Company's True-up for FY 2018-19, Annual Performance Review (APR) for FY 2019-20, Annual Revenue Requirement (ARR) and Tariff for FY 2020-21. Further, the Hon'ble UPERC also decided to continue with the existing rate schedule for all categories of consumers, approved vide Tariff Order dated 3rd September, 2019, without any changes until next Tariff Order.

For details of the aforesaid Tariff Order and Rate Schedule, please visit our website viz. [www.noidapower.com](http://www.noidapower.com)

Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer  
Noida Power Company Limited

CIN-U31200UP1992PLC014506  
Electric Sub-station, KP-IV, Greater Noida, G B Nagar, UP- 201210, India  
Customer Care No: (0120) 6226666, 2333555 & 233388

## Still unresolved

With one more round of talks having failed, and with all hopes now pinned on a final meeting ~ as yet unscheduled ~ between British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen at the end of the year. Both sides accept that the many rounds of talks have failed to resolve differences, the latest on Monday having caused the European side to say that negotiations were going backwards while the British believe there is every chance they would not be able to secure a deal. The sticking points remain what they have been for some time ~ fishing rights in British waters, fair competition for companies and ways to resolve future disputes, the last of these an ironic reflection on the hash that negotiators have made of solving the present differences. Britain left the EU on January 31 and has been in transition thereafter with existing rules in place until the end of the year. The costs of a no-deal Brexit could be enormous, with some analysts pointing at a drop in Britain's GDP of between 1.5 and 2 percentage points. But it is the impact on people who have got used to seamless movement and trade within Europe that will be felt first. Living and working on either side of the English Channel will be affected, and as some analysts have pointed out, taking one's dog across from one side to the other could become challenging. Once Britain leaves Europe's Customs Union, trade would be subject to WTO rules while tariffs and quotas would become the norm. London faces the risk of losing its place as Europe's pre-eminent financial centre, as access will be guided by the EU judging the UK's rules to be equivalent to its own in 40 areas. Businesses moving goods would need to prepare for long queues at border checkpoints. Other impacts are likely to be felt insofar as adhering to separate sets of standards for goods is concerned; immigration controls; passport validities and restrictions on the services sector.

In the event Mr Johnson and Ms van der Leyen can reach agreement ~ however unlikely it may seem at this time ~ the deal would need ratification by the two parliaments, which will pose scheduling challenges as the Christmas break approaches. While analysts believe that the two leaders might be able to resolve differences on fishing rights, the real challenge will be posed by the European demand that it be allowed to unilaterally hit back if Britain deviates from EU environmental, labour and social standards or enforces state subsidies in the future. Britain believes these are tactics to apply EU rules via the backdoor. One school of thought believes that both sides are taking matters to the absolute brink to ensure that as the consequences of a no-deal Brexit sink in, people will accept any deal, even one that does not wholly address the concerns of either side.

## Civilised norms

The collective schizophrenia which is inherent in the legacy of Partition has played out between India and Pakistan in wars, on the sports field, and across the cultural arena for over 70 years now. With the rise of Wahabi/Salafist pan-Islamism on that side of the border and an emphatic reassertion of the Indic ethos on this side as a clear differentiator over the past few decades, people-to-people interactions too have been impacted. It was, therefore, heart-warming to hear of the immediate repatriation of two teenaged girls from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir who had inadvertently crossed over to the Indian side in the Poonch area early on 6 December. Given tensions on the Line of Control and the heavy deployment of troops by both sides on high alert, the restraint shown by the Indian Army when it detected the crossing deserves commendation. It is a tough call at a time when conflict no longer follows what used to be called civilised norms whether to eliminate on sight any infiltrator, given brainwashed suicide bombers are now embedded in the matrix of war, or to hold fire till identities can be established. Indian troops chose the latter option in this instance.

As a result, Laiba Zabair, 17, and Sana Zabair, 13, from the PoK village of Abbasspur, who had, as teenagers do, run away from home following a domestic tiff and found themselves on the Indian side, were repatriated loaded with gifts at the Chakan Da Bagh crossing where Pakistani officials received them.

But it is worth thinking about the potential human tragedy if the Indian Army had not taken the call it did. Which is also why it is vital to note that at about the same time as the teenagers were being handed over safely to their family, Delhi Police's Special Cell was engaged in a gunfight on the streets of the Capital at the culmination of which five armed men with alleged links to banned terror outfits were arrested. The suspicion is that the five suspects ~ three Kashmiris thought to have been radicalised and two pro-Khalistan gunmen from Punjab ~ were taking orders from the Pakistani state's covert agencies to assassinate prominent leaders from the saffron camp to provoke social-religious tensions.

The aborted operation is seen by Indian intelligence as part of Pakistan's attempt to resurrect what the media has termed its K2 (Kashmir, Khalistan) plan. Whatever the details of the matter, which is for the legal system to decide, Islamabad's use of terror as state policy and its desire to foment trouble in India continues apace. There are, therefore, no easy answers here. New Delhi's only option is to give no quarter and keep the military-diplomatic squeeze on its western neighbour till such time it shows at least the first stirrings of wanting to re-join the civilised world.

# Women at work

Extending social security to informal women workers is the need of the hour. Some sort of minimum employment guarantee scheme by the government is likely to help women informal workers as a stop-gap solution in case no work is available



Imposing lockdown across the country to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus was a step in the right direction. Yet, the lockdown followed by a near complete shutdown of all economic activities brought about a devastating impact on the labour market, particularly women informal workers. What is the magnitude of the impact? The International Labour Organization (ILO 2020) report indicates that an estimated 400 million informal sector workers in India are at risk of abject poverty as a result of the pandemic and that women workers will bear the brunt of job losses the most. This is because of the invisible nature and informal work arrangements of women workers. Moreover, widening gender gaps in workforce participation rates (WPR) that existed before the lockdown have increased during the post-lockdown period. The last national Time Use Survey (1998-99) showed the most unequal gender division of household work in India. While women spend around 4.50 hours per week for looking after children, elderly, sick and disabled, men spend only one hour per week. This apart, women's burden of domestic chores has increased during the pandemic period thereby causing their layoffs.

Trends in women's work will lay bare further the precarious nature of employment of women workers. In India, because of women's unacknowledged and unpaid contribution towards many economic activities, men have a hidden advantage in the labour market as they do not have to share the burden of domestic chores. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), 2018-19 and National Sample Survey (68th round) clearly show that India has recorded one of the lowest WPR in the world. In 2018-19, the share of women engaged in domestic and allied activity together was 57.4 per cent and 60

per cent compared to just 0.5 per cent and 0.6 per cent for men in rural and urban areas respectively. There is also evidence that women's WPR is negatively associated with the presence of young children in the household and that, over time, the burden of child-rearing has increased in India. During 2011-12, 33 per cent of married women with young children participated in the job market, while in 2018-19, it reduced to 24 per cent. In 2018-19, almost 31 per cent of women workers were largely employed as unpaid family helpers.

Among the employed, self-employment is the predominant source of employment for women. Further, among the self-employed women, many of them worked from within the household premises, without having any fixed workplace and written job contracts. They were not eligible for any paid leave and any social security benefits. Only 24 per cent of women workers received wages according to the job contract. Given this precarious situation and the absence of any standard employer-employee relationship, decline in the employment of women workers during the pandemic period is the highest. 40 per cent of women workers who were working during the pre-lockdown period have lost their jobs amidst the lockdown. Rural women were hit the hardest of all. According to the Azim Premji University Covid-19 Livelihoods survey, the share of women reporting job losses was highest compared to men in India during the lockdown. But then, what are the plausible reasons for such poor condition of women workers? The main reason is that women working in the informal sector

face different structural constraints. Rapid assessment studies conducted by the Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST) on women informal workers show that women in poor households work in more vulnerable categories of work such as domestic work, street vending, waste picking, home-based work and construction work. PLFS (2018-19) presents women's employment distribution across industries along with a sectoral break-up. It shows that agriculture is the largest provider of employment (59.5 per cent) followed by manufacturing (13.8 per cent), public administration, health, education (12 per cent), trade, hotel and restaurant (7.2 per cent), transport, storage (1.1 per cent), electricity, water etc. (0.3 per cent) and mining and quarrying (0.2 per cent). In all these sectors, women workers comprise the largest group of landless labourers and they work on daily wage basis in informal work arrangements.

All these sectors have been affected and hit hard by the pandemic. Of all these sectors, public administration, health and education industry are at relatively low risk in terms of job loss, but many of these front-line women workers are employed as voluntary workers like accredited social health activists and anganwadi workers. They are recruited on a contractual basis and are paid honorarium which is significantly lower than the minimum wage. There are about 10.6 million domestic women workers in India, and 82 per cent of them are employed in urban households, with wages lower than the national minimum wage.

The ISST survey reveals that around 83 per cent of women workers faced severe income

drop. All the women workers in the construction sector reported a loss of paid work, while 97 per cent of street vendors had no source of income during the lockdown. Women home-based workers did not have any income in their household since mid-March. Women waste pickers were also hit hard owing to restrictions on movement and they were forced to sell the waste at substantially reduced prices.

In a nutshell, the impact of Covid-19 on women workers is profound and devastating.

Women workers are impacted differently because of gender dysphoria. Before the Covid-19 crisis, India was grappling with a low and declining women's WPR along with a precarious informal employment.

According to the official Employment and Unemployment Survey of National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), WPR for women of the productive age group (15-59 years) was 32 per cent in 2011-12, which declined to 25 per cent in 2018-19. Although the Union government has announced a relief package, the effective implementation of the welfare measures poses a big challenge. Given this background, how will women workers overcome challenges at the time when the pandemic has hit the country's economy hard? Following the recommendation of the National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS 2006), extending social security to informal workers is the need of the hour.

Some sort of minimum employment guarantee scheme by the government is likely to help women informal workers as a stop-gap solution in the case of no availability of work. Finally, the increasing reliance of the government on underpaid women workers in implementing major public schemes like health, nutrition and education without even recognizing them as workers needs to be rectified.

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

**ASIAN VOICES**  
**Filth and human neglect**

If ruin and devastation following torrential rains, floods, and mudslides were not grievous enough postscripts to a disaster, in this country the aftermath is made even worse by the onset of diseases among the population. These may range from common colds, flu, diarrhea, and a slew of other communicable diseases resulting from overcrowding and unsanitary conditions in evacuation centers, to more deadly and "exotic" illnesses such as leptospirosis. Of course, still looming over this scenario in these days of dread is COVID-19, the coronavirus that causes it unaware (and uncaring) that it is aggravating an already bad health situation.

A topic on many people's minds and in the headlines lately is leptospirosis, "a bacterial, water-borne disease that can lead to kidney damage, meningitis, liver failure, respiratory distress and even death when not treated properly," as reported in this paper this week.

Most commonly afflicted are people exposed to "floodwater, mud or food contaminated by the urine of infected animals, such as rats, pigs, dogs, cattle, and goats." The most common mode of entry are open wounds or sores on the feet or skin of people who wade in (or jump into) floodwaters without adequate protection.

"Lepto" cases have swamped the National Kidney and Transplant Institute (NKKI), which had to convert its gym into a ward for patients suffering from this ailment. A total of 89 patients have been admitted since

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**  
Nov. 12, said NKKI executive director Rose Marie Liqueite. This is the day Typhoon "Ulysses" cut a swathe through much of Luzon, including Metro Manila, Bicol, and Northern Luzon.

The aftereffects of these successive typhoons go beyond the damaged homes, muddied streets, flooded fields, and ruined crops that the country beheld soon after the winds died down and the floodwaters receded. Two years ago, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III sounded the alarm about the onslaught of "lepto," warning that after a series of typhoons, the number of cases had risen by 41 percent from the previous year.

The number of cases, at the time numbering over a thousand, was already considered an outbreak, "because they have already breached the epidemic threshold, which means that the cases reported now in these cities and barangays have already gone past the average number for the last five years," said Duque.

Indeed, leptospirosis is likely to add more to the count of the injured and debilitated as well as the death toll. It is far more than just a disease caused by the urine of infected animals in the mud and floods left behind by weather disturbances. It is, in essence, a disease caused by environmental negligence and human indifference. There are things we can still do to stem the tide of "lepto" infestations.

knows how to deal with the farmer's agitation by sitting across the table. Any foreign country's interference in India's internal matters is tantamount to violation of international diplomatic ethics and norms.

Yours, etc., Mihir Kanungo,  
Kolkata, 8 December.

## BE FLEXIBLE

**SIR,** The ongoing strike of farmers is growing stronger with each passing day, with more and more of them joining the stir. The Centre was apparently not prepared for this. The farm laws were passed without taking the farmers' unions into confidence. The farmers had not made any demand for such laws.

What prompted the government to go for such laws so hurriedly, and that too when the country was in the grip of Covid-19? It smacks of some hidden vested forces behind the move to legislate these laws. Tensions are high on our borders. The agitation must not be allowed to linger. It is for the government to show flexibility and shed arrogance.

Yours, etc., Chandan Kumar Nath,  
Guwahati, 8 December.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** editor@thestatesman.com

## Of unacceptable interferences

**SIR,** Apropos the editorial, 'Allowed to fester' (December 8), the government's statement that it would not be correct to link foreign minister S Jaishankar's cancellation of the Canada-led meeting on coronavirus with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's comment on the ongoing farmers' agitation is decidedly at odds with reality. The video call meeting, an initiative of Canadian Foreign Minister François-Philippe Champagne, with his counterparts from various nations, has been a regular affair since March 15. On November 3, Jaishankar took part in

11th such call of the ministerial coordination group on Covid-19 hosted by Canada.

Trudeau's reiteration of his support for the right of farmers to protest on Saturday, despite India expressing its displeasure on his previous comments, was too close to the bone. India had responded saying the Canadian leader's comments were "unwarranted and ill-informed", especially when pertaining to the "internal affairs of a democratic country". The farmers are firm that they want the farm laws repealed, while the government is ready to only make amendments. The BJP gov-

ernment cannot abdicate its responsibilities towards the farmers and pass laws which could promote private players. Democracy requires the government to negotiate with the farmers. The government's steadfast attitude is working as a catalyst in fuelling the agitation.

India has said that the Canadian Prime Minister's comments on the protests are "an unacceptable interference" in India's internal affairs. Meanwhile, 36 British MPs have written a letter to the UK Foreign Secretary and urged him to raise concern over the protests here. The UN Secretary-General's

spokesperson has also said people have a right to protest peacefully and the authorities must allow them to do so.

The government may try to silence foreign leaders and international organisations by saying this is India's internal matter, but it seems to forget that our own Prime Minister said in Houston, "Ab ki baar, Trump sarkar". The US election too was that country's internal matter.

Yours, etc., SSPaul, Nadia, 8 December.

## UNDIPLOMATIC

**SIR,** It is best to ignore Trudeau' (8 December) by Harsha Kakar was excellent and true to the point. The remark made by Canada's

## CONSULT OPPONENTS

**SIR,** While inaugurating the construction of Agra metro rail project, the Prime Minister said that some laws from the past century have become a burden now and needed reform.

Assuming but not admitting that some laws are becoming a burden now, my question to Mr Modi is will he or his party alone decide whether laws are to be reformed? Will he not take the opposition into confidence while introducing any new law? Farmers are not at all happy with new farm laws and have reasons to believe that the government wants to corporatise agriculture. If the government stands for the people, it must shed its stubbornness and must take steps to repeal the farm laws before the situation goes out of hand.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, 8 December.



## Redefining the First Lady's role

ATANU BISWAS

**D**uring his visit to India in February, when President Trump was busy in his meeting with Prime Minister Modi, first lady Melania Trump attended a "happiness class" at a government-run school in Delhi. In fact, the first lady of the United States (FLOTUS) performs possibly "the hardest unpaid job in the world", as Pat Nixon, the wife of former president Richard Nixon, once said. The role of the FLOTUS is considered an "office of honour", and she is always in public attention and under the media scanner.

Baring a few exceptions, when some relative of the President bore the responsibility, the term 'First Lady' applies to the wife of the president. However, what's her role? "The role of First Lady is whatever the First Lady wants it to be," Laura Bush believed, although most of the first ladies carefully tried to balance being perceived as a "queen" of the people while also being a "commoner" who understood their problems and lives.

Despite being daughter-in-law of a former president, Laura Bush got amazed by the sheer number of designer clothes that she was expected to purchase to meet the fashion expectations for a first lady. "After our first year in the White House, our accountant said to George (W Bush), 'It costs a lot to be president,' and he was referring mainly to my clothes," she wrote in her memoir. However, this Thanksgiving, Joe and Jill Biden, the President-elect and the future FLOTUS, penned a joint opinion piece for CNN. "This year, our turkey will be smaller and the clatter of cooking a little quieter," they wrote. And immediately it became apparent that Jill Biden might re-shape the image the FLOTUS.

Martha Washington, the first 'first lady', played hostess for social events, and thus an unwritten template for subsequent first ladies was framed. From her eye-catching fashion to her penchant for politics in the early 1800s, Dolley Madison possibly set the stage for future first ladies.



Mary Todd Lincoln's stylish wardrobe became a topic of gossip. However, the role of the FLOTUS might have been reformulated ever since Eleanor Roosevelt undertook duties beyond just being a hostess, possibly transforming the role of first lady to the high profile one it is today. Mrs. Roosevelt worked on social reform projects, and even the first wife of a presidential candidate to speak at a national convention. However, Eleanor Roosevelt's unprecedented active political role in FDR's presidency, becoming his surrogate in many ways, may be better explained by the physical constraints FDR faced from polio's after-effects.

While Eleanor Roosevelt was dedicated to African-American civil rights, Jacqueline Kennedy focused on historical preservation of architectural treasures, and Lady Bird Johnson paid attention to the envi-

ronment; subsequently the focus of the FLOTUS might have been shifted mostly towards women's and children's issues during Nixon's presidency. This was followed by Betty Ford's positions favoring women's rights, Rosalyn Carter's campaign for effective treatment for mental illness, Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No" drug awareness campaign, Hillary Clinton's focus on health initiatives and women's equality, Laura Bush's efforts on education-related issues, Michelle Obama's works on issues such as childhood obesity, girls' education, and military families, and Melania Trump's drive on well-being, social media usage, and opioid abuse among children. However, while Bess Truman, Mamie Eisenhower, Jacqueline Kennedy, Lady Bird Johnson and Pat Nixon may be better described as "supportive spouses/model wives" in the post-World War II era, the role played by subsequent first ladies was no different – they just went through

adaptation and blended their style of functioning with the changing social problems of modern life while supplementing their husbands.

What can then be regarded a paradigm shift in the role of the first spouse? Well, in her speech at Wellesley College in 1990, Barbara Bush remarked that one day a member of the audience might walk in her footsteps as the president's spouse. "And I wish him well," said Mrs. Bush. Still, no woman could assume the top post and America couldn't get its first 'first gentleman' yet. Even Hillary Clinton waited for her husband's tumultuous second term to end before triggering her own political career. However, there are signs that the country is eager to change.

Come January 20, Kamala Harris will become the first woman vice president, and, who knows, America might get its first woman president within the next few presidential elections as well. A social revolu-

tion of this magnitude, however, is the collective effect of many issues. When Dr. Jill Biden, the Second Lady during Obama's presidency, held her job outside of the political sphere as a professor at Northern Virginia Community College, Gallup polls indicated that most Americans would not object to a president's spouse holding a second career. So, there is no doubt that for some time now America has been ready for a FLOTUS having a personal professional career. They just needed someone to come forward and to break the barrier. Michelle Obama or Melania Trump didn't go that far.

Thus, when Jill Biden, being the first lady of the United States, would teach in her classes, that would have no less impact than the likes of Kamala Harris towards revolutionizing society.

The writer is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

crisis that has followed from the pandemic is not neutral to classes - with the poor, the youth and women suffering more.

### Existing challenges

It is not only the challenges of eradicating poverty and reducing inequality that have become tougher in the pandemic-affected world. Other challenges - e.g. domestic violence, gender differences in the labour market, differences in educational opportunities - have also been accentuated by the pandemic and related developments. Irrespective of the level of development of a country, domestic violence has increased, women find themselves at greater disadvantage in the labour markets and sometimes withdraw from the labour market, and students from lower-income households are dropping out of education.

### Pandemic fatigue

The evening applause for doctors and other front-line workers, which was a practice in several countries during the first wave of the pandemic, was no longer there during the second wave. People no longer accepted shutdowns without question. They started ignoring calls and exhortations for minimising contacts. Policymakers started showing ambivalence in extending support to their economies and saving them from further damage. In sum, societies seem to have been taken over by a kind of fatigue.

Fortunately, vaccines are around the corner, and there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel. However, a key question is whether people will have access to them in an inclusive manner irrespective of the level of development of their country, level of income, race, and social strata. While there will be practical challenges in the roll-out of the vaccine, no less a challenge for mankind is to rise over "vaccine nationalism".

The Daily Star/ANN.

## One year on, lessons from the pandemic

RIZWANUL ISLAM

**I**t's been almost one year since the novel coronavirus was identified in China and reported to WHO. During the past year, the pandemic caused by Covid-19 has spread to the entire world, oversix and a half crore have been infected, and over 15 lakhs have died. We have seen countries suffering from multiple waves of the pandemic, different types of responses to the health challenge, severe crisis hitting the global economy and different types of measures taken in response to the latter. So much was unknown about the disease during its early days that there were differences even among scientists and epidemiologists on measures needed to contain the spread of the virus and mitigate its adverse effects. In the history of civilisation, this is one of the most serious challenges faced by mankind. It is perhaps time to look back and see what the major takeaways from this experience are.

### Disproportionate impact

It is well-known that some countries and regions have been more affected by the pandemic than others. Globally, Europe, America, parts of Latin America and parts of Asia have been more affected than Africa and parts of Asia. Scientists have scratched their heads and research has been done to understand this variation. Explanations ranging from genetic differences and basic hygiene practices of certain races to the timeliness and stringency of measures undertaken at the beginning of the outbreak have been put forward. And yet, it is not clear whether there are convincing explanations of why, for example, the number of infections per million of population is only in double digits in China, Thailand and Vietnam as opposed to thousands in not-too-far-away countries like Bangladesh and India.

### Anti-virus measures

On how to contain the spread of the virus, it is customary to recite the trinity of social distancing, mask-wearing and hand-washing. But the real challenge is their implementation. Human being is a social animal; and the experiences of countries as diverse as Bangladesh, Brazil or Germany show how difficult it is to persuade them to abstain from socialisation and to maintain distance from each other when they do so. People consider attending religious congregations their pious duty and right. Whether it is Eid or Thanksgiving, people are extremely reluctant to forego celebration with their near and dear ones. Maintaining social distance during such occasions gets low priority. Younger people even in developed countries have been seen to go to any extent to arrange and attend parties (there were instances of parties held in remote forest areas as a way of evading law enforcers).

As for wearing masks, issues like personal freedom and democratic rights come into play. While it is easy to preach frequent washing of hands, it can be a far cry for millions of people who have to walk miles just to procure a jar of water for drinking. So, when one is asked what else can one do other than wearing mask and maintaining social distance, the inevitable answer is: precious little.

### Importance of messaging

Countries that were able to put together well-thought-out strategies and send clear messages to the people attained greater success in containing the virus. There are different models of such success stories ranging from authoritarian regimes like in China to democracies like Australia and New Zealand. At the other extreme are countries (e.g. the USA, Switzerland - the lat-

ter, during the second wave) that could not put together such a strategy at the national or local level, and as a result, failed to contain the virus. The importance of clearly-laid-out strategies is also illustrated by the difference in the experience of the same country at different points in time. In Switzerland, for example, the success of containing the first wave could not be replicated during the second wave because of ambivalence and delay in putting in place the needed strategy.

### Health services strained

When the pandemic hit, health service infrastructure was strained and put to test not only in developing countries like Bangladesh but also in high-income countries in Europe and America. In general, the strain was felt more in countries where health service is over-dependent on the private sector. Scrambling to erect makeshift hospitals in parks (USA) and convention centres (Bangladesh) and to transfer patients to nearby countries (The Netherlands) are indicators of a general malaise: neglect of the health sector in public policy.

### The shutdown dilemma

One way of ensuring social distance is to shut down public life, and its effectiveness has been demonstrated in a wide range of situations ranging from Wuhan to New Zealand, and to a number of countries in Europe during the first wave of the virus in the spring of 2020. However, apart from the issue of jeopardising livelihoods, issues like democratic rights of people to move freely have been invoked in various countries. In several countries of Europe, there have been street protests against shutdown of economic activities.

### Raising awareness

At least two of the measures that

are critical to fight the pandemic - viz., social distancing and wearing mask (and to an extent the third one, greater attention to personal hygiene, also) - require changes in human behaviour. Although people in many East Asian countries became familiar with and used to wearing masks when they fought viruses before, the concept of social distancing is rather new. If lack of public awareness about it at the early stage of the pandemic was a major factor, influencing human behaviour continues to remain a challenge even after a year of the fight against the pandemic.

### Lives and livelihoods

The dilemma between saving lives and saving livelihoods is a reality not only in developing countries but in high-income developed countries as well. Support was provided to businesses affected by the shutdown and the economic crisis that ensued. But given the prolonged recession, a repeat of shutdown to contain the second wave of the virus provoked resistance from the business community in several high-income countries.

### The Great Equaliser?

From the early days of the pandemic, people of all classes ranging from heads of governments, political and social leaders, business executives and stars from different fields to ordinary citizens were infected. And that gave rise to a view that the virus would act as a big equaliser in society. But after a year's experience, there is enough reason to doubt whether that has been so in reality. Although anyone can be infected by this virus, the probability of certain classes of people being infected seems to be higher. Lower-income people living in congested housing, immigrants, and minorities face a higher degree of risk compared to higher-income people. Also, the impact of the economic

### 100 YEARS AGO

#### OCCASIONAL NOTE

Very satisfactory progress is recorded in the report on co-operative societies in Bengal during the year ended on June 30, 1920. The co-operative movement has proved its value as a resource in times of calamity or stress. The greatest demand for new societies was in the area affected by the cyclone of September, 1919. An increase in the demand for co-operative store and supply societies, of which the number rose from 18 to 65, is ascribed to the prevailing high prices. Such societies are reported to be doing well on the whole, and the demand for them is still on the increase. Their numbers are small compared with those of the agricultural credit societies, which form over 92 per cent of the total, but it is satisfactory to find that the possibilities of distributive co-operation are beginning to be realised, and the whole movement is so well supervised that there is every reason to hope that the new societies will be guided on the right lines. The Registrar reports that the co-operative store societies acted as a great check to profiteering and have successfully brought home to the people the manifold advantages of co-operation. The Registrar refers to the scheme for a store in Calcutta which was initiated at a meeting of representatives of different co-operative societies. He remarks that, as the working capital of these societies is over Rs 24,00,000 such a store, if successfully run, could become a very large and advantageous enterprise.

#### NEWS ITEMS

#### RANGOON COLLEGES

The University boycott movement has spread considerably and today most of the schools are affected. Reports have been received that high schools in the District are following suit. At Bassein, Letpadan, Pegu, Thaton, Moulmein, and other places, students are said to be on strike and the movement which is being strongly propagated is spreading to other places. Two instances of violence have been reported the victims being Barry and Cooper, Anglo-Indian students from the Rangoon College who were stoned in front of the Government High School on their way to College. This is said to have been done by a group of Burmans who were loitering on a footpath. Barry's head was cut, but Cooper got off with bruises.

#### VOTERS ROUGHLY HANDLED

Lahore, Dec 8  
Polling in Lahore today for candidates for the Legislative Assembly and the Punjab Legislative Council caused unusual excitement, and wild scenes were witnessed in some places. There were 34 polling stations in different parts of the city to enable all of its 15,496 electors to have an opportunity of voting. The non-cooperators who had assembled before the polling stations in their hundreds, and in some places in their thousands, in spite of the definite instructions from non-cooperation leaders not to commit any violence, roughly handled almost all the voters who went to the polls, and assaulted several candidates, some of whom were valks and barristers. A large number of voters did not go to the polls at all after witnessing the treatment voters were receiving at the hands of the mob.

#### MEMORIALS TO INDIAN TROOPS

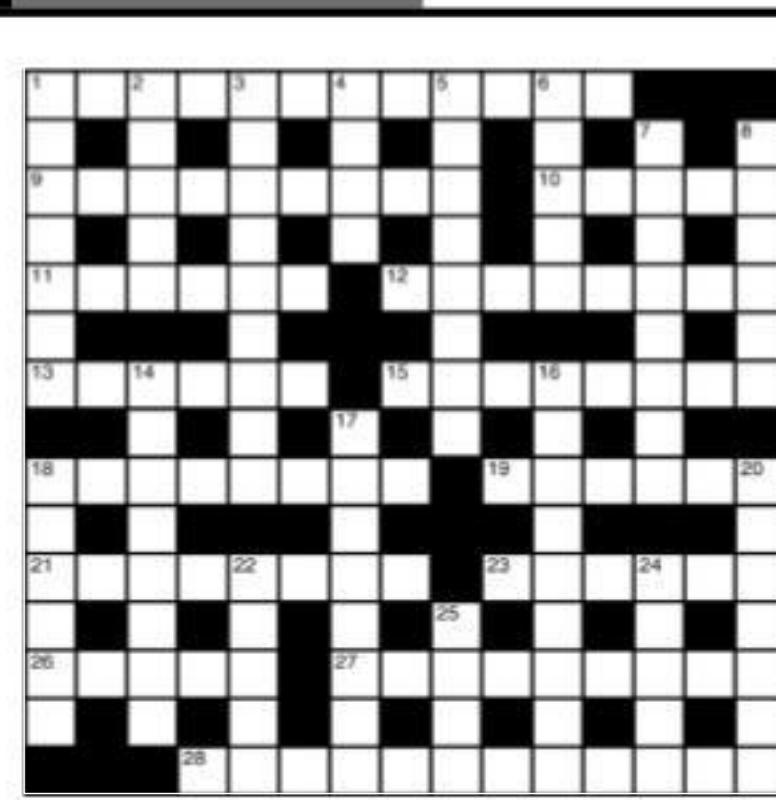
An announcement was made recently by the Indian Soldiers' Board as to the general intentions of the Government of India in regard to the erection of war memorials in this country and elsewhere. The scheme provides for a Central War Memorial at Delhi which will take the form of a memorial arch. There are also to be memorial tablets in individual villages, which will commemorate those who lost their lives in the war. Up to the present arrangements have been made for the provision of 500 tablets to be erected in those villages which furnished a high figure of recruits. As far as memorials in the theatre of operations are concerned, the original intention of the Government of India was to construct a separate memorial to the Indian Army.

#### VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

Patna, Dec 8  
The Bihar Government have issued the following Press communiqué: The development of village administration is one of the important questions to be decided by the Reformed Council and Acts dealing with the subject have recently been passed in the Bengal Presidency and in the United Provinces. The Local Government consider that the decision of the new Council on this matter will be facilitated if definite proposals are drawn up by a representative committee. The Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council has, therefore, decided to appoint such a committee, consisting of the following members: Mr. Hammond, President, Mr. J.A. Hubback, S.B. Dhavle Hallett, Raja Bahadur Kirtyanand Singh, Khan Bahadur Khwaja Muhammad Nur, Rai Bahadur Purnendu Narayan Singh and Babu Braja Sundar Das.

#### CROSSWORD

NO 28159



#### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

S	I	T	C	O	M	P	H	Y	L	U	M	I	N	T	E
Y	I	R	T	I	S	E	A	G	E	B	E	A	I	O	T
S	N	U	B	L	O	D	S	T	O	S	T	Y	E	C	H
B	R	E	A	S	T	G	A	N	G	L	I	N	T	R	U
E	G	A	U	G	E	B	E	Y	E	B	E	A	I	O	T
T	I	C	K	A	N	Q	N	E	A	U	U	U	U	U	U
F	E	V	E	R	I	S	H	U	P	I	P	S	S	S	S
R	M	M	E	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
H	E	M	I	S	P	H	E	R	E	L	L	L	L	L	L
S	U	L	K	U	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
A	R	M	L	E	T	S	P	L	E	E	E	E	E	E	E

#### ACROSS

- 1 Handout from salesman functions to stop people carriers beginning to depreciate (8,4)
- 9 European certainly next to file complaint (9)
- 10 Old cars overturned early in the morning (5)
- 11 Greetings from regulars in Ukrainian powerboat (3,3)
- 12 Long to accept piece of advice in place of PPE? (8)
- 13 Trump will accept no tiebreaker (3-3)
- 15 Colourful plant found in Sweden after climate changed (8)
- 18 Relatively short and thick uninvited guest (8)
- 19 Mug with drink for old copper (6)
- 21 What's the reason to push audibly (9)
- 23 Model that's still law, with time running out (6)
- 26 University dons joke before English test (5)
- 27 American football authority baffled about British making easy money (1,4,4)
- 28 Stock exchange in court over former PM accepting obsolete currency (6,6)

#### DOWN

- 1 Wave Muppet Republican inside (7)
  - 2 Decorated column found in wasteland (5)
  - 3 Trip often, scattering remaining income (3,6)
  - 4 Temperature dropped in hot water layer (4)
  - 5 Song is able to delight passing
  - 6 Strange graduate's dance (5)
  - 7 Former doorman is overseas trader (8)
  - 8 Points repeatedly to nurse close to collapse after advanced test (6)
  - 14 Mostly employ Union to replace insurgents, initially, after an uprising in submarine (8)
  - 16 Smoker returned an offensive letter from Athens after a short time (5,4)
  - 17 Person who won't worship Etruscan bust (8)
  - 18 Mixture of wee, gas and effluent (6)
  - 20 Mongoose is reportedly only pet (7)
  - 22 Obscene magazine shows medical procedure (5)
  - 24 Exchange rubbish vehicle (5)
  - 25 Counterfeit bar of chocolate left out (4)
- </



Foreign capital is welcome, foreign innovation is welcome, but we are equally keen that safety and security of the country is also important

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD  
UNION MINISTER

## THUMBNAILS

**Ericsson plea:** Swedish telecom gear maker Ericsson on Monday urged the government to reduce spectrum prices in India and speed up the process to make them available to the service providers. At the fourth edition of the India Mobile Congress on Tuesday, Ericsson head (South East Asia, Oceania and India) Nunzio Mirtillo said an encouraging policy framework will help telecom operators move to 5G network. "I strongly encourage India to prioritise actions to incentivise investments in the digital infrastructure, including making spectrum more affordable and speeding up the availability of spectrum," Mirtillo said.

**Spam calls:** India has dropped to 9th position in terms of number of spam calls received by users globally, while Brazil continues to stay on top, according to a report prepared by Truecaller. Spam calls received by users in India have decreased by 34 per cent. Despite a reduction in the amount of spam calls received, India still makes it into the top 10 most spammed countries, said the report.

**BPCL privatisation:** Privatisation-bound Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd's new owner will after three years of takeover get a right to decide on retaining the business or selling subsidised LPG, which in the intervening period will be transferred to a new unit to continue the flow of government subsidy, a top official said. Government subsidy will continue to be given to BPCL customers if the new owner chooses to retain the business after three years, the official said.

**Motorola:** Motorola has announced the launch of its latest offering in the affordable segment ~ moto g9 power. The phone comes with segment-leading 6000 mAh battery and a 64MP ultra high-resolution triple camera. It has been priced at Rs 11,999, said a Press release.

# Fitch revises GDP forecast, sees contraction at 9.4%

Country needs to repair balance sheets and increase caution about long-term planning, says Fitch

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

**F**itch Ratings today raised India's GDP forecast to -9.4 per cent in the current fiscal year to March 2021 from a previously projected contraction of 10.5 per cent after the economy staged a sharper rebound in the second quarter.

In its Global Economic Outlook, Fitch said the coronavirus recession has inflicted severe economic scarring and the country needs to repair balance sheets and increase caution about long-term planning.

"We now expect GDP to contract 9.4 per cent in the fiscal year to end March 2021 (FY21) (+1.1 percentage point), followed by +11 per cent growth (unchanged) and +6.3 per cent growth (+0.3pp) in the following years," the rating agency said.

The projections compare to a GDP growth of 4.2 per cent in fiscal 2019-20 (April 2019 to March 2020) and 6.7 per cent annual expansion between

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

► "We now expect GDP to contract 9.4 per cent in the fiscal year to end March 2021 (FY21) (+1.1 percentage point), followed by +11 per cent growth (unchanged) and +6.3 per cent growth (+0.3pp) in the following years," the rating agency said.

► The projections compare to a GDP growth of 4.2 per cent in fiscal 2019-20 (April 2019 to March 2020) and 6.7 per cent annual expansion between 2015 and 2019.

2015 and 2019.

In September, Fitch had sharply lowered its forecast for India's gross domestic product (GDP) to a contraction of 10.5 per cent in the current fiscal 2020-21 (FY21) versus its previous estimate of 5 per cent contraction.

On Tuesday, Fitch said the Indian economy staged a sharper rebound in the July-September quarter from the coronavirus-induced recession. GDP fell 7.5 percent year-



on-year, up from -23.9 per cent in the April-June quarter.

"The rebound in activity was especially sharp in the manufacturing sector: output reached its pre-pandemic level in Q3Q20 (July-September), and the manufacturing PMI hints at further gains," it said adding that manufacturing is buoyed by strong demand for autos and pharmaceutical products, in particular.

The rebound in the services

sector was more muted amid continued social distancing, with containment measures scaled back only gradually.

"The outlook is brighter owing to an expected roll-out of various vaccines in 2021. India has pre-ordered 1.6 billion doses including 500 million doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. Distribution should allow a faster-than-expected easing of social-distancing restrictions and boost sentiment," it said.

However, it seems likely that the vaccine roll-out over the next 12 months will not reach the majority of the people given the huge logistical and distribution challenges in a heavily populated country like India, Fitch said.

Regional shutdowns are likely in the next few months while the virus is still spreading. The coronavirus recession, it said, has nevertheless inflicted severe economic scarring.

"The need to repair balance sheets, increased caution about long-term planning, and firm closures will limit investment demand. Fur-

thermore, increased financial-sector weakness amid deteriorating asset quality will hold back credit provision," the rating agency said.

The failure of another bank in recent weeks – the third failure in the past 16 months – underlines the challenges in the financial sector.

Consumer prices have continued to accelerate in recent months, buoyed by lingering supply disruptions.

This, Fitch said, has deterred the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) from resuming its easing cycle.

"We think inflation has now peaked and should start to decelerate rapidly on favourable base effects and an easing of supply disruptions. This should provide room for the RBI to cut interest rates in 2021," it said.

Fitch saw consumer price inflation at 4.9 per cent in the current fiscal, which would ease to 3.5 per cent in the next.

For the global economy, it projected a less severe decline in GDP at -3.7 per cent in 2020 compared to -4.4 per cent in the September projection.

## Need more reforms, states must take lead, says Kant

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

The Niti Aayog CEO stressed that the next wave of reforms must come from states.

If 10-12 states grow at higher rates, then there is no reason why India won't grow at higher rates. We have asked union territories to privatise discoms. Discoms must become far more competitive and provide cheap power," he said.

Replying to a question on protests by farmers, mainly from Punjab and Haryana, against the Centre's new farm laws, Kant said the agriculture sector needs reforms.

"It is very important to understand this that MSPs (minimum support price) will be there, mandis will remain...farmers must have a choice to sell their products as they benefit out of this," he noted.

On sourcing of raw material for manufacturing electric batteries in India, Kant pointed out that lithium (which is used for manufacturing batteries) is available in large quantities across the world, including Australia.

"We don't anticipate any shortage of lithium," he said.

## Everstone sells Everise to Brookfield for \$450 million

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 8 DECEMBER

is focused on India and Southeast Asia, managing assets in excess of \$5 billion across private equity, real estate, infrastructure, and venture capital. Everise, co-founded by Everstone Group's Singapore-based customer experience platform Everise for a reported \$450 million.

The companies did not reveal the value of the deal in their media statement today, but sources pegged the value of the transaction at around \$450 million.

Through the sale, Everstone has reportedly made a three-fold return on its four-year-old investment in Everise, but sources pegged the value of the transaction at around \$450 million.

The Everstone Group is a Singapore-based private equity firm founded by Indians Atul Kapur and Sameer Sain, and

the health & wellness, travel & hospitality, media & communications, financial services and logistics & supply chain sectors. The Singapore-based Everise employs 12,000 globally with offices in 13 cities, including the US, Guatemala, the Philippines and Malaysia, the statement said.

Aditya Joshi, a senior vice-president at Brookfield Business Partners, which is the acquirer, said in Everise they see a high-quality customer experience solutions provider with deep domain capabilities in healthcare and tech verticals and serving a diverse set of marquee global customers.

For Everstone this is the second transaction involving Canadian PE giant Brookfield, which reportedly pipped global outsourcing provider Platinum to clinch the deal.

Brookfield will buy up to 95 per cent in Everise, but co-founder Agarwal will continue as the CEO, Everstone said in the statement.

Everise, which had revenue of \$300 million and an operating profit of \$40 million in FY20, provides services in

## Target to up MSME share to GDP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HYDERABAD, 8 DECEMBER

MSME is the backbone of Indian economy...a total 30 per cent of the GDP in Indian economy is contributed by the MSME. Out of our total exports, 48 per cent is also from MSME. At the same time up till now MSME created 11 crore jobs. And that is one of the reasons why MSME is the backbone of the country. Now we have decided to make this 30 per cent contribution to GDP to 50 per cent and 48 per cent of the exports contribution to 60 per cent. And we want to create five crore jobs.

NITIN GADKARI  
UNION MINISTER

MSME created 11 crore jobs. And that is one of the reasons why MSME is the backbone of the country," he said.

"Now we have decided to make this 30 per cent contribution to GDP to 50 per cent and 48 per cent of the exports contribution to 60 per cent. And we want to create five crore

invest in India, the Union minister said that the country currently has an excellent network of roads, abundantly available power and water and reformed labour and other administrative laws.

He said his ministry was planning to take up 22 new green highway road projects across the country.

According to him, though there is an impact of Covid-19 globally, the Indian industry may get some opportunities of it.

Lauding the achievements of the Indian automobile industry, Gadkari said the sector witnesses Rs 4.5 lakh crore turnover annually and the country can become a global hub for automobile manufacturing.

He said currently research is going on to use hydrogen fuel cells as an alternative source of energy for automobiles.

## Rupee rises 30 paise, stock indices scale new peaks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 8 DECEMBER

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was up 0.01 per cent to 90.80.

Meanwhile, foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market as they purchased shares worth Rs 3,792.06 crore on a net basis on Monday, according to exchange data.

"The Indian rupee appreciated against the US currency on the back of surging dollar inflows into local equities. However, possible central bank intervention to mop up dollar inflows trimmed gains on the local unit," said Sriram Iyer, senior research analyst at Reliance Securities.

"The rupee traded strongly on the back of inflow of money into capital markets as rupee took support near 73.95 levels," Jateen Trivedi, senior research analyst (commodity & currency) at LKP Securities, said.

According to Devarsh Vakil, deputy head, retail research, HDFC Securities, Indian rupee appreciated sharply on the back of strong foreign fund inflows in domestic equities.

"The recent pause in dol-

► The rupee surged by 30 paise to settle at a one-and-a-half month high of 73.60 against the US dollar on Tuesday.

► After touching a record intra-day high of 45,742.23 points, the 30-share BSE index

climbed 181.54 points or 0.40 per cent to finish at 45,608.51 points.

► Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty rose for the sixth consecutive day, up 37.20 points or 0.28 per cent to 13,392.95 points – its new lifetime closing high. It touched its intraday record of 13,435.45 points in early trade.

UltraTech Cement was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 3 per cent, followed by TCS, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech, Infosys and Kotak Bank.

On the other hand, Sun Pharma, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, Tech Mahindra, ONGC and Asian Paints were among the laggards.

"Domestic equities continued to defy weak global markets by registering gains. Financials (mainly supported by PSU banks), IT and Reliance Industries supported market today, while profit bookings were seen in phar-

ma and metal packs," said Binod Modi, head-strategy at Reliance Securities.

Continued foreign portfolio investment flows remained a dominant factor and given the consistent weakening of dollar along with increased possibility of new fiscal stimulus, domestic equities are expected to continue getting support from FPIs in the near term, he added.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net buyers in the capital market as they purchased shares worth Rs 3,792.06 crore on Monday, according to provisional exchange data.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended in the red. Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading on a negative note in early deals.

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude futures slipped 0.35 per cent to \$48.62 per barrel.

## Govt invites fresh bids for Pawan Hans sale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

lier decided to disinvest its entire equity shareholding in Pawan Hans by way of strategic disinvestment along with transfer of management control.

The PIM said that heliport at Rohini, built on land allotted to civil aviation ministry under perpetual lease granted by the Delhi Development Authority, shall not form part of the proposed transaction, and will be demerged from Pawan Hans Ltd (PHL).

"Proposal to provide the successful bidder with right to use over Rohini Heliport (currently being used by PHL) for a period of 10 years, is under consideration. If approved, such right to use shall be available from the date of consummation of the proposed transaction," the preliminary information memorandum said.

The government had ear-

years too," Takkar said.

**India benefits of 5G:** India is poised to derive full benefit of global investments on 5G standards and ecosystems in the coming two-three years, as equipment prices come down and devices become available, chairman of Bharti Airtel, Sunil Mittal, said on Tuesday.

Terming space as the "next frontier of communications", Mittal said India's proactive lead in the space industry and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and department of space's call to private sector, would ensure that advantages move in the country's favour in space communication industry, as well.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 8 DECEMBER

one and everything together, including machines, objects and devices.

India, he said, is today among the best digitally connected nations in the world.

"In order to maintain this lead, policy steps are needed to accelerate the early roll-out of 5G, and to make it affordable and available everywhere," he said. "I assure you that Jio will pioneer the 5G revolution in India in the second half of 2021."

Jio's 5G will be powered by the indigenously-developed network, hardware and technology components. "Jio's 5G service will be a testimony to your inspiring vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat." Jio and other service providers such as Airtel and Vodafone Idea

## INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS

India is today among the best digitally connected nations in the world. In order to maintain this lead, policy steps are needed to accelerate the early roll-out of 5G, and to make it affordable and available everywhere. I assure you that Jio will pioneer the 5G revolution in India in the second half of 2021!

MUKESH AMBANI  
CHAIRMAN, RIL

There are challenges related to tariffs, levies, spectrum availability and pricing but the government's support and strength of current progressive policies would enable the sector to script its "success story".

RAVINDER TAKKAR  
CEO, VODAFONE IDEA

India is poised to derive full benefit of global investments on 5G standards and ecosystems in the coming two-three years, as equipment prices come down and devices become available

ability and pricing but the government's support and strength of current progressive policies would enable the sec-

tector to script its "success story". Vodafone Idea CEO Ravinder Takkar also said that aspects like India-specific 5G

offer 4G services. The country, however, also has a 2G network that supports only voice calling and text messaging.

Vodafone Idea on Tuesday said there are challenges related to tariffs, levies, spectrum availabil-

ity and pricing but the government's support and strength of current progressive policies would enable the sec-





*It's like a third-world country ~ these ballots pouring in from everywhere, using machinery that nobody knows ownership, nobody knows anything about. They have glitches, as they call them.*

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

IN LATEST ATTACK ON ELECTION RESULTS

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	18°C	12°C CL
LONDON	17°C	9°C S
DUBAI	30°C	25°C H
SAN FRANCISCO	13°C	04°C H
NEW YORK	10°C	07°C S
MOSCOW	16°C	09°C H

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

## THUMBNAILS



People at the Westminster Bridge, in London. AFP

**Austria avalanche:** Authorities in Austria issued avalanche warnings for the east of the country as 4,000 homes there were without electricity and one man was injured while on a back-country skiing tour. Switzerland and Italy saw massive snowfalls over the weekend. AP

**British Columbia province Speaker:** Raj Chouhan, an Indian-origin legislator in Canada, has been elected as the Speaker of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly, becoming first from the community to occupy the post, according to a media report. PTI

**Chuck Yeager, 1st to break sound barrier, dies at 97**

WASHINGTON, 8 DECEMBER

Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Charles "Chuck" Yeager (97), the World War II fighter pilot ace and quintessential test pilot who showed he had the "right stuff" when in 1947 he became the first person to fly faster than sound, has died. Yeager died Monday, his wife, Victoria Yeager, said on his Twitter account. "It is w/profound sorrow, I must tell you that my life love General Chuck Yeager passed just before 9pm ET. An incredible life well lived, America's greatest Pilot & a legacy of strength, adventure, & patriotism will be remembered forever."

Yeager's death is "a tremendous loss to our nation," NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said.

He was "the most righteous of all those with the right stuff," said Maj. Gen. Curtis Bedke, commander of the Air Force Flight Test Center at Edwards. Yeager, from a small town of West Virginia, flew for more than 60 years, including piloting an X-15 to near 1,000 mph at Edwards in October 2002 at age 79. AP

## Husband-wife first Indian-origin recipients of vaccine against Covid in UK

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

An 87-year-old man and his 83-year-old wife from the north east of England on Tuesday became the first Indian-origin couple in the world to get a vaccine against Covid, after they got injected with their first of two doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech jab at a hospital in Newcastle.

Dr Hari Shukla, a race relations campaigner based in Tyne and Wear, had been contacted by the National Health Service (NHS) based on the criteria set for the world's first vaccine to receive regulatory approvals in the UK last week.

His wife, Ranjan, then volunteered for the jab as she also

falls within the first phase of people aged 80 and over, care home workers as well as NHS workers at high risk eligible to receive the "life-saving jab".

"Hari Shukla and his wife Ranjan have become the first two patients at Newcastle Hospitals and two of the first people in the world to receive the Covid vaccine," Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust said. They join 90-year-old Margaret "Maggie" Keenan from Coventry as the very first in the world to receive her shot, followed by 81-year-old William Shakespeare in Warwickshire as the second.

"I'm so pleased we are hopefully coming towards the end of this pandemic and I am delighted to be doing my bit



by having the vaccine, I feel it is my duty to do so and do whatever I can to help," said Shukla, who was born in Kenya and whose father hailed from Mumbai. "Having been in contact with the NHS [National Health Service], I know how hard they all work and the

greatest respect for them they have a heart of gold and I am grateful for everything they have done to keep us safe," he said.

Shukla, who has been honoured with an MBE, OBE and CBE for his work as the Director of the Tyne and Wear Race

Equality Council over the years, was notified by the NHS based on the criteria set by the UK's Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation as part of a phased rollout plan based on those at the highest risk of death from the deadly virus.

"Today marks a huge step forward in the UK's fight against coronavirus, as we begin delivering the vaccine to the first patients across the whole country. I am immensely proud of the scientists who developed the vaccine, members of the public who took part in trials, and the NHS who have worked tirelessly to prepare for rollout," said British Prime Minister Prime Johnson.

However, he struck a note

of caution to warn that mass vaccination will take time and urged the public to remain "clear-eyed" and continue to follow the lockdown rules over the winter months ahead.

The NHS said it is undertaking the biggest and most highly anticipated immunisation campaign in history at 50 hospital hubs, with more starting vaccinations over the coming weeks and months as the programme ramps up after the first set of doses arrived from Pfizer's manufacturing site in Belgium.

"We will look back on today, V-day, as a key moment in our fight back against this terrible disease, and I am proud our health services across the United Kingdom are about to

embark on our largest ever vaccination programme," said Health Secretary Matt Hancock, who got teary-eyed during television interviews on Tuesday as he declared he felt "proud to be British".

Since the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine got the green light from the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) last week, the NHS said its workers have been working around the clock to manage the large-scale logistical challenge of deploying the vaccine. "Coronavirus is the greatest health challenge in NHS history, taking loved ones from us and disrupting every part of our lives," said Sir Simon Stevens, NHS Chief Executive.

## UK PM to visit Brussels amid Brexit deadlock

I'm always hopeful, but I've got to be honest, the situation is very tricky: Johnson

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 8 DECEMBER

**B**ritish Prime Minister Boris Johnson will fly to Brussels this week for crunch talks to try and break the deadlock with the European Union (EU) over a post-Brexit trade agreement ahead of the December 31 deadline.

The clock is ticking for the end of the Brexit transition period and unless the UK and EU are able to thrash out and ratify a deal by the end of this month, Britain will leave the 27-member economic bloc on January 1, 2021, with the prospect of tariffs on goods as both sides trade on World Trade Organisation (WTO) terms. "I'm always hopeful, but I've got to be honest, the situation at the moment is very tricky," Johnson said.

But he added that he remained optimistic and hopes for "the power of sweet reason". "We will see where we get to in the course of the next two days, but I think the UK government's position is that we are willing to engage at any level, political or otherwise, we are willing to try anything. But there are just limits beyond



which no sensible, independent government or country could go and people have got to understand that," he said. Johnson and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen issued a joint statement on Monday night after their respective Chief Negotiators, Michel Barnier and Lord David Frost, failed to overcome the final hurdles in three key areas of divergence. "We agreed that the conditions for finalising an agreement are not there due to the remaining significant differences on three critical issues: level playing field, governance and fisheries, the joint statement noted.

"We asked our Chief Negotiators and their teams to prepare an overview of the remaining differences to be discussed in a physical meeting in Brussels in the coming days," it said. The two leaders spent over an hour talking on the phone on Monday

night but failed to resolve any of the key remaining differences. While no date has been set for their face-to-face meeting, it is expected either before or after a scheduled EU summit on Thursday.

Barnier and Frost, meanwhile, will meet on Tuesday to draw up a list of the outstanding differences between the two sides, ahead of the EU summit.

The UK and EU have been trading for years without paying tariffs or conducting customs or border checks, all of which is set to change at the end of the Brexit transition period unless they are able to agree a new pact. The major stumbling blocks to such a pact remain a set of shared rules and standards, or level playing field, to ensure businesses in one country do not have an unfair advantage over their competitors in others.

Brussels wants the UK to follow EU rules closely in areas such as workers' rights and environmental regulations, but Britain says the very basis of the Brexit vote in the June 2016 referendum was to break free from following common rules and reassert national sovereignty. Linked with this, is the

disagreement over how any future trading disputes should be resolved and the role of the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg.

Another area of divergence is fishing, with the EU warning that without ongoing access to UK waters for its fleets, UK fishermen will no longer have special access to EU markets to sell their goods. With the UK keen to assert sovereign control over its territorial waters, with the issue seen more of a matter of pride. France has been at the head of a group of countries, including the Netherlands, Spain and Italy, resisting any attempt to give ground on fishing rights or the level playing field. Germany, which holds the rotating EU presidency, Sweden and eastern European states are understood to be keener to find a compromise if European unity is maintained. Irish foreign minister Simon Coveney summed things up to say that a deal would require a change in approach.

"The next two days need to be very different to the last two days. In Brussels certainly the mood is starting to shift to contingency planning for a no-deal," he warned.

## Pressure mounts on Hungary, Poland to unlock EU stimulus

BRUSSELS, 8 DECEMBER

Germany's Europe minister said Tuesday that further delaying the European Union's landmark 1.82 trillion-euro (\$ 2.21 trillion) long-term budget and coronavirus recovery package would be irresponsible as diplomats envisage a solution without Poland and Hungary, the two EU states holding up the measure.

Speaking ahead of a video conference of European affairs ministers, Michael Roth said the stimulus is crucial for many European countries whose economies have been devastated by the pandemic. But Poland and Hungary, who agreed on the deal in July, are now vetoing the package because of a mechanism that would allow the EU to cut off funds to countries that violate the bloc's democratic standards.

Germany, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU, has been deploying efforts to find a compromise before a summit of European leaders in Brussels starting Thursday, where the topic will top the agenda..

The social and economic consequences of the crisis become more visible every day," Roth said. It would be irresponsible to further delay essential support to our citizens. We need to rapidly unlock the financial support which is so critical for many member states."

Both Poland and Hungary, have said they fear the EU mechanism will be used to punish their values.

If EU leaders fail to adopt the budget for 2021-2027 before the end of the year, the bloc will continue to spend but function on limited resources, with a maximum of one-twelfth of the budget for the previous financial year to be spent each month.

Many projects for Poland and Hungary which are already being formally investigated by the EU for their potential violations of the rule of law could be held up. AP

*America*" that "no one reasonably would buy more from any one of those vaccines because we didn't know which one would work and which one would be better than the other."

Adm. Brett Giroir, assistant secretary for health administration, told "CBS This Morning" the U.S. expects to be able to vaccinate about 20 million people this month, 20 million to 25 million in January and another 20 million to 25 million in February with the Pfizer vaccine and another vaccine from drugmaker Moderna, assuming both receive FDA emergency authorization.

The revelation comes as Trump's plans to host a White House summit aimed at celebrating the expected approval of the first vaccine later this week. His administration is seeking to tamp down public skepticism over the vaccine and secure a key component of the GOP President's legacy.

The focus was to be on the administration's plans to distribute and administer the vaccine, but officials from President-elect Joe Biden's transition team, which will oversee the bulk of the largest vaccination program in the nation's history once he takes office, were not invited.

The decision not to lock in additional Pfizer purchases last summer was first reported by The New York Times. Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told NBC the administration is "continuing to work across manufacturers to expand the availability of releasable, of FDA-approved vaccine as quickly as possible... We do still have that option for an additional 500 million doses."

The "Operation Warp Speed" summit will feature Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and a host of government experts, state leaders and business executives, as the White House looks to explain that the vaccine is safe and lay out the administration's plans to bring it to the American people. Officials from the pharmaceutical companies developing the vaccines were not expected to attend, despite receiving invitations, according to people familiar with the matter. Some expressed concerns about the event contributing to the politicization of the vaccine development process and potentially further inhibiting public confidence in the drugs.



FILE PICTURE

A group of chinstrap penguins walk on top of an iceberg floating near Lemaire Channel, Antarctica.

## No more tax-free shopping in Britain from 1 January

## HASAN SUROOR

LONDON, 8 DECEMBER

Global Indians with a taste for tax-free British luxury goods had better start looking for alternative shopping destinations on their next foreign outing. For, in a move that has sent shockwaves through Britain's business and tourism circles, Boris Johnson's government has decided to scrap tax-free shopping, including at airports, for all non-European tourists once Britain leaves the European Union (EU) on 31 December, deal or no deal.

So, no more cheap deals at Harrods and Harvey Nichols, or discounted cosmetics at Heathrow though in a sign of the power of the tobacco and alcohol lobby, cigarettes and booze will remain exempt from the new scheme. Clue: a number of ex-MPs, ministers and civil servants are linked to tobacco and drinks industry as advisers, consultants and board members.

The move makes Britain the only country in Europe not to offer tax-free shopping to international visitors prompting warnings that it would deter international visitors from

coming to the country and cost the economy millions of pounds in lost revenue it earns from tourism and retail sales. According to Visit Britain, the agency that promotes British tourism, international tourists spent £6 billion on shopping in the UK in 2018.

barely weeks away. Some 700,000 jobs could be lost, according to bosses of leading stores such as Marks & Spencer and Selfridges, and airport managements who have written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak pointing out that the decision would put Britain at disadvantage, not to mention have a material impact on jobs and manufacturing in this sector," warned Thierry Andretta, the boss of luxury handbag brand, Mulberry, accusing the government of being "short-sighted".

It is feared that Britain could lose up to £60 million pounds a day because of the likely impact of the move. This at a time when the retail sector, especially luxury goods trade, is already reeling from the impact of the pandemic and economic uncertainty caused by Brexit which is

other countries, and the stores and jobs will follow within months," said the head of the Association of International Retail (AIR) Paul Barnes urging the chancellor to "look again at this devastating decision" as businesses are already decimated by pandemic lockdowns braced themselves for more losses and uncertainty likely to be inflicted by Brexit.

The government has given no convincing explanation other than that the tax relief is costly and vulnerable to fraud. But it is widely seen as a symbolic assertion of British "sovereignty" after Brexit. The whole idea of leaving the European Union was sold as an issue of Britain's sovereign right to control its own borders and tax regime without "interference" from bureaucrats in Brussels. It was summed up in the catchy slogan "Take back control" and many of those who bought it are experiencing "buyer's remorse" as the reality hits them.

And they include many Indian expats who voted for Brexit on the back of a promise to liberalise immigration rules for citizens from Commonwealth countries. In the event, what is happening is exactly the opposite with Priti Patel, Britain's Indian-origin Home Secretary—a hardline Brexiteer—threatening to tighten up immigration, restricting it to only highly-qualified professionals with firm job offers and substantial money in the bank.

The decision to scrap tax-free shopping is also likely to affect mostly Asian visitors who, unlike Americans or Canadians, come to Britain with the specific purpose of shopping. Big spenders from China and India, the so-called cash cows, form the lifeline of Britain's luxury market thanks to free-tax bonus.

But all is not lost. This being British bureaucracy, the proposed new rules offer a Catch-22 option: if you have the goodies you have bought in a store delivered directly to your overseas address you will still be eligible for VAT-free shopping. Except that the cost of shipping goods internationally is most likely to be a lot more than the tax. In other words, you will be better off paying the local tax than having your stuff shipped to your overseas address.

Trump thought courts were key to winning, Judges disagreed

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 8 DECEMBER

President Donald Trump and allies say their lawsuits aimed at subverting the 2020 election and reversing his loss to Joe Biden would be substantiated, if only judges were allowed to hear the cases.

There is a central flaw in the argument. Judges have heard the cases and have been among the harshest critics of the legal arguments put forth by Trump's legal team, often dismissing them with scathing language of repudiation. This has been true whether the judge has been appointed by a Democrat or a Republican, including those named by Trump himself. The judicial rulings that have rejected Trump's unfounded claims of widespread voter fraud have underscored not only the futility of the lame duck president's brazen attempt to sabotage the people's will but also the role of the courts in checking his unprecedent efforts to stay in power.

On Monday, U.S. District Judge Linda Parker threw out a lawsuit challenging Michigan's election results that had been filed two days after the state certified the results for Biden. Parker, appointed by President Barack Obama, said the case embodied the phrase "This ship has sailed."

"This lawsuit seems to be less about achieving the relief plaintiffs seek ... and more about the impact of their allegations on people's faith in the democratic process and their trust in our government."

The lawsuit filed on behalf of a group of voters claimed Biden benefited from fraud, alleging, as in much of the other litigation, a massive





For more updates

'END OF ROAD'  
Mino Raiola has sensationally claimed that Paul Pogba (photo, left) will not sign a new contract at Manchester United. In an interview with the Italian media, the super-agent publicly announced that his 'unhappy' client had no long-term future at Old Trafford.

www.thestatesman.com

## THUMBNAILS

**Pak complaint:** Pakistan's cricketers complained on Monday about being affected "mentally and physically" by New Zealand's Covid-19 protocols, which had kept the players holed up in their quarantine hotel for nearly two weeks. They were to step out of it, though.

**Railway plea:** Some former Indian Railway cricketers on Monday announced they had formed an association, requesting it to allow their representative, in accordance with the Indian cricket board's constitution, to attend the institution's annual general meeting.

**Test setback:** The West Indies will be without Kemar Roach and Shane Dowrich when they take on New Zealand in the final Test beginning on Friday at the Basin Reserve. Both will return to the Caribbean: Roach's father has died and Dowrich has his personal reasons.

**Langer's plan:** Australia coach Justin Langer on Monday hinted that he might use Australia A's second tour game against the Indians - that begins in Sydney on 11 December - as a platform to prepare some of his Test regulars for the forthcoming Test series against India.

**Kohli's feat:** By sealing the Twenty20 International series on Sunday, Virat Kohli became the first Indian and Asian captain to win a series in all three formats against Australia in Australia. He had led India to a 2-1 win in Tests in 2018-19 and won the one-day series 2-1.

**Bradman's cap:** Don Bradman's baggy green cap from his Test debut against England in 1928 is being put up for auction this week. His remarkable consistency with the bat saw him retire with a Test batting average of 99.94, a mark not bettered in 72 years.

**Iniesta strikes:** Andres Iniesta rolled back the years to take Vissel Kobe into their first Asian Champions League quarter-final as the Spanish World Cup-winner opened the scoring in the Japanese club's 2-0 victory over Shanghai SIPG in Doha on Monday.

**Loew unhappy:** Germany head coach Joachim Loew on Monday launched a thinly-veiled attack on the German FA, DFB, amid the repercussions of last month's 6-0 drubbing against Spain. Loew said he was "extremely disappointed" that the DFB had gone public.

**Induction delayed:** Tiger Woods' entry into the World Golf Hall of Fame will be delayed, after organisers said they were postponing the 2021 ceremony until the following year due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He will be inducted alongside Susie Maxwell Berning.

**Golfing feat:** Playing over the course of the Royal Calcutta Golf Club on 28 November, Timir Mitra holed out in one stroke at the second hole (150 yards), according to a official Press Note from the RCGC made available to *The Statesman* on Tuesday.

## Breakdancing becomes Olympic sport with prestige venue in 2024 Paris Games

**THE INDEPENDENT & AGENCIES**  
LONDON/PARIS, 8 DECEMBER

The International Olympic Committee's pursuit of urban events to lure a younger audience saw street dance battles officially added to the medal events programme for the 2024 Paris Games.

The IOC executive board also confirmed skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing would be added for Paris.

Those three sports will make their Olympic debuts at the Tokyo Games which were postponed

because of the coronavirus pandemic by one year to open on 23 July, 2021.

However, Paris organisers need time to prepare their project and so the IOC kept to its long-time schedule to confirm the 2024 sport line-up this month even before some are tested in Tokyo.

Breakdancing will be called breaking at the Olympics, as it was in the 1970s by hip-hop pioneers in the USA.

It was proposed by Paris organisers almost two years ago after positive trials at the 2018 Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires.

Breaking passed further stages of approval in 2019 from separate decisions by the IOC board and full membership.

In Paris, breaking has been given a prestige downtown venue, joining sport climbing and 3-on-3 basketball at Place du Concorde.

Surfing will be held far from France - more than 15,000 km (9,000 miles) away in the Pacific Ocean - at the beaches of Tahiti, as the IOC already agreed on in March.

Surfing, climbing and skateboarding are already part of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, having



been proposed along with karate by the Japanese hosts.

Paris Games organisers have said they want to deliver a programme that is keeping with the times and will attract a new

and younger audience.

Under new IOC rules first introduced for the Tokyo Games, Olympic host cities can hand-pick sports and propose them for inclusion in those Games if they are popular in that country and add to the Games' appeal.

The IOC also trimmed the overall events for Paris by 10 to 329 compared with the Tokyo Games next year, while increasing mixed-gender events from 18 in Tokyo to 22 in four years' time.

"With this programme, we are making the Olympic Games

Paris 2024 fit for the post-corona world," IOC chief Thomas Bach (in photo) said. "We are further reducing the cost and complexity of hosting the Games. There is also a strong focus on youth."

The IOC also capped the total athlete quota to exactly 10,500. The recent summer Olympics had seen an increase to more than 11,000. There will also be exactly 50 per cent men and 50 per cent women athletes in Paris, up from 48.8 per cent women in Tokyo.

"While we will achieve gender equality already at the

Olympic Games Tokyo 2020, we will see for the first time in Olympic history the participation of the exactly same number of female athletes as male athletes," Bach said.

"It's a nice reference to the 1900 Paris Olympics, when it was the first time that women were at the Games," Jean-Philippe Gatien, sport director for Paris 2024, told reporters at the Paris headquarters yesterday.

The IOC is desperate to refresh the Games' sports programme to remain relevant to sponsors, broadcasters and younger fans.

## Australia prevent clean sweep by India with win

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
SYDNEY, 8 DECEMBER

**A**ustralian bowlers held their nerves to come up trumps against the genius of Virat Kohli, stalling an Indian clean-sweep with a 12-run victory in the third and final T20 International here on Tuesday.

While India won the shortest format 2-1, it was overall an even result for the two teams which won three white-ball games each. Tuesday's loss ended the visitors' 10-match winning streak in the format.

Kohli got as many as four reprieves and cashed in well enough to smash his way to 85 off 61 balls but India could only reach as far as 174/7 in their pursuit of 187 in 20 overs.

It was a slash drive off Andrew Tye in the penultimate over which was plucked inches off the ground by Daniel Sams, who compensated for a forgettable day with the ball.

An over before that Hardik Pandya's swagger was checked by Adam Zampa (1/21 in 3 overs). Zampa's leg-break turned enough to force the 'Baroda Bomber' to hit one against the turn and be caught at short third-man.

Pandya was deservedly adjudged player of the series for his heroics with the bat.

Once Pandya was gone, there was too much pressure on Kohli and this was one rare occasion when he failed to take the team home.

While he hit four fours and three sixes, Kohli did lead a charmed life as Steve



Smith missed a dolly at deep mid-wicket fence when he gave Maxwell the charge.

Then Sean Abbott failed to get his hands on a tough return catch while another slipped through Tye's palms. During the fag end, Matthew Wade missed an easy stump-ing.

The Indian captain scored his third half-century of the tour and an effortless six off Abbott after the completion of the milestone gave much-needed relief to the Indian dugout. This was after man of the match Mitchell Swepson's (3/23) innocuous leg-breaks reduced them to 100 for 4.

Swepson would be the first to admit that he was lucky to dismiss Shikhar Dhawan (28 off 21 balls) with a half-tracker and ever unreliable Sanju Samson (10) with a low full-toss.

The only wicket-taking delivery he bowled was the one that got Shreyas Iyer out for a first-ball duck.

While Pandya (20 off 13 balls) initially took time, Kohli decided to take matters in his own hands as he first deposited Sams into the mid-wicket stands and then guided a rising delivery behind square.

Zampa dismissing Pandya turned out to be the turning point.

Earlier, Wade's second consecutive half-century was well-complemented by Maxwell's blazing strokeplay as Australia posted a competitive 186 for 5 after being put into bat.

Wade, who has played all his big T20 knocks against India, smashed his way to 80 off 53 balls with the help seven fours and two sixes.

Maxwell, who struggled

with his timing initially, also got into the act during the last six overs with a 35-ball-54 and a third-wicket stand of 90 runs in 8.4 overs with Wade.

India's bowling heroes were Washington Sundar (2/34 in 4 overs) and Thangarasu Natarajan (1/33 in 4 overs),

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